The Pursuit of Truth and Post-Truth in the Classroom

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Abstract
The discussion of the processes of knowledge production in connection with the Truth and the Truthfulness produced-especially after the 1970s, a fertile frame of thought for the strategic moment, the so-called 'classroom'. Questions related to several aspects of the production of Truth have kept this discussion active to the present day. This research attempts to link the discussion on the production of knowledge in the Educational sciences with contemporary skepticism about Truth in the public sphere and detect the procedures for the introduction of Post-Truth to the classroom, from the perspective of Sociology of Education. The link between the discussion of knowledge production, the pursuit of Truth, and the skepticism associated with the introduction and management of Post-Truth highlights the import of Power in the production of knowledge. This renews the core arguments of the 1970s discourse. This discussion reveals important aspects of the classroom, which are significant to social cohesion and democratic citizenship.
Keywords: Post-Truth, Citizenship, Classroom

Introduction
Bernstein's "new" Sociology of Education (Karabel & Halsey, 1977; Young, 1971; Grobutt, 1972) linked the discussion on the Truth with the production of knowledge and the attainment of objectivity, leading the discussion on the tools of the social and human sciences. Bernstein's (1970) perspective caused concern, leading researchers to renew the discussion, introducing the concept of seeking "Truthfulness" (Young & Muller, 2007). This discussion remains active in contemporary discourse (ibid), with many questions remaining unanswered in regards to the production of school knowledge. Young (2006) proposes a nested theoretical structure, wherein each educational theory contains a social theory and, in almost all cases, a theory of knowledge.
Bernstein (1977˙ 2000) seems to accept that natural sciences are the only model (direct or indirect) for objective knowledge –a model invariably leading to the belief that both the development of

knowledge and knowledge itself is attainable through the nature of the mathematical sciences (Young & Muller, 2007). Cassirer (1996), however, classified different types of objectivity, in accordance with the concepts and objects of knowledge. This classification lead to the development of sociology and, more importantly, objective sociological knowledge, independent of the mathematical sciences (Young & Muller, 2007). While this discussion constitutes the core of the contemporary thesis and theory. There is, nonetheless, substantive value in a more generalized review and evaluation of the theoretical discourse on this subject in the modern era.

Statement of the Problem

The contemporary classroom differs greatly from those observed just a few decades ago (Schneider, 2018). At that time, the classroom was a place where Truth and science, primarily dispensed by the teacher, were indisputable (Hallinan, 2006˙ Solomon, 1992). The contemporary phenomenon of "fake news" (not to be confused with Post-Truth) was limited to a determinate extent, or in lay terms, it was not able to disseminate at the frankly unheard of and unexpected contemporary rates. Students did not have access to as many sources of Truth and knowledge as they do today. This final characteristic, the possession of such a broad plethora of (re)sources, has clear positive aspects, greatly enhancing students' ability to familiarize themselves with the real world but can also be the cause of great concern for students that may not have developed critical thinking yet (Peters, 2017). In light of these new circumstances, we are faced with by a significant conundrum: *how is knowledge produced in the classroom today*?

Purpose of the Study

Within the context of Sociology of Education, we attempt to link Truth in the Lifeworld with the way does or does not enter the classroom in the age of Post-Truth. Specifically, we concern ourselves with the means by which social cohesion and democratic citizenship may be fostered in the classroom. We aim to develop awareness of the definition, content, and substantive meaning of Post-Truth within the Lifeworld and by extension the educational field (i.e. the classroom), to the extent that this relation differentiates democratic social cohesion and citizenship. We give particular weight to the relation of citizenship with the Reason of the Power (Market, Media and Politics).

The article unfolds in four main sections. We first discuss the content of Truth, Post-Truth and the Lie, noting the perspective under which each was interpreted. We also focus on the approaches to Post-Truth adopted by certain researchers (e.g. Fuller) and the stand-out characteristics Post-Truth. We then analyze Post-Truth politics in the contexts of the 2016 United States (U.S.) presidential election and the United Kingdom's (U.K.) so-called "Brexit" referendum, concluding with a focus on the role of the citizen within the Post-Truth politics phenomenon its effects on citizenship. Following this, we explore the role of the Media and the Market in the context of the Post-Truth phenomenon, with emphasis on how these two pillars affect democracy and society. In the final section of this study, we move our focus from the macro to the micro scale. With emphasis on the classroom, we try to outline the transitional level we are in, examining the ability of the classroom to create citizenship and save democracy. We analyze the effects of the Post-Truth phenomenon on macro and micro levels, presented the results of this article, and the potential for relevant future research.

