



The Institution of Neoliberal Rationality in Brazilian Educational Policies based on the “Keep Learning” and “Learn to Learn” Principles

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Abstract: Considering the current neoliberal context and its implications in the field of education, the objective is to examine the discursive genesis of the “learn to learn” principle that privileges “keep learning”, pointed out by educational policies for high school. For this, based on theoretical and methodological bases in the studies of Educational Policies and Curriculum, a historical-documental analysis is carried out. The materiality chosen concerns the legal frameworks that followed the National Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDBEN, 1996). It is observed that the constitution of the neosubject, in a flexible, responsible and autonomous way, resides in the promulgation of LDBEN and is gradually supported in the educational and curricular policies that underlie the Common National Curriculum Base-High School. The meaning assumed by Brazilian education today is in line with market pr, which internalize and value assumptions such as entrepreneurship and self-entrepreneurship. Thus, neoliberal rationality tends to consolidate itself through the individuation and flexible autonomy of the formative itinerary aimed at high school. In this process, the institution of neosubject subjects throughout life is encouraged.

Keywords: lifelong learning; high school; neoliberalism; educational policies

La institución de la racionalidad neoliberal en las políticas educativas brasileñas basadas en los principios de “seguir aprendiendo” y “aprender a aprender”

Resumen: Considerando el contexto neoliberal actual y sus implicaciones en el campo de la educación, el objetivo es examinar la génesis discursiva del principio “aprender a aprender” según el cual los privilegios “continúan aprendiendo”, señalado por las políticas educativas para la escuela secundaria. Para ello, con base teórica y metodológica en los estudios de Políticas Educativas y Currículo, se realiza un análisis histórico-documental. La materialidad elegida se refiere a los marcos legales posteriores a la Ley de Lineamientos y Bases de la Educación Nacional (LDBEN, 1996). Se observa que la constitución de la disciplina del neo-sujeto, de manera flexible, responsable y autónoma, reside en la promulgación de la LDBEN y es apoyada paulatinamente por las políticas educativas y curriculares que sustentan la Base Nacional Común Curricular–Escuela Secundaria. El significado que asume hoy la educación brasileña está en línea con lo que proclama el mercado, en el que la intención es interiorizar y fortalecer supuestos como el emprendimiento y el autoemprendimiento. Así, la racionalidad neoliberal tiende a consolidarse a través de la individualización y autonomía flexible del itinerario formativo de la escuela secundaria. En este proceso, la institución de neo-sujetos de aprendizaje permanente.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje permanente; escuela secundaria; neoliberalismo; políticas educativas

A instituição da racionalidade neoliberal nas políticas educacionais brasileiras a partir dos princípios “continuar aprendendo” e “aprender a aprender”

Resumo: Considerando o contexto neoliberal no presente e suas implicações no campo da educação, objetiva-se examinar a gênese discursiva do princípio “aprender a aprender” que incide no “continuar aprendendo”, conforme apontam as políticas educacionais para o Ensino Médio. Para tanto, alicerçado teórica e metodologicamente nos estudos das Políticas Educacionais e de Currículo, procede-se à análise histórico-documental. A materialidade elegida concerne em marcos legais subsequentes à Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDBEN, 1996). Observa-se que a constituição do neossujeito aprendente, de modo flexível, responsabilizado e autônomo reside na promulgação da LDBEN e é referendado paulatinamente em políticas educacionais e curriculares que fundamentam a Base Nacional Comum Curricular-Ensino Médio. O sentido tomado pela educação brasileira na atualidade está em consonância com o que apregoa o mercado, no qual o intuito é internalizar e potencializar pressupostos como o empreendedorismo e o empresariamento de si. Assim, a racionalidade neoliberal tende a consolidar-se por intermédio da individuação e da autonomia flexibilizada do itinerário formativo pensado para o Ensino Médio. Fomenta-se, nesse processo, a instituição de neossujeitos aprendentes ao longo da vida.

Palavras-chave: aprendizagem ao longo da vida; ensino médio; neoliberalismo; políticas educacionais

Study Immersion

This article aims to examine how neoliberal rationality systematically enters Brazilian pedagogical thought through educational and curricular policies designed for high school — the last stage of basic education. Thus, within the scope of this research, the aim is to investigate the institution of the neoliberal principles “keep learning” and “learning to learn” that have gradually figured in Brazilian curriculum policies since their first inference in 1996. This date is marked by the enactment of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN; Brazil, 1996), as analyzed in the course of the study.

The constitution and dissemination of neoliberal rationality present in laws and decrees impute to the young individual the “learning to learn” by effect of the principle “keep learning”.

It should be noted that the concept of “learning to learn” was coined by anthropologist and social scientist Gregory Bateson (1973), who defines three basic ways for learning to take place: primary learning (protolearning), deuterolearning (internal process of learning) and tertiary learning (consolidation of the ability to model and constitute one’s own learning).

These learning processes, especially tertiary learning, as well as individuation and autonomy, juxtapose and converge with market principles. The concept of individuation refers to the method by which the neo-subject is able to adapt autonomously to different situations pertinent to the world of work. This exercise has its milestone in school, more precisely when entering high school, because from the flexibility of the formative itinerary, students will be able to model the contents of their curriculum according to their own aptitudes and interests.

In line with the marketing aegis, it is noted that this model of socioeconomic management has been consolidated since the 1980s and, above all, in the 1990s. Consequently, it starts to govern curricular policies in Brazil. Thus, it is evident that the neoliberalization of the educational field is characterized by

(...) the privatization and/or privatization of sectors of the economy that were under public control and the deregulation of the financial sector of the economy. These two major mottos marked the return of the main pillars of liberal economism at the center of capitalism from the 1980s onwards, especially with the reforms of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Britain. Neoliberal reformism is, therefore, understood as the reduction and restriction of the areas of action of the State, with a view to allocating the wealth produced by a given country primarily to the pleasure and service of the rentism of international financial capital. In developing countries, inflationary control and the public debt system are even more significantly the pillars of this structure built by neoliberalism. Thus, in addition to being an economic doctrine, neoliberalism also became a hegemonic ideological force at the center of global capitalism from the 1980s onwards and, in a way, imposed and exported as a model for the peripheral regions of capitalism, such as newly redemocratized countries in South America and decolonized nations in Asia and Africa. In these regions, many of the rulers elected on social-democratic or even left-wing platforms have leaned, to some degree, to the pillars of hegemonic neoliberal doctrine. (Costa & Silva, 2019, p. 5).

According to the American philosopher Michael Sandel (2021), free-market theories focused in the 1980s through the concept of economic freedom, which tends to supplant social welfare policies under the aegis and defense of free competition. At first, it concerns companies and, later, it is shifted to the individual, who starts to manage himself in the same way.

