Title: *Educational Patterns and Issues for a High-Tech Citizenship*

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Abstract: Globalization is a great process of structural integration of world civilization, pushed forward by – above all – the very fast pace of technological innovation. The ease of access to communication, especially through the Internet and social media, has increased the speed of information exchange and the possibility of contact, both among individuals, within their private life; and public institutions, associations, etc., i.e. the citizens, or the individuals within their public life. Among the many dimensions in which technological innovation makes its way, there is public governance within the framework of a democratic society, with all its implications in the medium and long term. Since the Eighties, we speak more precisely of *new public management*, a new way of administering the public sector according to canons pertaining to the private sphere (corporate governance). The life of a city and its citizens, going beyond public administration and coming to the daily routine of work, travel, leisure, etc., are the other complementary aspect of the modernization of civil life, on which new technologies are bringing about other major changes. The idea of a «smart city» is precisely the idea of a city that exploits technology and gets influence by it, towards improving the quality of life, the right use of resources and the reduction of waste. In this work, we want to give an overview of ideas and concepts on the relationship between education, democracy, citizenship formation and participation in social processes, taking into consideration sociological, pedagogical and even philosophical elements.

Education comes into play as lifelong learning. The need to expand education beyond traditional areas is essential, towards the vision of a high-tech society in which the virtual community, made up of *avatars* in constant telecommunication, substitutes itself to the real community. A constantly changing reality that can function in better ways, the more democratically it forms: as Dewey notes, the difference between democratic and authoritarian societies has its base on the way they design their own structure. The democratic society, now globalized, is a society that *continuously plans itself*, accepting changes and evolving towards new forms, without stopping at rigid pre-ordered models and forms; the constant and increasingly rapid changes in the forms of social interaction are the premise – and also the effect – of transformation through the *new information and communication technologies* (NICT). That is the basis of smart cities and their public governance.

The technological development of the virtual community can be a tool for growth and evolution of the real community. Lévy argues that the Internet is a tool to achieve the so-called *collective intelligence*, that is, the intellectual collaboration between people who exchange complementary ideas through the network, integrating their knowledge: a communicative valorization of the use of intelligence. But the different quality of virtual interactions causes alarming phenomena: the persons behind the *avatars* are not valued as real people; lower accuracy of information exchange generates problems such as the *fake news* or the *cyberbullying*, building a public debate on errors and falsehoods. The preparation for the use of the internet therefore becomes an educational problem.

A pedagogical formula limited to traditional institutions and methods cannot easily resolve the educational needs of this democratic society. The theoretical work must be based on different perspectives, from the very concept of *society*, which has a vertical dimension, to the concept of *community* with its horizontal dimension. For Habermas, the base of participation in the training of public opinion relies on the communicative structure: social actors present themselves on the public stage each with their own communicative model and their interaction takes the form of *dialogue*, as a moment of search for the agreement on actions to be undertaken and on the reference standards recognized as binding. The rational argument is essential to make public opinion an effective social dimension of debate on matters of collective interest, since the *rule of law* provides, or should provide for, the consensual resolution of conflicts of interest. The training of the citizens, then, goes through dialogue, mutual understanding, and the cultural substratum that gives substance to their communicative intelligence; it is therefore important to know how education can develop dialogue. Dialogical education is, as set by Freire, an education to critical thinking, because it stimulates curiosity, questions and discussions beyond the affirmation of one's own point of view, to get in touch with others and open to cooperation.

The horizon of the Smart City concept brings some controversy, in the cultural frame of Crouch's definition of Post-democracy: on one hand, the digital development of *e-governance*, with spread of Internet connectivity, systemic integration of services, access to resources and information, leads to a wider inclusiveness, a constant participation of citizens to city's life and evolution. On the other, a greater use of technology risks to help also a strict control over citizenship, by new types of authoritarian governments in which the *forms* of democracy are still operating, but the contents of political decision processes are less concerned about the interest of the majority, and more on projects of economic development and power control. As in Western countries is evident the rise of "populist" movements, not always expressing real democratic instances, Eastern governments tend to adopt the so-called «Singapura Model», that is, an *authoritarian democracy* organizing a country's modernization with the combination of free market policies, sever control of citizenship and extensive use and development of technologies, in every field. From this point of view, education is itself the fundamental issue for a Smart City: forming citizens can be a work to achive the ability to think freely, thus participate through technology and have an organic role in the evolution of society; or can be a "rush" toward excellence in computing, programming and work efficiency, but at the risk of a conformistic society, where democracy could be just rethoric.