Review of the Relevant Literature

Teachers' are no longer the sole bearer of Truth and knowledge within the classroom. Today's students (tomorrow's de facto citizens) find themselves surrounded by media, politics, and the Market, to a greater extent and from earlier than ever before.

This shapes fundamental characteristics of what Habermas' referred to as the "Lifeworld" (1984), the sphere corresponding to communication action; a public space in which free communication and practical rationality are active. Within the Lifeworld, each actor can communicate with others, argue, and justify their intentions and goals –in effect, the world we share with other people on a daily basis. The Lifeworld encompasses both formal and informal areas of social life and is supplemented the System: the fragmented structures and has established forms of instrumental action. The System, in turn, can be divided into two different sub-spheres: Money and Power, which dictate individuals' external goals. Money and Power form the means of guiding the capitalist economy, state administration, and related organizations such as public administration and political parties (Habermas, 1984; see also Finlayson, 2005; Pleasants, 1999).

Logically, Power has substantive impact on the production of knowledge in the public sphere. The classroom is part of education, education is part of the Lifeworld, and the educational aspects of the Lifeworld seem to be undergoing colonization by the System. Thus, the starting point for investigating the issue of knowledge production in the classroom seems to be rooted in attitudes of the teacher and the student, as future[1] and current citizens respectively, towards the Post-Truth era. Specifically and centrally in regards to the changes the Post-Truth era has introduced to the concepts of Truth and knowledge.

Truth, Post-Truth and the Lie in the Modern Era

We have referred to the concepts of Truth, Post-Truth, and the Lie but have not defined them formally. While the first two may be somewhat self-evident, they still bear statement: The Truth is an element with a connection to a certified, objective fact. The Lie is an element with no connection to any certified, objective fact. The Post-Truth, however, is a relatively new concept, a distinct phenomenon, which allows the elimination of objective facts. Alternatively, Post-Truth may employ a convenient Truth to serve specific purposes, in the form of a plausible approach of the objective facts (Stenmark, Fuller & Zackariasson, 2018).

Let us provide examples of each: The statement "London is the capital of Great Britain" is true; it contains the Truth. The statement "Paris is the capital of Great Britain" is not true, it does not reflect reality and it therefore includes the Lie. The distinction is not always so clear-cut. Stenmark, Fuller, and Zackariasson (2018) present a great example of this. In the 2008-2016 period, unemployment in the United Kingdom was presented in two strikingly different manners. Political pundits on both sides of the argument presented clearly distinct subject specific discourse. One side of the argument,

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[1] This statement could seem, to the casual reader, to imply that students are not citizens of the society they reside in. In a ley sense, of course, this is not true, since they are inhabitants of their particular region or country and, by and large, recognized subjects of the national state and/or commonwealth in which they find themselves. Semantically, however, the term citizen is used here to reference those individuals who have assumed not only the rights but also all of the responsibilities which coincide with citizenship, many of which are not actionable until the age of majority.

making use of official statistics (showing a 5.8% unemployment rate), maintained that the change in the unemployment rate (a decrease from previous figures) was a positive trend. Their opponents claimed a 17.5% unemployment rate, which they used as the foundation to argue that the country was in the midst of a significant Economic (Market/System) recession. Both sides presented their arguments claiming the fundamental Truth of the data fueling their arguments, while concurrently highlighting the degree of subjectivity lent to its contextual interpretation. However, the 5.8% unemployment figure is objective (provable) fact, while the 17.5% figure is a claim made to support an argument, which is not based in fact (i.e. is a Lie) and can later be refuted. This ability to refute inaccurate statements portrayed as factual, at a later date, lies at the heart of the Post-Truth phenomenon (Stenmark, Fuller & Zackariasson, 2018).