Perhaps the greatest influence on free-market liberalism in the 21st century was promoted by Friedrich A. Hayek, an Austrian-born philosopher and economist. A source of inspiration to Margaret Thatcher and other proponents of laissez-faire capitalism, Hayek opposed government efforts to reduce economic inequality, argued against progressive taxation, and saw the welfare state as antagonistic to freedom (Sandel, 2021, p. 185).

In this scenario, engendered in the 1980s and consolidated after the 1990s, manufactured production began to be managed in autonomous collaboration networks oriented by demands, which favored the ephemeral based on the assumption of innovation and the use of information technologies in their labor and consumption relations.

From the 1980s and (especially) the 1990s onwards, a second-generation presenteeism took hold, underlying neoliberal globalization and the computer revolution. These two series of phenomena combine to ‘fulfill space-time’, elevating the logic of brevity. (Lipovetsky & Charles, 2004, p. 76)

Added to this, the old social and labor relations based on Fordism no longer reflect the current configuration of society, since the socioeconomic rearrangement is established with the advent of Toyotism (network and on-demand production) and the globalization of the production of goods. The demand for manufactured artifacts requires flexible labor to meet the needs of the factory. In this production model, inventory is reduced in order to avoid losses caused by financial crises and increasingly volatile market trends susceptible to the dictates of fashion.

In this context, it is important to note that Toyotism does not abandon the specialization characteristic of Fordism (serial production and storage). The training of this neoprofessional aims to make him flexible and multi-specialized – a specialist of himself (Brunel, 2004). With this, it is possible for the neo-subject to act in different sectors of the economy. By reallocating the employee, according to demand, productivity would supposedly be enhanced, which in the past would have been a deviation of function. The precariousness of work is disguised through the assumption of self-flexibility, something that is conceived in school from the flexible modulation of the curriculum for high school.

In the face of the neoliberal paradigm that is being established, the professional gap is a constant reality:

(...) Survival entails an orientation on the question of how one can adapt and adjust to the ever-changing circumstances, considering what life provokes to explore whether it is worthwhile to adapt to the circumstances that present themselves, or whether the first task is actually to try to create better circumstances. (Biesta, 2018, p. 26)

It is noteworthy that “creating better circumstances” is interpreted in this research as the ability to reinvent oneself in the face of contingencies, in other words: to undertake oneself. From this point of view, the generation of employment and income guides the processes of exclusion and social (dis)affiliation (Castel, 2005, Paugam, 2003) of individuals who do not fit the neoliberal paradigm. The “failure of the self” is internalized from blaming (Courpasson, 1997) and self-responsibility articulated with meritocracy, since the number of people who believe in work as the main driver for social ascension is increasing (Sandel, 2021). Therefore, its inverse is also reflected, understanding that failure is the result of incompetence in life choices and management and would not correspond to society or the State, being something intrinsic to the individual.

Moreover, in neoliberalism, this neo-subject is that of voluntary self-exploitation, because he believes that he is free when working from the perspective of a company – a micro-enterprise of himself. Subjugated to goals and results, this enterprising subject, therefore, by failing to “(...) performance neoliberal society, instead of questioning society or the system, holds itself responsible and is ashamed of it” (Han, 2018, p. 16).

Through autonomy, there is a shift from responsibility to accountability, which affects the retreat of the State and society in relation to the neo-subject who is impelled to the burden of his life choices. Responsibility lies with intrapersonal commitment or commitment to a cause, since responsibility denotes a sentence resulting from certain attitudes assumed by the individual – towards himself.

Insertion in the market becomes a movement of the individual and no longer a responsibility of the Government. Students, under the aegis of entrepreneurship, end up impelled to take responsibility for their life choices from the moment they enter high school. In this formative stage, the young person is called upon to deliberate on the composition of his curriculum aligned with life management with a view to articulating autonomy, flexibility and responsibility.

The allocation of this *new* learner in the world of work based on their curricular training is based on flexibility and self-responsibility based on what is established by the National

Common Curricular Base (BNCC) for the New High School (Brazil, 2018). The security of full employment of the past does not exist today due to the technological changes that are reconfigured and manifested in the labor market, which are equally contingent. Added to this is the planned obsolescence of artifacts that influence labor relations, which are increasingly dynamic, precarious, and disposable. Thus, in the current conjuncture imposed by neoliberalism, the stability of the worker is weakened due to competition among themselves and among all, which results in the precariousness of the individual¹. Although attractive, the flexibility of the training process, based on self-entrepreneurship, directly influences the “(...) deregulation of the labor relationship, absence of rights” (Tiddi, 2002, p. 75). From this perspective, Barbosa (2011, p. 122) understands that nowadays,

(...) the heterogeneity of the working class takes on much more abyssal contours than it did in the Fordist period. The obviousness of this situation is manifested in the coexistence of the employment contract for an indefinite period and various types of atypical employment contracts, configured by the logic of productive flexibilization; that is, all those contracts that do not fall under the traditional condition of Fordist wage-earning, such as, for example, temporary work, part-time, outsourcing (subcontracting) and apprenticeship (trainees). In addition to informal work, which in the countries of the capitalist periphery, such as Brazil, has been present for a long time and has only recently become a hindrance for the countries of advanced capitalism.

The objective of educational policies is to make the students' educational itinerary more flexible, as is already the case in social, work and consumption relations. “The new paradigms encompassing both the labour market and that of education and training, ‘long life training’ and ‘employability’, are significant strategic modalities” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 333). Thus, it contributes to the resignification of the individual's identity who, through individuation, begins to privilege an education directed to meet particular interests in the opportunity to ascend in the social and economic sphere. In spite of this thought, the Education Development Plan (PDE; Brazil, 2007) points to an autonomous teaching that is capable of articulating socialization and individuation of institutions and students.

The autonomy of schools and networks, however, is not original, but derives from the autonomy of the learner consequent to the process of socialization and individuation. When the latter is threatened by the former, the right of the school and the right of the learner come into conflict. There is an antinomy here, right against right. In education, the right of the learner takes precedence, in which case a reparative action is justified (Brazil, 2007, p. 40).

The right to individualized education and individuation is guaranteed by law, as mentioned above in the PDE (Brazil, 2007, p. 40). Regarding these tensions present in the field of education, Professor Tomaz Tadeu da Silva (2005) highlights the issue of neoliberal rationality, which, by mobilizing different types of knowledge and knowledge, aims to institute and naturalize competition among themselves and between everyone. In addition, the unique composition of authentic, autonomous and flexible individuals configures a permanent learning that is fostered by the logic of entrepreneurship and self-entrepreneurship.

