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Disentangling the National Plan for Digital School: the Micro-dispositivity of the Futura Event

Emanuela Spanò* and Danilo Taglietti**

Abstract: The aim of this work is to address the shaping processes of subjectivation through the exploration of spaces, times, technologies and subjectivities involved in the *Futura* event, organized by MIUR to promote the National Plan for Digital School (PNSD) policy in January 2018. We look at it as a “policy event”: a «micro-dispositif of power» strongly connected to the PNSD as a «macro-formation of policy». In the contribution, we articulate the *thick description* of the event – gathered through observation in notes and ethnographic materials (especially visual materials) – starting from four epistemological dimensions: *spaces*, *times*, *technologies* and *subjectivities*. These dimensions are further detailed in specific sub-dimensions: social connoted / technological connoted spaces; orientation / value of times; technological practice / speech; and subjectified / autonomous subjectivities. In conclusion, we argue that the observation and analysis of the *Futura* micro-dispositif allows us to shed light on some aspects of the PNSD macro-formation and, in particular, on its effects on the subjectivation of the school professionals, on the role of technologies in their practices and in the processes of endogenous privatization of the Italian educational system.

Keywords: dispositif, learning spaces, digitalization of education, subjectivation, diagram

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1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to address the shaping processes of subjectivation by the National Plan for Digital School (PNSD¹) in practice through the exploration of spaces, times, technologies and subjectivities involved in the *Futura* event, organized by MIUR (the Italian Ministry of Education) in January 2018. For this reason, we look at the making digital of educational subjectivities as a series of assemblages among (parts of) humans, spaces, discourses and artifacts, which have been constituted and constitute themselves through certain practices of power and games of truth in a determined contingent context: the *Futura* event. Then, through the identification of the pure functions of power that characterize this micro-dispositif – that is: its *diagram* – we try to disentangle the making of those processes of subjectivation put into play by the macro-dispositif of policy (PNSD).

In our perspective, events like this constitute an interesting and innovative entrée through which to look at policies. In fact, while the “event studies” literature has developed in disciplines such as organizational studies, exhibitions have caught the attention of educational researchers only from an historical perspective (Sobe, 2013; Sobe & Rackers, 2009). In contrast, we consider these events as crucial, pivotal arenas: “policy events” (Playier-Koro et. al., 2017; De Feo & Pitzalis, 2018), in and through which both the mobilizing and the embedding of policies can occur. For this reason, the “exhibition event” *Futura* is interpreted as an integral element of policy mobilities, proving a time and a space for the social dimension of policy work. It is a key site for strategic “naming and framing” of policy and a place where policy stories and narratives are told to audiences predisposed to be conceived, “disciplined” and persuaded. Stealing Stephen Ball’s words, *Futura* can be seen: «as a moment of *meetingness* when network members from a range of backgrounds come together, where stories are told, visions are shared, arguments are reiterated, new relations and commitments are made, partnerships are forged and where a form of “buzz” is generated» (Ball, 2016, p. 550). By this way, it is a site of symbolic, performative and practical policy work, where it is possible to observe concretely the prominent role of the

¹ The National Plan for Digital School is a fundamental pillar of the last Italian educational reform policy (law 107/2015, the so-called *The Good School*), an operative vision that reflect Government position in relation to the most important challenges about the innovation of the public system: at the center of this vision there are the innovation of the school system and the opportunities of the digital education. This Plan has a pluriannual valency and addresses concretely the activity of the whole Public Administration, with financed actions. [...] This Plan answers to the call for building a vision for Education in the digital era. [...] It is, first of all, a cultural action which departs from a renewed idea of school, intended as an open space for learning and not only a physical place, and from a platform which will allow students to develop competences for life. Within this paradigm, technologies become enabling, daily, ordinary [...]: an Italian way to the digital school. (MIUR)

“trade” as the logic that now underpins the organization and the provision of many aspects of public education, involved in a process of endogenous privatization (Ball & Youdell, 2007)

Starting from these premises and adopting a Foucauldian frame, we look at the *Futura* event as a «micro-dispositif of power», strongly connected to the PNSD as a «macro-formation of policy» (Bailey, 2015). By micro-dispositif we refer to a local mechanism with contingent characteristics and a performative function of specific institutional elements. We also consider these elements in their *diagrammatic*, as they are the same that inform the macro-formation [dispositif] of policy (Deleuze, 1986). In particular, within the micro-dispositif, we have focused our observational attention on four dimensions: *space*, *time*, *technologies* and *subjectivities*. These dimensions were then detailed in specific sub-dimensions and steered the production of ethnographic notes and visual materials. Finally, we analyzed these materials using a hermeneutical approach inspired by Paul Ricoeur *hermeneutical arc* (Ricoeur, 1981).