Post-Truth, an influential historical feature of intellectual life in the West, is a key feature of the complex distinction between appearance and reality. As a result, in many cases, a strong appearance can be akin to a reality. Fuller (2018) borrows the substance of Post-Truth from Italian Sociologist and Economist Vilfredo Pareto, to determine the concept. We eschew Pareto's (1935) rather florid simile and present the essence of his argument. The elite are comprised of two groups, which wrangle over Power, accusing each other of misdeeds, based on outrageous Untruthfulness. The first group discusses the actions they have *already* taken while the second the actions they are *going* to take. Pareto (ibid) defines the first favors group as those elites willing and able to participate in the controversy described above under the existing rules regarding the Truth. They embody the fundamental virtues of "stability" and "tradition". The second group are in favor of any possible change in the rules regarding the Truth, preferring to play the role of "opposition", fundamentally ensconcing the ideas of "change" and the "new" (Fuller, 2018). Rhetorical questions arise from this depiction: From which of the two perspectives does the person derive more benefits: The stability of appearance offered by the first group or the rapid change in appearance of the second? These rhetorical questions warrant serious consideration by modern individuals.

Communication in the Lifeworld, however, is characterized by a great degree of fluidity. Actors within it can and do both perceive and transmit information colored by their own perceptions, making the attainment of the Truth or the Lie potentially extremely difficult and arguably temporarily impossible (Gouga & Kamarianos, 2019). So according to Keyes (2004) "we choose the convenient" instead of the 'true'. This shifts the analysis from communicative importance of 'true' and 'false' to the identification of a gray area which extends from the realm of Truth to a limit defined by the plausible Lie.

Post-Truth is not a new phenomenon; it simply escaped formal definition and academic scrutiny. The modern age has enabled the empirical definition of its features and composition. Post-Truth reflects the possibility of being Truthful or lying inherent in contextual interpretations of reality. It reflects the conditions under which something is true or false. From a functional standpoint, governmental mechanisms fundamentally benefit from and, implicitly or explicitly, strive for social stability rather than the sharing of knowledge, which could disrupt democratic social cohesion. This is not to say that the Truth is a source of evil (it is not); rather the Truth is a by-product of institutionalized knowledge (Fuller, 2018).

We should note at this point that the narrative offered by Post-Truth is, by definition, plausible. This is especially true if the person providing the Post-Truth narrative holds a position of Power and exerts influence. The phenomenon of Post-Truth encompasses ideologies and political beliefs, since the interpretation of events can vary significantly by individual approach and perspective. Democracy

and discourse can play a decisive role in the Post-Truth phenomenon, since discourse we can foment positional changes on a given issue and enable the perception of alternative perspectives, if actors weigh the pros and cons of the argument. This suggests that democracy is a healthy and active system. However, this does not happen between people who serve personal interests through the Post-Truth. Discourse is an unknown word for them (Sim, 2019).

After analyzing Truth, Post-Truth, and the Lie in a contemporary context, we must consider about the way in which Post-Truth is related to politics in general and citizenship in particular.

Post-Truth Politics: Citizenship on Hold

What is the term Post-Truth politics? Politics is a field often characterized by uncertainty regarding what is true and what is not. Within politics one can easily identify conspiracy theories, plausible worlds, pure Lies, and clearly defined, long-standing attitudes indicating indifference to the Truth. Each of these characteristics along with the superset containing them compose the landscape of Post-Truth politics. Post-Truth politics are concerned not with the arguments conforming to real, verifiable events, but with securing electoral advantage (Block, 2019; Fish, 2017). Typical examples of Post-Truth politics can be seen in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and its aftermath, and the 2016 U.K. referendum for the United Kingdom's exit from European Union (EU) membership status. The latter is often (technically inappropriately) referred to as the referendum for (Great) *Britain's* Exit from the EU, resulting in the more memorable *Brexit* nomenclature.

In 2016 U.S. Donald Trump, at the time candidate for the presidency of the United States, incorporated unreasonable rhetoric and extreme racism to political discourse. These two characteristics are intrinsic parts of the defense of the U.S. working class. Concurrently, Donald Trump's staff attempted to present a different interpretation (or outright version) of his statements or social media posts throughout his election campaign. This was supplemented by statements made on then candidate Trump's Twitter being updated and replaced by new facts. Thus, events could be perceived to have many different versions. Following his election, Trump focused his rhetoric on what he described as the failings of former president Barack Obama, persistently reiterating the "mess" his predecessor "left behind". Official reports, however, show that former president Obama's economic management of the United States can be considered a successful attempt to restart the US economy. Donald Trump also extensively criticized the Affordable Care Act (commonly referred to as "Obamacare"), citing excessive amounts of money spent on the masses. To date, his administration has failed to provide hard evidence of this information to US citizens. Trump's Post-Truth politics are also apparent in his approaches to racism, the environment, and the elite. A special example of Post-Truth politics is apparent in the fact that president Trump considered that his own Tweets should be considered official government releases (Block, 2019; Stenmark, Fuller & Zackariasson, 2018). The dominant characteristic in all of the above examples is the narration of myths, eschewing both evidence and references to real events. These are the mechanisms through which he invests in the emotions of his potential voters.