This process, which intertwines neoliberalism and education, has its milestone in the socio-liberal government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC; 1994-2002) and is strengthened during the center-left mandates of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff

¹ The advance of neoliberalism in Brazil occurs in a forceful way, being criticized by the International Monetary Fund, as exposed in an article published by BBC Brasil, on June 30, 2016: The strange day when the IMF criticized neoliberalism. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/geral-36668582>.

(2011-2016); and tends to be consolidated and exacerbated in the neoconservative administrations of Michel Temer (2016-2018) and Jair Bolsonaro (2019).

In Brazil, market rationality is articulated with the public agenda and government policies that are independent of ideologies professed by presidential regimes. In the FHC government, for example, there was the control of inflation and the expansion of public schools; however, it occurred concomitantly with the continuity of the national economic opening to the foreign market in addition to the privatization of strategic state-owned companies for the development of the nation – Vale do Rio Doce, Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional, among others. These actions, which were supposedly aimed at the socioeconomic restructuring of the State, began during the governments of Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1992) and Itamar Franco (1992-1994). Moreover, the relations between the State and society have been gradually re-signified since the 1990s, assuming the capitalist character embodied by neoliberal rationality. The socio-political and economic composition assumed is expressed in the harmony between the LDBEN (Brazil, 1996) and the orientation of international organizations (OCDE, FMI and World Bank) for basic education, especially in peripheral countries.

In the twilight of the 2000s, the center-left governments (2003-2016) took over the management of the national executive power. Affirmative policies, such as the University for All Program (ProUni), Bolsa Família and the expansion of the Family Health Program were important in the fight against social inequality. Even so, these actions were not enough to reduce the concentration of income in the country, given that during the Lula government (2003-2010), banking institutions contracted profit records – eight times higher than in the previous government, reaching the level of 199 billion reais.² It is noted that neoliberalism adapts and intertwines with the different ideologies of government in order to maximize its profits through the increase in the production of consumer goods and services, combined with the precariousness of labor relations.

The previous discussion substantiates the analytical subsequence of this article, which has as its theme the association between neoliberalism and education in the field of curricular policies. In the continuity of the study, the theoretical and methodological contribution used in the scrutiny of materiality are presented. Then, the influence of neoliberal rationality in the field of education is investigated, as well as the basis of this thought in the proposition of policies, laws, and educational guidelines designed for the curriculum of the New High School, which is configured from the principles “keep learning” and “learn to learn”.

Theory and Method

This research is circumscribed in the studies of educational and curriculum policies and aims to examine the relationship between neoliberal rationality and education, expressed in legal guidelines designed for high school, in the period that comprises the advent of LDBEN (Brazil, 1996) and the enactment of BNCC-High School (Brazil, 2018). In view of this, the conceptual tools used in this work are based on the thought of the French philosopher Michel Foucault. Their studies provide the necessary reading key to understand how the biopolitical process of self-management develops, which is established through a set of strategies that aim to govern individuals and the population (Foucault, 1996, 2008b).

² On this topic, there is also an article originally published by Aguinaldo Novo, in the newspaper O Globo (26-02-2011), only for subscribers, but available for reading at the Instituto Humanitas Unisinos (IHU UNISINOS): Banks had record profits in the Era Lula: R\$199 billion, February 27, 2011. Available at: [http://www.ihu.unisinos.br/noticias/40984-bancos-tiveram-lucro-record-na-era-lula-r\\$-199-Bills](http://www.ihu.unisinos.br/noticias/40984-bancos-tiveram-lucro-record-na-era-lula-r$-199-Bills).

For analysis purposes, in addition to the aforementioned LDBEN (Brazil, 1996), the National Curriculum Parameters for High School - PCNEM (Brazil, 2000), the PDE (Brazil, 2007), the General National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education - DCN (Brazil, 2013) and the National Education Plan - PNE 2014/2024 (Brazil, 2015) were listed, because these legal frameworks culminated in the elaboration of the BNCC-EM (Brazil, 2013) 2018)⁴. The materiality chosen denotes the intention of endorsing and expanding the influence of the market in the field of education, especially in the curriculum designed for high school.

Thus, in the process of scrutinizing the materials, the following terms were chosen as categories of analysis: “learning to learn”, “keep learning” high school, curricular flexibility, formative itinerary, life management, individuation, autonomy and responsibility – which is understood here as accountability. The first analytical movement examined the entry of business thought in Brazil from the second half of the 1990s, more precisely in the period between the promulgation of the LDBEN (Brazil, 1996) and the last year of the FHC government, in 2002. Afterwards, the policies subsequent to the 2000s were analyzed. Then, in the continuity of the study, the incidence of business rationality present in the legal frameworks elaborated with a focus on high school after 1996 is highlighted.

By choosing these empirical documents, it is intended to identify which forces operate in the constitution of these official guidelines. It is emphasized that the institution of these curricular policies converges in strategies of domination, whose intent is to establish networks of control that underlie discursive practices that aim at the production of individuals within a certain logic. In this case, it obeys neoliberal rationality.

According to Foucault’s notes (1996, p. 52), to “(...) That a class becomes dominant, that it secures its domination, and that this domination reproduces itself, these are the effects of a number of effective, systematic tactics that work within grand strategies that ensure that domination.” By “dominant class” we mean the business community that, in the field of education, consists of formatting the individual’s conduct within the scope and starting from the school curriculum designed for High School³. The market’s interest in the school is justified by the capacity that education assumes in the process of subjectivizing the social fabric. Thus, these discursive practices embodied by the economic elite gradually permeate the individual and the collective, juxtaposing them in neoliberal society. The manifestation of this *modus operandi*, which stems from the neoliberal conjecture and gives rise to specific knowledges articulated with other pre-existing ones, is re-signified and replicated through discursiveness that crosses educational policies. In order to better understand how this process is established, when examining the empirical documents, we resort to the intention of

(...) to make the rules of formation of concepts, the modes of succession, chaining and coexistence of utterances appear, is faced with the problem of epistemological structures; studying the formation of objects, the fields in which they emerge and are specified, also studying the conditions of appropriation of discourses, is faced with the analysis of social formations. (Foucault, 2008a, p. 235)

In view of this, it is necessary to observe how self-government influences the “(...) ‘self-work’, ‘self-realization’, ‘self-responsibility’” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 343). At present, these exercises

³ It should be noted that the discussions pointed out in this article regarding the BNCC-EM (Brasil, 2018) date back to what was elaborated in Law No. 13,415, of February 16, 2017 (Brasil, 2017), which defined the training itineraries and the minimum workload for the New High School. These deliberations were also present in the first version of the BNCC, in 2017. Thus, as this is an analysis focused on high school, it was decided to analyze exclusively the BNCC-EM.

of the self-emerge from educational and curricular policies combined under the aegis of neoliberalism. In its calculation, the objective is to gradually format the conduct of individuals within a given rationality (Foucault, 1996). Regarding self-government, Dardot & Laval (2016, p. 332) understand that in the process between the “(...) the governance of itself and the governance of companies, the company defines a new ethic, that is, a certain inner disposition, a certain ethos that must be embodied with a work of vigilance over oneself and that the evaluation procedures are responsible for reinforcing and verifying.” From what weaves the term ethos, it is evident that this concept expresses “(...) a certain way of being and acting, the result of processes by which each one learns to see himself, to reflect on his own actions, to operate transformations about himself” (Dal’Igna & Fabris, 2015, p. 78).

