

## **Education and urban crises: Coercive neoliberalism, the politics of disposability, and the struggle for the right to the city - Abstract**

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This paper argues that education is co-constitutive of the neoliberal economic-political order and its urban crises and is a critical site for resistance to neoliberalism, racism, reactionary nationalism, and xenophobia. I begin with the stakes of the present moment: the conjuncture of profound economic, political, social, and ecological crises and global resurgence of xenophobic, white supremacist, nationalist, anti-democratic agendas, on one hand, and new resistances, solidarities, social imaginaries and emerging counter-hegemonic programs, on the other. I trace this polarized moment to the protracted structural crisis of capitalism, globalized neoliberalism, and legacies of colonialism, white supremacy, xenophobia, and entrenched class/race/gender/caste/ethnic/religious social hierarchies that variously permeate our societies at all scales.

Neoliberal logics of capital accumulation and anti-democratic governance (intertwined, in the U.S., with white supremacy) have driven the economic and spatial restructuring of cities and its intensified economic, social, and spatial inequalities. I argue that, in the U.S., urban education policies are co-constitutive of neoliberal urban restructuring and its inequalities, the shrinking and commodification of the social state; and racialized/spatialized politics of disposability, visited particularly on African Americans (Lipman, 2011; 2015). Undermining critical thought, academic independence, and democratic participation in schools is also central to neoliberalism's anti-democratic political project. In this moment, public education is a locus of the crises of the neoliberal order, including the crisis of social reproduction (Fraser, 2016), and, in the U.S., the municipal state's racialized attempt to discipline the public through fiscal austerity (Peck, 2012), subordinating the lives of "surplus people" to fiscal solvency and subjecting them to intensified state violence (Pulido, 2016) and "organized abandonment" (Gilmore, 2008). These practices have given rise to an education justice movement, with parents and teachers as key protagonists. Led by people of color, opposition to closing and privatizing public schools and to education austerity and racial inequity is unsettling neoliberal hegemony. Parents, students and members of racially marginalized communities, along with educators, are authors of critical, humanizing education visions and practices of urban solidarity that challenge the present neoliberal social order. These contests over education are part of what Lefebvre (1996) called struggles for "the right to the city".

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