The Brexit referendum is another striking example of Post-Truth politics. Proponents of the "Leave" campaign argued that the UK sent large sums of money (on the order of 350 million pounds) to Europe each week. This approach was featured on the front pages of newspapers, on the side of a notorious red bus (or coach, to use the local term) employed by the campaign, and dominated social media. After winning the referendum, Leave campaigners themselves admitted that their pre-referendum claims were not fact; their goal was to target the citizens' emotions to achieve their goal

–a strategy paralleled in the 2016 U.S. election (Mavelli, 2019). This illustrates the transition of Power from pure separation between true and false to the much more contextual interpretation and manipulation of verifiable events or even outright employ of verifiably false claims, through mechanisms of social cohesion, in a period of expected (and implicitly demanded) Truthfulness.

The majority of the world's most powerful governments' statements do not correspond to the objective Truth. What is "real" is essentially *what is understood by the public* to be real, to serve the purpose of the nation state in conjunction with anything imaginary that fulfills the requirement of plausibility for the majority. This has even sparked discussion about a "non-actual reality" (Stenmark, Fuller & Zackariasson, 2018). Truth and outrageous untruth have been "democratized", making it impossible to regard relevant statements as correct or undeniably wrong, since they indicate an individual perspective on a specific object or event. Scientists are trying to create clear rules for the Truth "game", while politicians wish to bend (or even break) them for their own benefit. The citizen is the recipient of the alliance shaped by the "game" of what is true and what is false (Fuller, 2018).

Post-Truth politics have highlighted a deep political illiteracy, the corruption of the political system and the gradual destruction of political culture. More importantly, however, it has largely eliminated the sense of common citizenship that characterizes democratic people across all societies (Giroux, 2018).

Culturally and politically, Post-Truth as a condition is apparent in numerous social phenomena observed in Western countries, including the recycling of fake news via the Internet, targeting emotional public opinion, and strategies that affect citizens in order to manipulate them. This process includes trolls (individuals who employ emotionally manipulative discourse, predominantly on the internet), software agents and other forms of propaganda, whether employed by the State or third parties. The main goal of Post-Truth is limiting citizenship and controlling common sense. Despite this, many citizens participate, potentially without realizing it, in the production and dissemination of Post-Truth narratives whose aim is undermining scientific, political, and cultural order. These processes foment and propagate information wars and ideological battles (Cosentino, 2020).

The Media seems to have a decisive influence on what narrative the citizen acquires regarding events that have transpired (Kalpokas, 2019). This, in turn, implies that the Media has an impact on citizens' perceptions of knowledge, politics, and Truth. However, it does not work alone. The Media and the Market both seem to play an important and often intertwined role in the emergence and propagation of Post-Truth.

(Social) Media and Market: The Emergence of Post-Truth
The prodigious number of different forms of Media in conjunction with social networking, which permeate contemporary reality, make the manipulation of the modern citizen easier than ever before. Because of this bombardment of information, Post-Truth is characterized by a singular dynamic throughout the process of manipulation. Since the individual convey whatever information they desire to their own social circle through a simple message, the advancement of technology serves the Post-Truth. This is enhanced by the plethora of social media platforms available for said dissemination. In a sense, we could characterize this as a perverse form of DIY (do it yourself) culture, where informational content is created by the social media users themselves. In conjunction with a seemingly generalized disregard for critical thinking, this leaves disgruntled people wondering and exploring, in each case, what intellectuals and their statements might actually represent (Sim, 2019).

In addition to Media, we consider the Market to be an extension of the social. One of the dominant narratives is that Post-Truth politics exist as a result of neoliberalism, which no longer aims only at the realization of competition and commodification, but at the modification of the citizen's beliefs. Foucault (2010) proposes that neoliberalism lies in the fact that politics, economics, and society are no longer separated. Mavelli (2019), in turn, attributes the gradual rise of Post-Truth is also linked to the belief in the neoliberal Market of Truth, which manages to soften the distinction between facts and beliefs.