By appropriating education, the Brazilian business community aspires to develop strategies that intend to subjectivize individuals according to the demands of international organizations (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Bank and International Monetary Fund, among others) responsible for instigating global policies of large-scale evaluation. When analyzing how market rationality imprints its discourses in the field of education, it is important to observe how intensely this method is configured in games of power and knowledge.

I need to distinguish between power relations as strategic games between freedoms—strategic games that cause some to try to determine the conduct of others, to which others try to respond by not letting their conduct be determined or by determining the conduct of others in return—and states of domination, which are what is generally called power. (Foucault, 2006, p. 285)

From this marketing perspective, the authenticity and autonomy of the individual are promoted within and from the curriculum. Through the promotion of these precepts, we seek to re-signify the way students perceive and constitute themselves both in society and in the world of work. Entrepreneurial thinking is inserted in the field of education through the increase of curricular policies, which do not aim to overlap or break with pedagogical-educational thinking, but to merge and transfigure it to market rationality, that is, to make students think and conduct themselves similarly to a company.

The Neoliberal Inference in Educational Policies (1996-2003)

The dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the 1980s and 1990s marked the “triumph of capitalism”, which demanded the characterization of new social practices, work, and consumption that have impacted the field of education. The formative process designed for the *new* learner aims at social development and critical awareness; however, it privileges preparation for the world of work and the generation of employment and income. This does not mean that there is a need for the expansion or expansion of technical schools, but rather the design of a subjectivation that corroborates the institution of a neoliberal rationality based on self-entrepreneurship. Because it is essential for the individual to acquire the ability to be flexible in the face of contingencies and, thus, forge himself in a continuum *of* learning — for life. This exercise of the self begins with the decision-making regarding the modeling of curricular contents by the student when entering the New High School.

Between 1996 and 2000, the composition of a common curriculum capable of encompassing the municipalities and states of the federation was conceived. The intention to establish a national curriculum guideline aims to “(...) a common basic education to be observed in the curricular proposals for municipal or state elementary education or in the school unit

itself, had, as a counterpart, the non-mandatory nature of the PCN” (Bonamino & Martínez, 2002, pp. 372-373). This opportunity stems from the guiding character present in the National Curriculum Parameters - High School (Brazil, 2000), whose practices are not imposing. Each school institution would be responsible for developing its own teaching plan, having in the PCNEM the necessary contribution for the elaboration of its Pedagogical Political Project. It should be noted that this predilection does not exempt the PCNEM from a political intention that, even implicitly, aims to institute competencies and skills a priori in the students.

These are defined in terms of knowledge and skills useful for the functioning of the economy — with reference to the labor market and competition — and for flexible adaptations to changing conditions. As a result, education systems around the world are increasingly similar. (Biesta, 2018, p. 26)

As mentioned above, this thinking based on knowledge and skills that are “useful” for the market corroborates item 5.1 set forth in the PCNEM (Brazil, 2000, p. 92), in which the curricular organization and the pedagogical proposal designed for the formation of the individual should “(...) linking education to the world of work and social practice; be able to keep learning; prepare for work and the exercise of citizenship; have the flexibility to adapt to new occupancy conditions.” The advent of the PCNEM provided a peculiar look of the business community and the government in relation to high school, as this is the final stage of the school training process of the students. Upon completion, the student will need to enjoy competencies and skills related to the propensity to keep learning. The neo-subject will have to adapt to the different realities of work and occupation imposed by the characteristic presentification of neoliberal times, which is praised in the PCNEM in two distinct moments:

(...) the development of skills to continue learning, autonomously and critically, at more complex levels of studies.

(...) I - development of the ability to learn and continue learning, intellectual autonomy and critical thinking, in order to be able to continue studies and to adapt flexibly to new conditions of occupation or improvement. (Brazil, 2000, p. 101)

Therefore, among the competencies praised in the PCNEM, the development of the ability to “keep learning” is highlighted, which, in turn, requires the young person to be flexible in the face of market demands and constant improvement. In other words, it means to keep up-to-date and attractive to the world of work. In this method, performance and performance are paramount.

This process began with the enactment of the LDBEN (Brazil, 1996), which advocated the flexibility of the curriculum of the Brazilian education systems. According to Santos & Diniz-Pereira (2016), the first attempt to standardize the curriculum was established in the post-military period (1964-1985). This homogenization aimed to articulate the “keep learn” with the possibility of flexibilization of the formative itinerary. It is understood that “(...) the educated person is capable of learning permanently.” (R. Silva, 2018, p. 561). Therefore, *the neo-subject* could, in theory, define his/her/their education through the formatting of his/her/their knowledge, constituted through the selection of contents according to market needs and/or his/her/their own desires.

According to the provisions of section IV, item II, article 35, alluding to high school, “(...) the basic preparation for work and citizenship of the learner, to keep learning, so as to be able to adapt flexibly to new conditions of occupation or subsequent improvement” (Brazil, 1996). It should be noted that this same passage *ipsis litteris* is present in the PCNEM (Brazil,

2000), as mentioned above. It is inferred, then, the opportunity for a teaching based on the rationality of the market in which it is engendered within the scope and from the LDBEN. In view of this, it is evident that a considerable portion of its articles are only transposed to other subsequent legal frameworks in order to endorse the government's position in line with the business community.

This new social reality, which has been consolidated since the 1990s, aims to forge individuals within what neoliberal rationality advocates. If in the first half of the 20th century there was class consciousness, in which the employee discerned his condition as a wage-earner and the separation between employee and employer was translucent, in the present, these relations are diluted and confused. Through the discursive basis of self-entrepreneurship, the contemporary individual dissociates himself from the Marxist understanding of classical labor and union collective representation and begins to conceive himself as an associate or collaborator of the company.

