

Abstract: The ‘development of individual capacities’, in addition to the ‘education of responsible citizens’ and the ‘preparation for work’, constitutes one of the most important objectives to be achieved by education systems and, in this sense, makes up one of the main planks of that which Dale (1989) terms ‘mandates for the education system’. In this article, we centre our attention on the ‘development of individual capacities’ in an attempt to map out the effects of the simultaneous pressure, top-down and bottom-up, that has been increasingly brought to bear on the nation-state and on the education system. This work aims at challenging the dichotomy constructed by way of an analysis of the implications, for both pedagogy and the development of individual capacities, of the development and consolidation of a network state and society (Castells, 1996).