Society in the era of Post-Truth is designed based on the Ratio of the Market, where citizens act as consumers who accept that there is no way of evaluating the Truth (Kamarianos, Spinthourakis & Gouga, in press). Concurrently, citizens believe the Truth of the Reason of the Market (ibid; for more on the Reason of the Market, see Ball, 2008˙ Olssen & Peters, 2005). The Market aims to remove from citizens those rights which their citizenship guarantees. The citizen therefore automatically accepts the processes of the public sphere. And, if they claim any of their rights, whatever they obtain will be a (likely very) small proportion of what they actually deserved. In other words, the relationship between the citizen and the Market is designed in such a way that every action of the citizen is predictable –or even spatial (Harsin, 2015).

Because the Market incorporates a Market of Truth, it appears to also be related to Post-Truth politics and the Media. Truth that is marketable and consumable by citizens is considered real. Such Truth confirms existing narratives and preserves prejudices.

Truth is gradually becoming a commodity, and neoliberalism is becoming more and more entrenched in society. Events are becoming voluntary beliefs. Traditional Media is being depreciated, and the Truth is judged on "clicks" (i.e. how many and which individuals invest the effort to engage), "likes" (i.e. how many individuals express identification with or approval of information), and "shares" (i.e. the scale of re-distribution). This point denotes the emergence of the Truth Market, in which there are several competing sub-Markets (e.g. newspapers, blogs, and digital channels). These sub-Markets overwhelmingly battle over who will secure greater levels of trust and loyalty, offering consumers such facts as they want to consume. A significant role in gaining "market share" in such Truth sub-Markets is played by the incorporation of an online platform for the reader, listener, or viewer to express their positive or negative emotions/reactions (Mavelli, 2019).

In some form, Media outlets have existed as long as organized society. In the past, however, the number of Media outlets around the world was limited. In a very original sense, the agora of classical Greece, the Forums of Rome, and town criers from medieval times were all aspects of Media. In more contemporary times, following the invention of the printed word, newspapers made the dissemination of information easier and significantly increased its availability to the public at large. Arguably, however, the greatest increase, prior to the inception and broad adoption of the internet came in the form of Radio and Television. Radio captured the imagination of the entire world, bringing information and entertainment directly into the home (and later in portable format). Television enhanced this to include the transmission of moving images, which carried with them the weight of an entirely new sensory perception experience. At this point, there were a number of national and (to varying degrees) local television channels and radio stations. Gradually, with the expansion and, more recently, explosion, of the Media and the growing dominance of Social Media in our lives, the focus has in informational content has shifted from the dissemination of information to an emphasis on emotion. Arguably, any information available through classical means is now available through social media. A given event can be presented from many perspectives and through

the many sources, such that each of these perspectives may seem to be based on reality. It is incumbent on the individual critically evaluate each of these sources accumulated in Social Media and discern which is/are characterized by logic and have a connection with reality. It more often the case, however, that the average citizen accepts information which is characterized by extensive clicks, likes, and shares (i.e. information which has "gone viral") as more likely to be true, simply by virtue of their ubiquity (Block, 2019).

Since the process of fragmenting existing beliefs and creating new ones in their place takes place via the Market, it follows that the Market functions as a mechanism of democratic social cohesion. In this manner, Truth and expert opinion and testimony are removed from the forefront of the discourse.

There is a growing trend depreciating experts and scholars. However, scholarly opinions and expert testimony have also been subject to paraphrasing or been taken out of context to serve personal purposes. This is exemplified in the anonymous internet user selectively invoking a scholar (whether inaccurately or out of context), hoping his own information will draw accreditation from the credibility of a person with social status. In this light, fake news is a way to find people with common identities and ultimate destinations for communities with similar beliefs. This process offers the citizen a narrative removed from the crisis, liquidity, and complexity of the modern age (Block, 2019). At the same time, education does not focus on citizenship, but on vocational rehabilitation (Peters, Rider, Hyvonen & Besley, 2019). This, therefore, leads to the weakening of democracy and the domination of populism (ibid).