Analytically, to consider the dimension of *spaces* meant to pay attention to elements such as the renovation of the traditional classrooms – towards the model of creative ateliers – as well as the abandonment of computer rooms – in favor of the dispersion of a multiplicity of workstations in all the common areas of the school structure. This allowed us to highlight how a process of re-defining educational spaces within the school system is in progress. The dimension of *times*, instead, allowed us to deconstruct the eschatological nature of the numerous discourses that support the goodness and the undiscussed necessity of digital innovation: starting from the application of the Moore’s Law, extended as axiom of exponential innovation; and getting to the unmasking of a widespread “digital novelty” constantly compared to “old, obsolete and worse” analogical methodologies and practices. Then, *technologies*, understood as elements of concatenations, became co-implicated in practices of which we grasped the problematic and the not obvious naturalness. This has been highlighted, for example, in the repeated inconveniences connected to a wrong use of technologies at the service of the event itself; as well as in the structuring of digital (non-)interactive modalities in some workshops. Finally, this approach permitted us to grasp the processes of re-subjection of school professionals: from the birth of digital entertainers, emerging autonomous subjectivities of the whole policy; to the reconfiguration of the tasks and functions of teaching staff in the assemblage with learners and digital technologies.

In conclusion, we argue that the observation and analysis of the *Futura* micro-dispositif allows us to shed light on some aspects of the PNSD macro-formation and, in particular, on its power effects (its *diagrammatic*) on the conception of the whole educational practice by school professionals. More

precisely, we point out the attempt, by PNSD, to governmentalize (Foucault, 2007) the still disciplinary (Foucault, 1977) school. At its end, this paper focuses on the ways in which school subjectivities are solicited to adopt the regime of truth that govern the contemporary processes of endogenous privatization of educational systems.

2. Theoretical and methodological “disentanglements”

Adopting Bailey (2013) perspective, we look at the *Futura* event as a «micro-dispositif of power» (*ibidem*) strongly connected to the PNSD as a «macro-formation of policy» (*ibidem*). From this point of view, *Futura* event is «not only a [concatenation] of entities but also a site at which the [formation of policy] is continually produced and reproduced» (Power, 2012, p. 4). The concept of *dispositif* has been introduced by Foucault in his works in order to go beyond the distinction between the discursive and extra-discursive dimensions of reality. The relation which is established between these dimensions is one of exteriority (Deleuze, 1986) that find the proper site of clash and determination in the «non-place» (ivi, p. 85) of power. This is strongly connected to the Foucauldian genealogical move: we have to interrogate the «apparatus of power as a productive instance of discursive practice[s]» (Foucault 2006, p. 13). This «cluster of power relations [that sustain] – and [is] sustained – by certain types of knowledge» (Foucault in Gordon 1980, p.196) is an attempt to produce governed subjectivities (Agamben, 2006). So, we can sum up that a *dispositif* is a heterogeneous entanglement of flowing processes: some related to power, others to knowledge and others to subjectivation (Deleuze, 1991).

By this way, the analysis of a specific and local event «moves to its outside so as to resituate its constitution and operations within a technology of power typical of society» (Lagrange in Foucault 2006, p. 355). The concept of *dispositif* permits us to transcend traditional analytical dualism between micro and macro and allows an event to be understood as a fluid network of multiple elements, each one permeated by ideas and practices which are assembled and deployed by various subjects (Power, 2012). This is what Bailey (2015) recalls as the *scalar* dimension of the *dispositif*, which can be located both on the micro and on the macro level: in our case, by micro-*dispositif*, we refer to a local mechanism with contingent characteristics and a performative function of specific institutional elements. These elements, if considered in their *diagrammatic*, are the same that inform the macro-formation [*dispositif*] of policy. Referring to Deleuze (1986), the Diagram «constitutes itself as the ‘abstract machine’ coextensive to a whole social field. [...] It operates as a sieve of Chaos, thickening among meshes the ‘most probable’ molecular compositions, following power balances and games that a society produces

and by which it is produced» (Foladori, 2016 p. 40). It is the pure function of a dispositif. For instance, the Diagram of the Panopticon as a dispositif was «[to impose] a particular taste or conduct on a multiplicity of particular individuals, provided simply that the multiplicity is small in number and the space limited and confined» (Deleuze, 1986, p. 72), with no account to specific concrete forms or substances that make it present. Therefore, to look at *Futura* event as a micro-dispositif of policy means to pursue the attempt of mapping the relations of power that sustain it and, through an interpretative move of abstraction (Buchanan, 1997), to sketch out the Diagram of power of the whole macro-dispositif of the PNSD policy.

Coherently with this theoretical framework, we have to take an epistemological perspective that addresses an analysis of practices that does away with the social actor and focuses on subjects as effects of socio-material processes of subjectivation. So, to catch up the *diagrammatic* within the micro-dispositif *Futura*, we have focused our observational attention on those changes suggested by the critical rethinking of the epistemology of modern social sciences. Referring to Popkewitz's (1997) work, instead of treating space and time as fixed, dead and singular, we consider them as full of richness, life, and multiplicities. *Spaces* as *fabrication* and *times* as *rupture*, then, are the first two dimensions that aim at the understanding of «the rules and standards of reason through which the subject is constructed, with the notion of constructing directing attention to how identities are continually made through the formation of social spaces in which individuality is placed» (ivi, p. 23). These dimensions are also the premises to the other two dimensions we have focused on: *technologies* and *subjectivities*. The first one marks, in our perspective, the peculiarity of the contingent micro-dispositif under observation and is characterized by the particular artifacts involved in it. The other one, instead, refers to a subject that is decentered, ex-centered: an assemblage, the comingling of diverse materials in which the modern subject/object dichotomy completely disappears. The subject, in this perspective, becomes a plural, relational entity, founded on a positive creativity: a *machine désirante* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

From a methodological point of view, we propose an in-depth *event-ethnography* (Player-Koro et. al., 2017) to make it possible for the micro-dispositif *Futura* to be disentangled and for multiplicities to be accounted. As Tamboukou (2015) observes, freezing the present is not an easy exercise. What we therefore attempted to do by using ethnographic practices has been to trace the different heterogeneous elements, discourses and practices that synthesize and recall the *Futura* event. In particular, we articulate the *thick description* (Geertz, 1998) of the event – produced through *passive participant observation* (Gobo, 2001, p. 82) in notes and ethnographic materials

(especially visual materials) – starting from the epistemological dimensions indicated above: *spaces*, *times*, *technologies* and *subjectivities*.