Investment in human capital remains, but this process becomes an individualized action rather than an institutional one. The "employee" configures his training according to what he wants for himself and, similar to the management of a company, conducts himself according to the contingencies and demands of the market. The Fordist conception in which the worker perceived himself as part of the manufacturing machine, as in the past, does not combine the socioeconomic reality of today. The result of these discursiveness manifests itself more strongly in labor relations. The precariousness of employment that is engendered under the risk assumed in certain life choices is blamed and naturalized by the individual himself through education, which shapes the conduct of himself under the neoliberal spectrum.

This accountability is consolidated and propagated through autonomy in life management, which begins with the curricular modeling listed by the student during high school. On this issue, Dardot & Laval (2016, p. 327) understand that, in this process, the "(...) *distance* between the individual and the company that employs him. He must work for his own efficacy, for the intensification of his effort, as if this conduct came from himself, as if it were commanded to him from within by an imperious order of his own desire, which he cannot resist." In this assumption, the development of human capital is articulated with the socioeconomic model and school education that "(...) consistent with the 'capital configured in the child', may be the key to an economic theory of population" (Schultz, 1973, p. 9). It is in this sense that the interest of the business community in education is founded, more precisely in the training of the individual still of school age. By capturing schools and inferring itself in educational and curriculum policies, the business community permeates and re-signifies social, work and consumer relations. From this point of view, it should be noted that

(...) education is linked to biopolitics and to a certain form of neoliberal governmentality, namely: the one that has been instituted in the United States of America since the beginning of the 1960s, particularly under the influence of the economic analyses undertaken by the Chicago School, and which had in the theory of Human Capital one of its most poignant expressions. (Costa, 2009, p. 172)

As mentioned above, neoliberal governmentality was established by the Chicago School in the 1960s and sought to influence the field of education through economic orientations. The theoretical foundation of these guidelines lies in the theory of human capital. This neoliberal governmentality engendered in the 1960s predates the advent of neoliberal rationality in the 1980s. The period of 1960 underpins the conditions for the emergence of the business discourse that, in the present and in the field of education, shifts the centrality of teaching to learning. This

method, at the present time, has a certain correspondence with the past. To the extent that it assumes a certain individuality that results in a neoliberal pedagogical governmentality, the formative regime established in high school aims to prepare students for the world of work and life in society.

The opportunity of the business community to foster the capacity for autonomy and adaptability in the individual, similar to what occurs in companies, is not a characteristic restricted to the current conjecture. It is noteworthy that the purpose of an education that stimulates these requirements focuses on a formative process oriented from the student's interest, something announced and advocated by Killpatrick (1978, p. 74), in the 1920s: "We have to face the unknown future, in such rapid change as has not been known until now. Hence the corresponding need for our students to learn to adapt to a situation, which we, their teachers, can only partially glimpse." From this point of view, the teacher would have the strict function of protecting or facilitating the learning of the student "(...) through criticism, questions, and suggestions" (Dewey, 2002, p. 45).

It is evident that in the thought promulgated by the New School Movement lies the conception of a student-centered teaching-learning, something that precedes the Chicago School. There is a gradual shift from teaching to learning with a view to student protagonism (a recurrent term in Brazilian educational policies).

The need to promote "lifelong learners" is linked to the constant adaptation that drives them to be flexible. The intention of centering the process of educational formation on the student is neither new nor innovative, as this method has already been present in the New School movement in the United States. At the beginning of the last century, the American pedagogue William Heard Kilpatrick (1978), an adherent of John Dewey's pedagogy, understood that the teacher's action should be restricted to the application of the curriculum; thus, the figure of the teacher would be in the background in the process of student formation. According to the author, based on the development of the skills of each student "(...) it is concluded that learning follows a direction established by the desire, purpose or intention of the learner" (Kilpatrick, 1978, p. 70).

Moreover, the aforementioned terms "unknown future" and "learning to adapt to a situation" are similar to what corroborates the neoliberal paradigm. These principles, appreciated by the New Schoolers, underlie in the contemporary legal frameworks designed for the elaboration of the formative itinerary to be outlined by the *neo-subject*. The school operates as a laboratory for the development of their autonomy, decision-making, and self-responsibility. The choice of content that will shape one's curriculum in high school has the purpose of stimulating in students a certain aptitude necessary for entry into the job market, occupation, and income generation – in short, to train entrepreneurs and self-entrepreneurs.

School tests in the historical context of New School, such as the ABC test, developed by Dewey (1922), aimed to standardize the evaluation in order to measure performance and effectiveness of teaching in schools. These ABC tests preceded entry into school, similar to the college entrance exam, which categorized students according to their "level of cognition." The verification tests measured reading and writing skills (Lourenço Filho, 2008). In the liberal and Fordist context of the first decades of the 1900s,

(...) intelligence tests focus on higher psychological products or mature psychological categories, do not assess the conditions for learning or do little to help in the assessment of intelligence when it is not yet developed, since the tests are conditioned by the contents they aim to measure. (Sass, 2011, p. 978)

The inclination for liberalism, rooted in Fordism, aimed at a double movement in Brazil: to train large-scale labor for the labor market and to institute an education along the lines of Fordism. This intention was present in the debates that circulated at the First National Conference on Education, held in 1927, in the city of Curitiba. In thesis n° 5, “The Needs of Modern Pedagogy”, presented by Lindolpho Xavier, the author proposes for the full socioeconomic development of Brazil an education along the lines of liberal and Fordist thought. In his words: “All modern pedagogy will be Fordian in Ford’s books: it will seek in Ford’s books the processes of victory, with the maximum of humanity, in the most intense system of economics, with the generality of specializations. For Fordism there are no cripples, there are no useless; all cooperate for the general work” (Xavier, 1927, p. 71). Society should be productive and each individual would contribute according to peculiar physical and cognitive aptitudes, and the function of the school would be to form in a homogeneous way. These students were staggered and then homogenized throughout their formative process, which differs from the current situation in which diversity and difference are characteristics of the socioeconomic and educational model.

It is noted that the organizational management model of society was based on Fordism and the homogenization of industrial artifacts that reflected in the school structure and training of individuals. The students were designed in such a way as to morally and professionally replicate the master. With the advent of Toyotism after 1980, the productive and socioeconomic model is re-signified and industrial artifacts take on customized characteristics in order to meet the contingent demands of consumers who excel in authenticity. In view of this, it is necessary for professionals to adapt to the volatile demands of the market, which reverberates directly in the relationship between employer and worker and teacher, student and curriculum (Pizolati, 2020, p. 522).

In correspondence with the present, the statistics extracted from school tests are still widely used in Brazil, ranging from early childhood education to higher education. In this way, the use of school measurement and evaluation is currently different from the past and manifests ambivalence, while evaluating the whole from the student-individual and the school-institution, that is, a performance and performance model that merges students and school institutions into an algorithm.