Post-Truth and the Classroom

The Post-Truth implies circumstances in which objective events are overshadowed by the formation of public opinion and shaped by emotional motives and personal beliefs. Post-Truth is associated with education, as the pupil's critical thinking within the educational system is limited and instrumental-controlled pedagogical practices are applied, under the supervision of the State. Teachers often find themselves questioning whether they convey Truth to their students (Peters, 2017). Moreover, education is now more strongly linked to vocational rehabilitation than the creation of democratic citizens (Panagopoulos, in press).

The link between education and Post-Truth is a strong indication of students' lack of critical thinking. The educational system strives exclusively to maintain the narrow frameworks within which the student meets reality. However, no significance is attached to the development of the student as a democratic citizen within the classroom. As a result, citizenship is affected, participatory democracy is not given weight and pupils are not politicized (in the sense of being made politically aware or encouraged to engage in discourse on political subject matter), giving populists and extremists suitable ground for action (Peters, 2017).

The political system makes every effort to finance education. To some extent, this is indeed implemented; citizens however, find themselves systemically discouraged from criticism, in that they are trapped within the regulatory framework. As a result, a mild form of authoritarianism is cultivated, with education bearing characteristics incompatible with the principles of Enlightenment. Individuals do not learn how to expand their capabilities, which may extend to a wide range and great depths, within schools and during their lives. Instead, they are taught about the discovery of and respect towards the limits of the existing Power. Clearly, this is a paradox for modern democracy (Fuller, 2018).

This lack of critical education leaves students struggling to evaluate what message is delivered by the Media. They cannot assess whether the "facts" that emerge are real events or alternative perspectives. This is not to say that students completely lack critical faculties. They do not think about what is presented and whether some scientific research has preceded it or if it is simply an advertisement without a scientific background but are ill equipped or unprepared to make the critical distinction between the two. Students are easily persuaded by imagery, trends, and statistics and, while the latter may seem to be a positive stimulus, it is most often transmitted to them in the form of an oversimplified representation of reality and consumed without further thought or investigation. School curriculums include a greater degree of knowledge-preserving myths, prejudices, and plausible facts, than the pursuit of Truth. This is arguably undesirable, as it stymies the stimulation of students' critical thinking and their articulation of reason (Horsthemke, 2017).

Truth and knowledge are not offered to citizens and students. The state's primary purpose is the stability of society (Adamopoulou & Kamarianos, 2008 Balias et al., 2011); education's aim is the realization of standard pedagogical, instrumental procedures (Lovat et al., 2011). The State and the school -as an educational institution of the state - do not promote citizenship; they promote stability. This has a significant impact on participatory democracy. Post-Truth is not necessarily a negative element, but it is necessary for individuals to realize and recognize its existence, on both the societal and school level.

There is an understanding gap between the recipient of informational stimuli and Post-Truth –one that, so far, neither the State nor the school has succeeded in bridging (Fuller, 2018). Students cannot judge whether information comes from facts or is simply the communication of a plausible proposal. Consequently, as future citizens, they will be unable to discern whether an official government statement is the result of empirical research or if it is simply a plausible narrative formulated in such an outrageously good manner as to appear to be true (Peters, 2017).

A key issue for the school classroom is that most contemporary children use social media from an early age, either directly or indirectly, to familiarize themselves and communicate with the real world. Essentially, society in general and the teacher specifically must foster the children in a kind of intelligent doubt and rational understanding. Teaching must focus on cultivating critical thinking through the creation of common ground from opposing views. Otherwise, the lack of critical thinking and, consequently, the ignorance of facts and Truth becomes a demonstrable failure of the educational system while concurrently threatening democracy.

Populist politicians gained dominance around the world through the manipulation of the average citizen, who did not employ critical thinking –which is arguably the counterweight to rhetoric (Peters et al., 2018). However, the reaction of better-educated individuals who, through their inaction, implicitly enabled the transformation of populists into carriers of Truth and change was also problematic (Hopf et al., 2019).

Discussion and Conclusion
This article followed the Truth, Lies, and Post-Truth from macro to micro, in the transition from politics, Media, and Market to the classroom. We highlighted an active process, focusing on how the classroom perceives the Post-Truth phenomenon.