These dimensions were then detailed in specific sub-dimensions. *Spaces* has been articulated in relation to the kind of connotation (Sartori, 2011) that its fabrication refers to. So, we had two specific sub-dimensions: *social connoted spaces* and *technological connoted spaces*. *Times*, then, has been specified in relation to the kind of rupture time has to be passed through in order to light up its discontinuities. So, we had the sub-dimensions: *orientation of times* and *value of times*. The third dimension refers to *technologies* and it has been constituted in relation to the kind of assemblage is made between artifacts and their users. So, we had the *technological practice* sub-dimension, referring to a non-discursive assemblage with artifacts, and the *technological speech* sub-dimension, referring to a discursive assemblage with artifacts. Finally, the *subjectivities* dimension has been analytically split in *subjectified* and *autonomous subjectivities* sub-dimensions, referring to the theoretical frame above illustrated and, particularly, to the distinction made by Foucault (1982) between being a *subject of* and being a *subject to* other forces. Each sub-dimension has been lastly equipped with an operationalization rule, as synthesized in Tab. 1.

Table 1. Sub-dimensions and operationalization rules

Dimensions	Sub-Dimensions	Operationalization Rules
<i>Spaces</i>	Social Connoted Spaces	Spaces that are produced by the attribution of social features
	Technologically Connoted Spaces	Spaces that are produced by the attribution of technological features
<i>Times</i>	Orientation of Times	Times that are framed thorough the attribution of a direction
	Value of Times	Times that are framed through the attribution of a value
<i>Technologies</i>	Technological Practice	Techno-human assemblages that are non-discursive
	Technological Speech	Techno-human assemblages that are discursive
<i>Subjectivities</i>	Subjectified Subjectivities	Figures who have placed themselves as main characters
	Autonomous Subjectivities	Absent figures who were spoken by others

Finally, we interpreted the ethnographic notes gathered adopting a hermeneutical approach inspired by Paul Ricoeur *hermeneutical arc* (Ricoeur, 1981). This approach allowed us to pay attention to the social production of narratives, ie the way in which they are constructed as performances within shared meaning systems (Riessman, 2008). More specifically, in the particular context of the ethnographic notes, when we narrate out of lived experience and write down the narration, we produce an autonomous text: a text that expresses its own meaning. The narrative thus produced has (in itself) no need of correction through a stating of facts. The epistemological assumptions that accompany this theory of texts (Ricoeur, 1989) are fundamental to the continuation of the analysis, since they have allowed us to conceptualize the ethnographic notes as inscriptions of a previous narrative production, which thanks to the *distantiation* (*ibidem*) introduced by the phenomenon of writing - that is transcription - they turn into something that goes beyond the boundaries of a specific discursive context in which they originated. Fixing through writing makes, in fact, every narration - which however comes from the synthesis of different “materials”, which belong to a shared cultural repertoire - is a semantic innovation, a unique and unrepeatable composition that, just like a metaphor, rather than describing the world, re-describes it.

In the next paragraph - coherently with the above delineated theoretical and methodological frame - we are going to interrogate empirically the shaping processes of subjectivation by the current Italian digitalization policy. We are looking for the making digital of educational subjectivities as a series of assemblages among (parts of) humans, spaces, discourses and artifacts, which have been constituted and constitute themselves through certain practices of power and games of truth in a determined contingent context: the *Futura* event.

3. Futura event: fieldnotes

The *Futura* event took place in Bologna from January 18th to 20th 2018, in a series of different spaces, set up and “well-dressed” for the occasion, near the central and monumental Piazza del Nettuno (Figure 1). Organized by MIUR, the event was conceived as «a three-day training and comparative initiatives to socialize and deepen the PNSD themes with laboratories, libraries and open ateliers, good practices, innovation competitions, hackathons and competitions for schools». The broad program of the event included over a hundred appointments efficiently organized in parallel sessions, thanks to the simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor spaces of several historical buildings, duly indicated on a special map. After registration, compulsory to enter the reserved areas, this map was delivered to each visitor along with a

kit branded PNSD including bag, identification tag, promo-information and program documentation (Figure 2). As Image 1 shows the architectonic space was clearly fabricated through a visual marketing approach. In fact, the organizational model for the event, therefore, clearly appeared to be inspired by the exhibition model. Even in terms of visual design, *Futura* took place in very busy spaces, all decorated with logos, banners and screens. Everything tended to be a rush of colours, sounds, and sloganeering (*fieldnotes*).

Figure 1. Space fabrication through visual marketing.