A “(...) the concentration of industry and the division of labor practically eliminated domestic and communal occupations – at least for educational purposes” (Dewey, 2002, p. 22), which, in effect, reverberated in the pedagogical praxis of the early twentieth century. As similarities in both historical contexts, the influence of economics in the field of education and the change in educational policies that affect the active method – *escolanovist* – stand out. If we adopt this pedagogical perspective that is characterized by student protagonism – autonomy and flexibility – it’s not unique to today, nor is it innovative.

That said, after the analysis of educational and curriculum policies subsequent to the 1990s, carried out in this section, and a brief historical digression regarding the active method and the New School movement (20th century), it is possible to locate and examine how neoliberal rationality gradually began to shape the ways of being and existing inside and outside space scholastic. However, in the continuation of the research, the neoliberal spectrum is mapped to the field of education.

Learning, Individuation and Work (2003-2010)

The neoliberal paradigm resides in the change in the relations of consumption, work, and human habits, in which the ephemeral constitutes the main gradient of contemporary society. As a

result, the products, as well as the training of the individual, become contingent in the face of the volatile demands of the market. This paradigmatic resignification begins in the field of economics and systematically crosses the field of education through laws and decrees permeated by business rationality.

Teaching that used to be a *posteriori* – thought from the teacher to the student – now develops a *priori* – the student is the one who defines his or her formative itinerary in order to prepare autonomously for the world of work and social insertion. Life management, called as a technique of the self, aims at the self-formation of young people for the uncertain future that awaits them. In this formative process, presenteeism and the utilitarianism of knowledge are articulated, key elements in the commodification of teaching and learning. As Bauman (2008) points out, students are conceived as potential customers and education as a commodity to be consumed. This understanding, which defines knowledge as something marketable and the individual as someone who must be endowed with a capacity for continuous learning, is gestated within the scope and from economic theories linked to neoliberal rationality. This formative continuum aims to model the individual according to the demands of the market. It will then be up to the new subject to identify what will be the necessary knowledge to format their curriculum in order to allocate themselves to the world of work. In this method, not only pecuniary interests are articulated, but also personal interests such as quality of life, for example.

Since education is an important tool for the production of the individual, the Brazilian business community seeks to progressively influence the curricular guidelines. “The flexibilization of labor relations, the restructuring of the role of the State, the modification in the training of workers and a new quality of basic education are expressions of ‘transformations’ that are accepted by capital, as long as they further consolidate its interests” (Oliveira, 2003, p. 52). From this point of view, as pointed out by Professor Sylvio Gadelha Costa (2009, p. 172), it is evident that

(...) certain economic values, as they migrated from the economy to other domains of social life, disseminating themselves socially, gained a strong normative power, instituting processes and policies of subjectivation that have been transforming subjects of rights into micro-enterprises — entrepreneurs.

The reflection of the imbrication between neoliberal rationality and education is consolidated in the pressure for results and performance, which focuses on surpassing oneself and others. To this end, the proposition of educational policies that evaluate the “quality” of teaching and learning offered by school institutions would be essential for the formation of this competitive neo-subject. In view of this, the individual could choose which school and curriculum would best suit his/her/their desires and life planning. In line with business thinking, in 2007, the Minister of Education, Fernando Haddad, ratified the large-scale evaluation of schools based on the establishment of the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB).

Therefore, it is in order to adapt Brazilian education to what the OECD establishes for education that large-scale assessments, such as the National High School Exam (ENEM) and the Basic Education Evaluation System – SAEB (Brazil, 2019), were carried out in the country. The objective set by the government was to promote “(...) a set of large-scale external evaluations that allow Inep to carry out a diagnosis of Brazilian basic education and some factors that may interfere with student performance, providing an indication of the quality of the education offered” (Brazil, 2019).

By investigating the opportunity on the part of the market and the government to raise Brazil’s score in the international mechanisms of large-scale evaluation, it is possible to perceive the opportunity of both to attest to the quality of the education offered to the population. In this scenario, which is engendered by the BNCC-EM, it is intended to standardize and bring the

education offered closer to what the market demands. During the public hearings that formulated the Base, between 2016 and 2017, the need to raise the performance of students in large-scale assessment mechanisms was raised in the scope of ensuring the quality of teaching and learning. Regarding this issue, it is important to highlight that

(...) the BNCC is configured as another attempt to strengthen and subsidize the neoliberal guidelines that are established according to the concept of quality of education of this economic model, centered on a model of teaching by skills and competencies that establishes the matrices of references and, thus, favors the application of large-scale assessments, so that employability, Entrepreneurship and skills pedagogy act to strengthen the interests of capital. (Ribeiro et al., 2020, p. 11)

In line with the excerpt quoted above, it can be seen that such educational and curricular proposals came close to what is advocated “(...) the economic perspective of the reform discourse as well as the approximation with the private sector” (M. Silva, 2018, p. 3). Mass measurement policies, such as Prova and Provinha Brazil, the National High School Exam (ENEM) and the International Student Assessment Exam (PISA) aim to verify the quality of education. Implicitly, what is intended to be measured is the level of knowledge acquired and produced by the individual pertinent to the labor market and the provision of self.

The development of a market-oriented education demands a flexible curriculum, which is willing to meet the interests of both individuals and the business community. Concepts such as “(...) learning expectations. (...) learning rights” (Hypolito, 2019, p. 188) prelude the “learning to learn” that, since the 2000s, has been instituted within and from the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM). GERM is articulated with accountability, which “is articulated around three principles of educational policy: standards, accountability, and decentralization” (Hypolito, 2019, p. 189). Therefore, the flexibilization of the self-concerns the ability of each person to condition himself to the demands and market orientations that tend to result in the precariousness of labor relations.

By establishing amplified and homogenized evaluations, the objective is to control and model the student under the neoliberal prism, an old claim of the business community that has been gradually designated since the 1990s. Given the assumption of quality, the purpose of this process is to measure the development of students in strategic areas for the economy, such as mathematics and the vernacular language – in the case of Brazil, Portuguese. Thus, the (self) competition between public and private educational institutions through school Olympiads is stimulated, and the ranking of individual and institutional performance promoted by evaluations on a large scale. Many schools disclose the harmonic average that their students obtained in ENEM in order to advertise and attest to the quality of the education offered. This method is more common in the private sector, since the objective of training is to prepare students for entry into higher education, preferably in federal institutions.

Thus, it is based on the intention to measure the teaching and learning processes that have been gestated since 1996. “It is understandable, then, how the establishment of indicators and ‘rankings’ is part of the expansion of the neoliberal mode of subjectivation: any decision, whether medical, school, or professional, belongs to the individual” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 350). In this sense, Anderson (2010, p. 71) demonstrates that

Education, based on results, has created a culture of accountability, i.e., performance criteria, performance indicators, performance management, etc. (...). The need to be constantly held accountable increases our visibility and requires us to align our performances with external accountability criteria.