We attempted to shed light on the phenomenon of Post-Truth. Post-Truth produces a narrative characterized by Truthfulness. One of its key features is the subtle distinction between appearance and reality. Post-Truth is not a negative point, but one which all parties must be aware of. It seems

to dominate in social life and in many cases it seems to be carried out in order to secure self-seeking aims. Post-Truth also seems to dominate in the political sphere. A candidate's campaign, a country's governance, and any number of important decisions are based on Post-Truth narratives. This is because events are less successful in affecting the emotions of the citizen, compared to the various perspectives they want to hear. Only politicians benefit from the manipulation of the citizen. However, the passive citizen who accepts whatever is offered to them as Truth is not only indicative of a lack of critical thinking, on the personal level, but also of the degradation of modern democracy. Claims of Truth ensure that any interlocutor's statements belong to the objective world (Gouga & Kamarianos, 2011). This poses a difficulty for the modern discourse participant, however, who must not only discern what constitutes fact on their but also argue for it (Parousis, 2005). Thus, claims of Truth are seemingly difficult to attain. Our society, according to Habermas, consists of two spheres (1984). One corresponds to the System and the other to the Lifeworld (ibid). Each sphere is dominated by one of two types of action: communicative or instrumental (Finlayson, 2005˙ Kavoulakos, 1995). The colonization of the Lifeworld is becoming more and more apparent within the Post-Truth phenomenon. We note that a large part of the Lifeworld is already colonized, while the colonization of the classroom is still at an early stage.

The arguments made in this article supports the proposition that society is ready to accept Post-Truth. At the macro level, Post-Truth already exists. It dominates both politics and Media, and therefore the Market. Post-Truth is gradually moving to the micro level, the school classroom, which seems to be the only field in which citizenship can be formed.

Moreover, politics aside, citizenship in the era of Post-Truth seems to be threatened by both Media and Market. Media outlets in contemporary society have increased exponentially compared to the past, allowing the citizen to share any piece of information with any other individual. It seems that the citizen in many cases into conflict with their citizenship if they participate in the dissemination of false news or conspiracy theories in their social circle. Concurrently, the Market perceives the citizen as a consumer and offers a Market of Truth. The citizen-consumer essentially buys the Truth that is "marketable" and which, generally speaking, follows the "Market trend". This process perpetuates prejudices and existing narratives.

To conclude with, (on the macro level) education does not seem to focus on the cultivation of citizenship, but on future professional rehabilitation. This is, after all, the primary direction that neoliberalism gives to education. However, the classroom (the micro level) retains the ability to cultivate critical thinking and shape citizenship. This process would provide tomorrow's citizen with awareness of the Post-Truth phenomenon and allow them to distinguish Truth from rhetoric.

Recommendations

In light of the above, does democracy exist? Habermas (1997), for whom communication and discourse are directly and intrinsically linked to democracy, argues (2007) that "Post-Truth democracy would no longer be a democracy". This stance is likely founded in series of sub-phenomena manifested in the Post-Truth world: no discourse is undertaken, no claims of Truth are raised, and the Lifeworld is colonized by the System. Discourse, in particular, is an active process between participants who are characterized by equality and one that is inextricably tied to claims of validity (i.e. Truth, Appropriateness and Sincerity) (Habermas, 1997). Therefore, it would be very interesting for future research to investigate the identity of the democratic citizen through the Post-Truth

phenomenon. Conducting such research may reveal (or not) the threats of the Post-Truth phenomenon to democracy and citizenship.

Society seems receptive of the colonization that is taking place in the Post-Truth era. The installation of the colonization of the Lifeworld and Post-Truth is accomplished, at least in part, with the help of the citizen. Through Post-Truth, we could talk about the gradual creation of a second public sphere –one which offers a range of alternative narratives and ideas. This second public sphere is vividly portrayed on the internet in general and Social Media specifically. Post-Truth brings with it an increasing lack of trust in most of the institutions of a democratic State. Most noteworthy are the lack of trust in governments, media, scientists and experts. This lack of trust is not only vertical, from the citizen to the institution, but also horizontal, manifesting as a lack of trust between citizens. This trust is a key element for the democratic cohesion of society and the preservation of democracy. It is core component necessary for the formation of Social Capital and by extension, educational, occupational and later status attainment (Moustairas & Katsillis, 2006). Thus, we find ourselves contemplating one more very serious question, if one beyond the scope of this particular study: Does Post-Truth mean a transition to Post-Trust? The answer to this question can shed light on two points: a) the way the Post-Truth phenomenon affects social cohesion and b) whether Post-Truth is a factor of low levels of trust, both in institutions and in individuals who represent them.

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