Figure 2. Edu-bubbles and exhibition-style materials.



Our research is based on the ethnographic *in situ* passive participant observation of 10 programmed specific laboratories-ateliers-lectures-debates, which covered 2 whole days of the general event. We got the access to the field through an online pre-registration as “academic researchers”. Anyway, this qualification was acknowledged only by registrant officers and was not public for other participants. Moreover, we payed particular attention to avoid any kind of interaction with anyone: this was also made easier by the fact that the event was public and open to a wide audience of strangers.

In order to highlight the sociological aspects of interest in this observation, the «narrative» (Cavarero, 2009) that will be provided in this paragraph will not follow the temporal trend but will be articulated on the dimensions and sub-dimensions recognized in the previous paragraph.

The sub-dimension of the *social connoted spaces* was certainly the most immediately recognizable within *Futura* (Figure 2).

Piazza del Nettuno presented itself scenically set up as a space with a strong brand connotation. A large writing “Digital School” resuming the colours – red and blue – and the font – a very showy one – used for the PNSD, had been placed on the square at the entrance to the main area, located in Palazzo Re Enzo, clearly suggesting that the principles of advertising underlying the coordinated image and branding strategies were pivotal. Moreover, in the whole area surrounding Palazzo Re Enzo, semi-spherical and transparent temporary structures, called *edu-bubbles*, were located. The bubbles suggested brightness and airiness: pneumatic structures enclosed only by a thin translucent membrane created an area in which air and light, existing and new spaces seemed intertwined (*fieldnotes*).

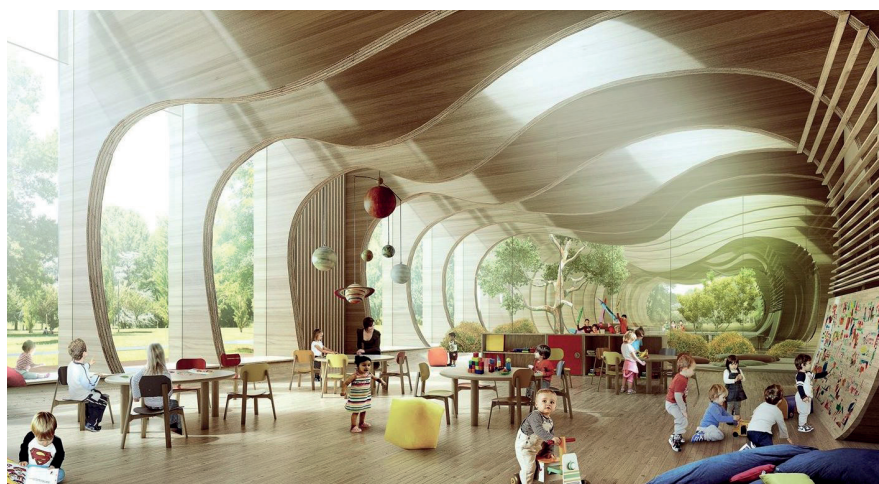
Used as extra locations for workshops and seminars aimed at small groups of participants, these “educational bubbles” were clearly inspired by some of the key concepts of digitalization – transparency, circularity, horizontality and lightness – going to connote, in a strong and consistent sense, with the aforementioned banner, the entire external space of the event. An “outside” that becomes an “inside”, a historic square interspersed with medieval buildings that becomes a lobby sponsored for the connection between exhibition areas. An interpenetration of in and out, of historic and technologic, of analogic and digital, of “new” and “old” which suggested a well-defined «representation of space» (Lefebvre, 1974).

The naming adopted for the different areas connotes the space in the same way: “agora”, “inspirational”, “stakeholders club” and “future zone”, without forgetting the “robot circus”, were conceived in a cultural frame and made with coherent and functional coordinated graphics to mark and represent the space with a clear identity (*fieldnotes*).

The centrality of *technological connoted spaces* is confirmed by the importance it assumes in the contents of some key-workshops, even through the engagement of notably charismatic performers. In particular:

in the “agora” area, dedicated to institutional conferences, the whole morning of the 20th January was dedicated to the workshop “Architecture makes school”, which attracted a large audience of people familiar with the topic and/or the persona. After interventions by MIUR managers, OECD representatives and School Leaders, in fact, Mario Cucinella, an internationally renowned architect (*Archistar*), explained that «architecture is the first form of education» and that, as evidenced by a research by Stanford University, «students learn better in well-designed classrooms, because the child’s attention depends on the proportion of CO₂ in the air of the class».

Figure 3. Whale Kindergarten in Guastalla (RE).



The rethinking of the school space and, more in general, the attempt of re-spatializing education, is traced through the exemplification of some projects of so-called “excellence”, such as his “*Asilo Balena*” (Whale Kindergarten), built in Guastalla (RE) after the earthquake of 2012. As Image 3 clearly shows, it is a space consisting of the parallel succession of fifty lamellar structural frames conceived like the “Pinocchio whale”. Each portal is shaped with harmonic forms that recall the internal anatomy of the great cetacean and determines the architectural rhythm both inside and outside, prolonging it on the front. The teaching spaces are interrupted by rest areas and by the winter garden and the rooms are perceived continuously, thanks to the flooring that rises up to lean against the sinuous shapes of the portals. In the “kindergarten” everything communicates with the outside, thanks to the large windows that collect light, becoming the occasion for sensorial experiences.