The results and performance adhere to the imperative of curricular flexibility and autonomy which, in turn, imputes to the student the responsibility for curricular choices and life management. From the articulation between individualization and flexibilization, it is inferred the possibility of the neo-individual constituting himself in a singular, unique and authentic way. Through these propositions, the objective is to safeguard the autonomy and aspirations of students in relation to their insertion in society and the world of work, as denoted by the PDE (Brazil, 2007) in line with the legal frameworks enacted between 1996 and 2018. Regarding the concept of individualization and accountability, Bauman (2008, pp. 130-131) shows that “Individualization” consists in transforming human “identity” from a “given” thing into a “task”—and entrusting actors with the responsibility of performing that task and of bearing the consequences (and also the side effects) of their performance; in other words, it consists in establishing a *de jure* autonomy (but not necessarily a *de facto* autonomy).

From this perspective, Vallejo (2002) points out that governmental actions in the field of education are added to the external contingencies promoted by the social, economic and technological changes peculiar to globalization. Consequently, there is a need to compose the neo-subject in such a way as to forge itself in a “(...) self-manager: really.” (Foucault, 2008b, p. 311). It should be noted that the *homo aeconomicus* conceptualized by Foucault (2008b) differs from the subject of exchange thought and instituted in the context of liberalism. The neo-subject self-manages and invests (governs) in himself similar to the management of a company; necessarily, he constitutes himself a lifelong learner. Thus, in the scenario to which neoliberal rationality is engendered, the training process implies curricular standardization. Paradoxically, the remodeling of the New High School occurs through its curricular flexibility. In the words of Pinto (2017, p. 1058):
 (...) the educational policies instituted in Brazil in recent decades have been configured around actions aimed at the systemic organization of Basic Education, an action coordinated by the Ministry of Education. Consequently, the proposition of a BNCC is part of the set of these actions, in the perspective of configuring a conceptual unit to the curriculum.

The neoliberalization of education in Brazil is a reflection of the influence of American and European authors who greatly impact the debates about the curriculum in the country. Second Triches & Aranda (2016), these foreign intellectuals preach in their speeches the defense of curricular adaptations aimed at the formation of the student as demanded by the international market.

Moreover, when basing one’s thinking on foreign theories, local particularities are sometimes disregarded, as in the case of Brazil. Issues such as basic sanitation and access to drinking water should precede, in importance, other topics such as entrepreneurship and school *gamification*, since different regions of Brazil are in different social strata, in fact, this occurs even in locations in the same city (Pizolati, 2020). Following the study, the consolidation of neoliberal rationality in the field of education is investigated.

Consolidation of Neoliberal Rationality in the Field of Education (2010-2018)

In the period from 2010 to 2019, four important legal frameworks were developed in Brazil that contemplate business thinking: DCN (Brazil, 2013), PNE (Brazil, 2015) and BNCC-EM (Brazil, 2018). It can be inferred from these laws and decrees the establishment of a student

education directed to the world of work and the generation of employment and income as symbols of social inclusion. This position assumed by these educational policies is intimately linked to neoliberal rationality, which aims to outline the formative itinerary of the individual according to the assumptions of self-entrepreneurship and self-entrepreneurship.

The institution of the BNCC-EM aimed to implement it through the collaboration of the Brazilian educational systems. According to CNE/CP Opinion No. 15/2018, approved on December 4 of the same year and CNE/CP Resolutions No. 4 and No. 2 of December 17 of the same year, establishes the MS-Base as the regulatory framework for the final stage of Basic Education – consisting of early childhood education, elementary school, and high school. With the officialization of the BNCC-EM, the criticism in relation to the promulgation of the Base lies in the lack of dialogue between society and the government, since the binomial New High School and BNCC were designated

As a matter of urgency and not without resistance, the federal government instituted the new high school through Provisional Measure (MP) No. 746/2016 (Law No. 13,415/2017), trampling over the National Education Plan 2014-2024 and all the accumulated debate on the elaboration of goals and public policies related to Brazilian education. The two measures promote profound changes in the organization and curriculum of Brazilian high school, among them the narrowing of training and, not without reason, aroused indignation in society and in the academic, union and student circles, whose struggles and resistances have been taking place in defense of the right to education and differences and to a public school with public management. In addition to being secular, of social quality, of State responsibility, for all and opposed to the commodification and privatization of education. (Costa & Silva, 2019, p. 4)

As stated above, the BNCC-EM and the PNE (2014-2024) promoted a systematic modification of what weaves the elaboration of the curriculum, disregarding the debate with intellectual authorities in the field of education, teachers and students. Another question on the part of researchers in the area is the fact that the implementation of the Base ignored all the debate held during the preparation of the PNE (2014-2024). The BNCC-EM was concerned with praising a curriculum that meets the multiplicity of individual and market interests, in which the formation of the individual is thought of within the scope and from the imperative of curricular flexibility juxtaposed with the mobilization of competencies and skills. Regarding these two concepts,

In the BNCC, competence is defined as the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures), skills (cognitive and socio-emotional practices), attitudes and values to solve complex demands of daily life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work. (Brazil, 2018, p. 8)

Contrasting education for citizenship, M. Silva (2018) understands that “In the devices that guide curricular propositions based on competences, a conception of human education preponderates marked by the intention of adapting to the logic of the market and adapting to society through an abstract notion of citizenship” (p. 10).

In this perspective to which the Base is configured, especially the flexibility of the training itinerary, it is emphasized that this intention is not innovative as assumed by the Government, since the National Council of Education, from the CNE/CP Opinion No. 11/2009, instituted, almost a decade ago, the curricular flexibility in the justification of enabling the autonomy of students in the choice of the contents that would compose their training, contemplating an education focused on the development of citizenship and the world of work.

To this end, knowledge and skills would be mobilized within and from the curriculum so that the student establishes in himself the capacity for cognitive and socio-emotional autonomy.

Passions and desires would then be the catalysts for the performance and performance of this neo-subject so that his insertion in society and in the world of work could be consolidated. The process does not end but begins from the last stage of its formative process, basic education – high school. In view of this, according to the BNCC-EM (Brazil, 2018), the aim is to promote the inclusion of central and mandatory components provided for in educational legislation and standards, in addition to flexible content ingredients. Thus, by making the curriculum malleable, it is intended to enable the student the opportunity to outline his/her/their formative itinerary according to individual interests mixed with the conditions of offers that each school institution makes available to its students.

Encourage the construction of flexible curricula that allow students to develop diversified training itineraries that better respond to the heterogeneity and plurality of their conditions, interests and aspirations, with the provision of spaces and times for open and creative use.