Everything is dominated by transparencies, which connect the interior with the exterior; wood and natural materials, which integrate eco-sustainability with the need for oral exploration of newborns; welcoming and symbolic shapes; close relationship with nature and its times.

The need to rethink the educational space and to re-spatialize education also concerns the higher educational levels, following the precept: “never more computer classrooms”. They are aesthetically unpleasant and not very functional: they identify a single space with a single function, while today we have realized that digital runs through and enables our whole existence. For this reason, IT infrastructures of common spaces should be realized, with the dissemination of personal computers in corridors and/or close to the stairs, to allow children to “work standing”, to give body to their idea or give vent to their curiosity while they are passing through. Finally, the workshop dedicated to the PNSD action #28 allows us to see how the rethinking of spaces is to be disseminated in all schools:

the innovative spaces for teaching «are not purely technological environments, but rich, creative and immersive ateliers». They «bring the outside world into the classroom and allow the emphasis to shift from the reproduction of knowledge to its construction». Creativity is enough to make them recycle furniture from old houses and differentiated seats, building them on their own or, where necessary, involving the parents of the pupils in different ways of sharing or financing (*fieldnotes*).

Figure 4. From analogic past to digital future.



The digital school does not live only in spaces “others”, but also in other *times*: it is the school of the future, not because it still has to come, but because it embodies the future that enters the present (*orientation of times*). It is an idea of time as progression from an obsolete past to a shining present (Figure 4).

This future, then, delivers to the present, through digital, its fortune and his intrinsic goodness: the question that often comes from speakers, in fact, is «what digital can do to improve the life of every school actor in each moment of the year?». This question is intrinsically connected to a specific and implicit *value of times*. It is precisely from this intrinsic and undisputed importance of digital that it is often highlighted the importance of teaching coding in schools of all levels, starting from elementary school: it has «infinite potential, because there is no limit to creativity».

Reflecting the rushed and “futuristic” nature of the exhibition, these “mantras” are understood and presented in urgent terms: «digital is the future... It’s everywhere... it’s modern». Through the look and feel of corporate TED talk’ style of presentation, one of the speakers affirmed: «Digital is all that we can represent with numbers: history is digital, Leopardi’s “Infinito” is digital, [indeed] we are all digital natives, because we all use a conventional language» (*fieldnotes*).

Figure 5. All is digital: we are here, but always mediated by digital technologies.



In Figure 5, we choose to show a kind of “digital silent party”, during which also a real in-site workshop is digitalized: a wi-fi headphones system allows participants to hear the speaker and virtualizes all the possible interactions. We can see that digital introduces a virtuous mechanism of change, improvement and problems solving. It is the result of the «thirsts for knowledge inherent in human nature» and, today, thanks to Moore’s Law, we can say that innovation, not only in electronics, but in through all our lives, is “exponential”. It grows vertiginously, from day to day, taking us where we would never have imagined we could arrive, allowing us to

realize our best intentions: to improve the world making it more creative and inclusive.

In several moments the main values that are associated with digital innovation have been solicited and brought out: better communication, sharing, transparency, but also openness, inclusiveness and creativity. These are the main terms that emerged from the focus groups during the “Co-design laboratory for schools websites” and from the word cloud projected on a maxi-screen following the real-time survey administered through the platform www.menti.com during the workshop “A digital entertainer in every school”. In general, digital seems to be constantly associated with transparency, quality and excellence. There are no problems presented at *Futura*, only solutions! Even the outcome of the MIUR working group on BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), in this context, is presented, in the words of the MIUR officer D. L., as an almost revelatory “moment of transparency” (*fieldnotes*).

The contrast with the “analogic” world is strong and dichotomous: analogic is all that cannot be reproduced equal to itself (the imperfections, the sensations, the sounds, the colours, etc.). This defective reality, analogical indeed, however, can be controlled and commanded. It is essential that young people become active producers of technology, through the learning of coding, because «with a USB cable or a 3D printer, the design from the PC can change to reality, can create reality». The analogy that tries to normalize this approach is the comparison with Gianni Rodari’s “invented endings”: the coding would allow the children’s creativity to be free, just like the fables of the famous Italian writer and pedagogue, who had the intuition to make his little real readers co-authors of his adventures. But the break that takes place by this way, although it remains hidden, is remarkable: the creative effort solicited by the latter was completely open and left the imagination completely free to express itself; while coding constrains creativity to the linearity of the code within which commands are written, to the objectifying thought of what is real only if it assumes a visible form, to the causality inherent in identifying a path made of instructions to be carried out to what is invented.

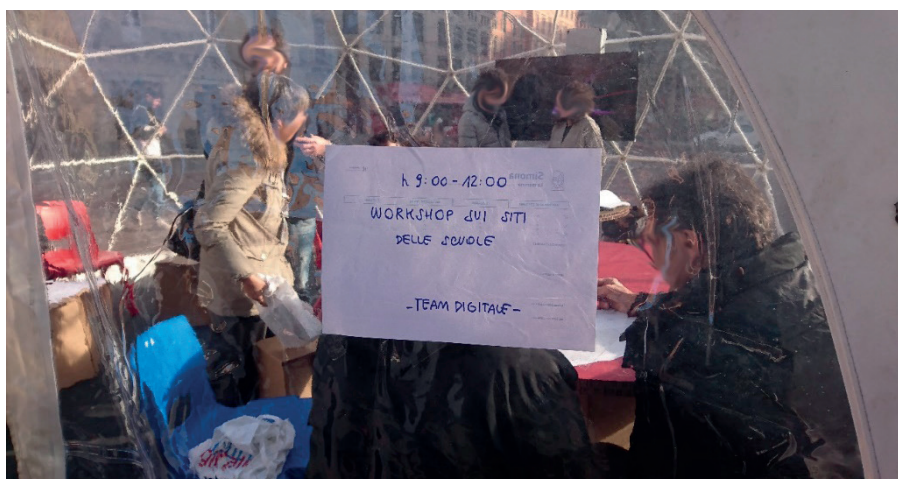
In a digital school, *technologies* are the main focus: they transform, empower and allow us to be “digital humans”. They are to be tamed as exotic, weird or sometimes dangerous animals in a circus, like in Figure 6. Our attention, in relation to this observational dimension, has focused on the links between the *technological practice*, referring to a non-discursive assemblage with artifacts, and the *technological speech*, referring to a discursive assemblage with them.

Figure 6. Technologies to be tamed: the robot circus.



The first thing that surprised us, in this sense, was to notice how often technological practices were not at all so simple and unproblematic: on many occasions, workshops have been delayed a lot for trivial technical problems (wi-fi repeatedly down, projectors on automatic stand-by and speakers unable to restart them, sound-check more difficult than expected, etc.). In addition, the calendar of appointments had been loaded on the platform eventbrite.it in order to manage the reservation of the available seats: in some cases, this loading was done incorrectly, as some booked events did not correspond, for times and places, to those actually realized. The “timetable revisions”, then, were communicated using (very analogic) paper and pen (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Paper and pencil in a digital bubble.



In this sense, during all workshops, mentioned technologies were conceived as essentially neutral, mere instruments, independent of the context and the use. An example is the “Co-design laboratory for school websites”. The designers who conducted it asked the working groups to complete a format. They had to answer themselves a question: what kind of assistance technology can give to teachers in every moment of their work? Assuming the neutrality of the same technological format and of the request, designers did not bother to supervise the activities of the groups: it turned out that the group under our observation, in order to absolve the task, compiled the format by including all the activities carried out during the year, *de facto* arguing their whole digitalization (*fieldnotes*).

The same designers, interacting on the theme of mobile-apps poorly used by parents to book appointments with teachers, showed their concern for what they consider “badly implemented” apps, not putting the problem in the least, even raised by teachers, that parents are not equipped with adequate skills for using these technologies.

The case of the “Kit:Cut project”, promoted by the MondoDigitale Foundation and awarded by the Agnelli Foundation, is an example of how technology as *speech* is proposed as a vehicle to improve learning in individual disciplines but becomes a discipline even more important of the others. The project, synthetically, is presented with this incipit: «we make story-telling (we teach history and geography) using 3D printers». Flying over the implications of the association between history, geography and the story-telling, the project’s goal is summarized in «we activate human capital, making it create educational material»: the pupils are called to learn the use of a 3D modelling software that will allow, using special 3D printer, to «design in groups and produce the same Garibaldi and Cavour they are studying: physical action facilitates learning and materials produced, then, remain at school, stimulating sharing and respect; while group work makes children to acquire skills that are very much in demand in the today world of work» (*fieldnotes*).

The inversion of values between learning how to use a software (or the so-called soft-skills useful in the world of work) and the study of the specific discipline is evident.

Finally, the dimension of *subjectivities* was the one that aroused us at most. In a general way, we have structured our observation of this dimension along the distinction between *autonomous and subjectified subjectivities*, collecting in each one the notes relating to the professional figures encountered. In particular, in the first sub-dimension are included all those figures who have placed themselves as main characters of the event and of the school reform in place. It is a kind professionalism that we could define

outside-school-spaces, at least until today. On more than one occasion, for example, we met designers. The speakers of the “Co-design laboratory for school websites” were designers, employees at the MIUR. Also the speaker of the Kit: Cut Project presented himself as a designer. Even the working materials used in the “Co-Design Laboratory”, instead of reporting the institutional signs of the Government, were branded with the logo of the “IT / Designers Association on the side of the citizens”.

These are subjectivities that are explicitly characterized by their extraneousness to the educational world: they ignore the functioning mechanisms of the school organization, they ignore the contents of education, they declare that they want to gather information from school professionals, because school is not their profession. Indeed, more precisely, suggesting that they are practitioners dispensing tips, tricks and other forms of useful advice: «we are designers: we collaborate with teachers who tell us their needs and we translate them into concrete projects». Also, in this sub-dimension, we noted:

The presence of university professors of computer science, according to which «digital is the essence of human beings and distinguishes us from animals»; but also of architects who, after discussing educational spaces, can make explicit the paradigm shift that underlies the need for new educational spaces: «we have now passed from the knowledge concentrated in the teacher to a knowledge that is elsewhere, on the internet, and the teacher must help children to reach it». There is obviously space for the start-uppers, such as D. R., serial entrepreneur, CEO & Co-Founder of «an engagement platform that helps the map and leverage the passions and skills of their members». He has been involved by MIUR in the realization of the on-line community for Digital Entertainers (*fieldnotes*).

Figure 8. Who are you?



Finally, as the badge represented in Image 8 shows, there are the real emerging subjectivities of the school world: born with the PNSD action #28, they are a fundamental investment of the MIUR, which allocates to them € 8.000.000 of the entire policy for each year. They talk about themselves as the true leaders of this digital revolution, those who “give a boost to innovation”: «we are people who believe in a school that can be different. If we feel a little lonely in our schools, we are less so on the platform»; not just computer technicians but those who carry on the change in the mentality of the school. As teachers, they are called to realize these innovative practices in their daily life: they do it “educating to emotion”; realizing immersive learning environments that finally allow «an education chosen by the children and according to the ideas of the teacher», because «innovation happens if [students] were free to play, to have fun, to experiment».

The subjectivity of Digital Entertainers allows us to move towards the sub-dimension of *subjectificated subjectivities*, which collects the subjectivities defined “by difference” at *Futura*. In fact, it is also worth paying attention to what was *not* been said at *Futura* and to those who were completely forgiven. These are pupils, teachers and their daily practices and problems. Pupils emerge as a real objects without reference at the bottom of things (Foucault 2002), at the centre of a re-definition of the «grids of specification» (*Ivi*, 46) that define their nature: from those who must be educated to those that «have all solutions in themselves and must only be facilitated in the knowledge of this enormous potential inherent in themselves». Other teachers, those less involved in the digital revolution, also emerge in the same way, in opposition to Digital Entertainers: «when colleagues complain, maybe for the salary, I answer: you chose this job, you knew that, now take your own responsibility». Or: «often [the other teachers] consider us as the technicians who have to make computers work, because they are not skilled, they are not in step with the PNSD revolution». In a few words, through the words of MIUR officer D. L.: «the Digital Entertainer is a designing project, [...] an investment to make the educational community work». To reshape teachers’ subjectivity.

4. Discussion

The name of the event – *Futura* – has been clearly conceived as a tribute to one of the most famous citizens of Bologna, the song singer-writer Lucio Dalla. However, it was inspired by the model and “recipes” proposed by the PNSD for the “future” school, the school of tomorrow. In fact, it explicitly positions the event in terms of technology-based change, future times and improvement. The *pharmaka* – in the double meaning of “remedies” and “poisons” – proposed as “treatment” to be administered to the obsolete and

gasping “analogical school” – appear fully informed to the regimes of truth that govern the contemporary processes of endogenous privatization (Ball & Youdell, 2007). That is: a progressive and inexorable importation of logics, values, methods, imaginaries, aesthetic models, professionalism, practices and techniques from business management into the public sector.

Starting from these premises, the objective of the contribution was therefore to try to “re-narrate” and “re-contextualize” (Rorty, 1991) this event focusing attention on some dimensions suggested by the critical rethinking of the epistemology of modernist social sciences: *spaces*, *times*, *technologies* and *subjectivities*. The main analytical points collected during the ethnographic observation and their analysis in terms of *diagrammatic* are summarized in Tab 2.

Table 2. From Futura to PNSD.

DIMENSIONS	FUTURA EVENT	DIAGRAMMATIC PNSD
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent is beautiful • Removing inside/outside separation • Architecture makes school • No more computer classrooms • Creative Ateliers 	Circulation
Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future is today • History is digital (future is yesterday) • Innovation is exponential • Digital is transparent • Analogic vs Digital 	Time Kairologization
Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un-problematized technological practice • Technology is neutral, instrumental, independent from the context and its use • Human Capital activation 	Means Universalization
Subjectivities <i>Subjectified</i> <i>Subjectivities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designers • Informatics Full Professors • Start-uppers • Digital Entertainers • Pupils • Teachers 	Multiplication Renovation Professionalization

Presented and conceived as an opportunity for studies, reflections, comparisons and exchanges on digital innovation for the Italian school professionals, the *Futura* event – as reconstructed from the ethnographic notes and the visual materials collected – seems firstly to reflect a process of re-definition of the educational *spaces* within the school system. As we can see by

looking at the central box of the first line of Tab. 2, this process moves from the architectural principles of transparency, eco-sustainability, design, natural light, innovative furnishings, immersive environments and recyclable materials to reshape classrooms and school buildings. As synthesized in the right box of the same line, we can say that the dimension of spaces seems to perform the diagrammatic function of *circulation*: as shown by Foucault (2005) in relation to governmental dispositifs, it refers to the blurring of boundaries and the prominence assumed by the regulation of flows according to a principle of statistical normality, rather than the determination of quantities of substances according to their lawfulness.

On the second line of the table, the dimension of *times*, instead, allows us to highlight the eschatological and soteriological nature of discourses that support the need for digital innovation: starting from the application of the “Moore’s Law”, extended as axiom of the exponential innovation; and finishing with the disentangling of the widespread “digital novelty”, which seems to express that «diffusionist optimism» (Pitzalis et al., 2016) which postulates a causal relationship between technologies, educational innovation and improvement of school performances. In terms of *diagrammatic*, the right box on the same line underlines that the dimension of times seems to actualize the function of the *kairologization* of time, that is the replacement of the chronological and historical sequence of periods with the instantaneization of the present and its repeated relationalization to the end of time and to eternity. This function promotes a sort of “exceptionality” of the present day or, in Walter Benjamin’s words, «every instant [becomes] the narrow gate through which the Messiah can pass» (Benjamin, 2001, p.86).

The dimension of *technologies*, on the third line, resumes how they are co-implicated in practices of which we have grasped the widespread and intrinsic (not problematized) problematics and the presumed obvious neutrality and naturalness: this emerges, for example, in the repeated inconveniences connected to an incorrect use of them; as well as in the structuring of spaces and connected models of (non-)interaction in some workshops that used innovative means. That is to say that this dimension actualizes a true *means universalization*: the digital emerges as a universal tool, useful for every purpose and so crucial in every process that its intrinsic value becomes greater than that of the ends for which this mean could be employed. It is the «supposed universalism of the means, in opposition to the historical particularism of the ends» (Friedland & Alford 1991, p. 383).

Finally, on the fourth line, we are able to highlight the emergence of new subjectivities for school professionals: from the birth of the Digital Entrepreneurs, very main subjectivity of the whole policy; to the significance given to professionals from outside the educational world (architects, designers, start-uppers, academics); passing through the reconfiguration of roles

and functions of teachers – no longer understood as *magister* (Hirschhorn, 1993) but as facilitators – in the assemblage with the learner and the digital technologies. Diagrammatically, it gives substance to subjectivities that are *multiple*, *renewed* and *professionalized*. This point also signals a perfect correspondence with what has been highlighted so far: multiplicities to be circulated; to renew the “old”, “obsolete” and “past” existing subjectivities; thanks to a kind of professionalism about specific technical means.

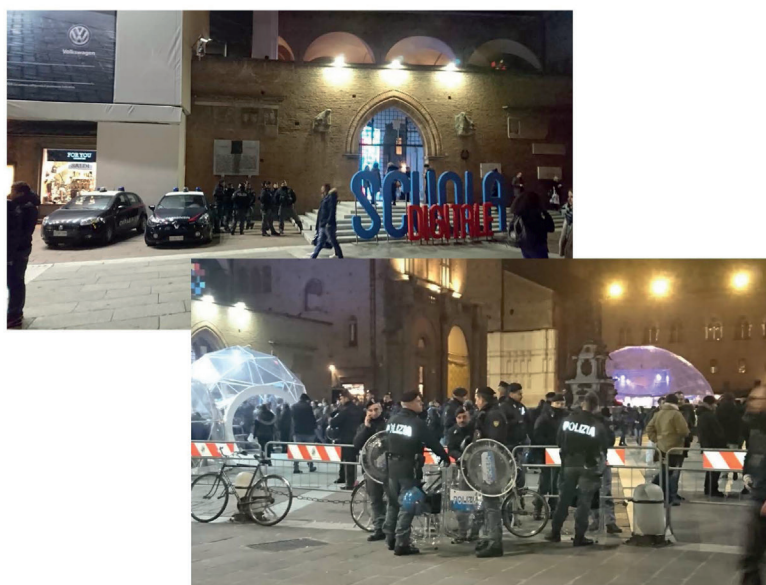
5. Conclusions

The aim of this work was to address the Nation Plan for Digital School (PNSD) in practice through the empirical exploration of *spaces*, *times*, *technologies* and *subjectivities* involved in the *Futura* event. Our *in situ* ethnographic analysis mainly focused on the ongoing processes of making digital of educational subjectivations. They were interpreted as complex series of assemblages among (parts of) humans, spaces, discourses and artifacts, which have been constituted and constitute themselves through certain practices of power and games of truth in the determined contingent context of the “policy event” observed. We finally argued that the observation and analysis of the *Futura* micro-dispositif allows us to shed light on some aspects of the PNSD as a macro-formation of policy and, in particular, on its power effects (its *diagrammatic*) on the conception of the whole educational practice by school professionals.

More precisely, we shed light on the attempt, performed by PNSD, to governmentalize (Foucault, 2007) the still disciplinary (Foucault, 1977) school. In fact, the PNSD seems to bring a discontinuity/fracture into the world of educational policies: it aims to change the perspective of educational system from the focus on the production of disciplined and lettered subjects to the «structur[ation of] the field of possible actions» (Foucault, 1989, p. 249) for all the subjects involved. This shifting has also other implications for the Italian politics of education: in fact, it represents the new main gateway to the endogenous privatization process of the Italian educational system, as it is already operating in other Western countries (Ball & Youdell, 2007). In fact, it is possible to identify a deep intertwining relation between the process of governmentalization of the state and the one of marketization, through which the exchange of the market presents itself as a «principle of veridiction» (Foucault, 2008) that is alternative to the one of legality. So, it is on the market that these «new processes of subjectivation constitute and regulate themselves, settling on an autonomy that rides reasons of interests and valuing a freedom that must be constantly returned back» (Chignola, 2014, p. 200).

Anyway, dispositifs are multi-layered and one layer could also conflict and struggle against the other: outside the doors of the horizontal, open and governmental *Futura* event, a deployment of policemen were ready to stop any possible strike or contestation: are we facing a really digital or a still disciplinary school? (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Digital... or (still) disciplinary?



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