The high school curriculum will consist of the National Common Curricular Base and training itineraries, which should be organized through the offer of different curricular arrangements, according to the relevance to the local context and the possibility of the education systems, namely:

- I - languages and their technologies.
- II - mathematics and its technologies.
- III - natural sciences and their technologies.
- IV - applied human and social sciences.
- V - technical and professional training. (Brazil, 2018, p. 296, p. 467)⁴

In effect, these changes in the curriculum do not apply to basic education in its entirety, but only to students entering high school, subject to the flexibility and autonomy of the training itinerary. The imposition of this measure stems from the following understanding: it is understood that the young people in this age group would be in a position to choose the necessary content to format their curriculum according to what they want for themselves. Thus, “(...) from the moment it is assumed that the individual is able to access the information necessary for his choice, it must be assumed that he becomes fully responsible for the risks involved” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 349).

The curricular flexibility envisions the possibility of technical-vocational education and/or preparation for entry into higher education. In view of this, the selection of certain contents that will compose the formative grid of this neo-subject is no longer the responsibility of the teacher, the school or the State, but of the student himself, who is compelled by his or her life choices.

Unlike Elementary School, for High School there is no indication of years in the presentation of skills, not only due to the more flexible nature of the curriculum for this level of education, but also, as already mentioned, to the degree of autonomy of the students, which is supposed to be achieved. This proposal no longer imposes restrictions and needs for the establishment of sequences (which are already flexible in Elementary Education), and each school system and school

⁴ In the sequence of this work, the same citation may be pointed out as present on different pages within the aforementioned legal framework chosen for citation.

can organize the sequences and simultaneities locally, considering the general organization criteria presented after each field of action. (Brazil, 2018, p. 493)

As explained above, the New High School will be offered by areas of knowledge. In this way, other areas of knowledge are made more flexible, making them mostly optional and the teaching of mathematics and Portuguese language are maintained as mandatory components – “(...) 60% of compulsory subjects and 40% of electives, at the student’s choice” (Silva et al., 2018, p. 19). In view of this, it meets the international interests that measure precisely the mathematical knowledge and the mastery of the vernacular language in their evaluation processes on a large global scale.

This method is the result of educational policies based on flexibility and self-responsibility, according to PISA, which is ideologically linked to the OECD. In addition, as Sahlberg (2005) and Fuller (2018) point out, international assessment systems seek to measure and attest to the performance and performance of the student and the school institution. In this sense, “(...) the success or failure of schools and teachers [which] is often assessed through standardized tests and external assessments, in a reductive and decontextualized way” (Marinho et al., 2018, p. 927).

Broadfoot & Black (2004) point out that the intention to globalize performance and performance is manifested through the institution of a culture of testing characteristic of the current neoliberal conjecture, that is, a “learning society” (Lima, 2017, Pozo, 2004). The elaboration of the curriculum in the current context aims to offer a range of competencies and skills to be developed by the student, who would have at his disposal a portion of eligible content to model his formative itinerary and life management. The interest of the business community in training labor is implicit in camouflaging itself in the valuation and autonomy of students, supposedly elevating them to the protagonist of their formative itinerary, because in this process the entrepreneur of himself is fostered. From this angle, the Base would serve as an educational guideline, similar to what occurred in relation to the LDBEN, in both legal frameworks to the final decision regarding the distribution of activities and the modulation of the curriculum, being at the discretion of the education networks.

(...) it is up to education systems and networks, as well as schools, in their respective spheres of autonomy and competence, to incorporate into curricula and pedagogical proposals the approach to contemporary issues that affect human life on a local, regional and global scale, preferably in a transversal and integrative way. (Brazil, 2018, p. 19)

In line with the logic of the market, financial education would overlap in importance with the teaching of the arts, sociology, and philosophy. Converging with this thought, the Government of the State of Paraná plastered the offer of disciplines related to the subjects of humanity for high school, replacing them with financial education. When analyzing the BNCC-MS, it is observed that the criterion on the choice of contents would be under the responsibility of the student, and not of the institution, which would be responsible for offering and not electing (restricting) the curricular components. In 2021, the curricular offer for high school occurs unilaterally, restricting the possibility of a flexible curriculum. The state government assumes this movement because it supposedly equates the curricular matrices, in which this curricular rearrangement would consist of reducing the workload of these disciplines, by creating financial education, safeguarding the minimum number of class hours of the disciplines of Portuguese language and mathematics.

From this action, it was observed that financial education would be applied in the curriculum as a formal discipline, and not as a transversal theme, as guided by the Base. “Among

the planned changes is the guarantee of four weekly classes of Portuguese Language and three of Mathematics, which today does not happen in the entire state network. The government also foresees the creation of new disciplines, such as Financial Education” (Fragão, 2020). It is noteworthy that the course taken by education in favor of neoliberal rationality is not restricted to just one state, this new market paradigm that is presented in the current scenario tends to expand throughout the Brazilian territory.

According to Base (Brazil, 2018), since 10% of enrollments in high school would correspond to vocational education and only 16% of students who complete high school are able to enter higher education, the intention to reformulate the Brazilian school system concerns reducing the “overload” of 13 subjects (Ferreti & Silva, 2017, Silva & Scheibe, 2017). Added to this, in addition to the reduction of disciplines that are less valued for the market, there is the encouragement of other disciplines that dialogue directly with neoliberal rationality, for example, financial education and self-entrepreneurship. These movements engendered within the curriculum reflect the current attack that the humanities suffer as a whole by society, which, in turn, is permeated daily by pro-market discourses: economic liberalism and minimal state. To these weaves the school subjects, currently divided into languages and codes, which involves Portuguese, literature and foreign language — English or Spanish; humanities, which includes history, geography, philosophy, and sociology; natural sciences, composed of biology, chemistry and physics; and, mathematics, being the discipline itself in its different approaches. Regarding the assumptions that sustain these curricular prerogatives, it is highlighted that: “This new structure values youth protagonism, since it provides for the offer of varied training itineraries to meet the multiplicity of interests of students: academic deepening and technical professional training” (Brazil, 2018, p. 465, p. 467).

However, even though the focus of the educational actions presents in the BNNC-EM concerns curricular flexibility, it is emphasized that it is not a matter of cognitively plastering the student, as the formation of critical thinking and social responsibility are stimulated in the Base. In addition, the unique composition of authentic, autonomous and flexible individuals configures a permanent learning, which is fostered and intrinsic to the business logic. The definition of the concept of autonomy precedes the Base. According to the PDE (Brazil, 2007, p. 41),

Understanding the concept of individual autonomy requires a perception of the dialectical nature of the relationship between socialization and individuation. To educate autonomous men and women is to ensure the emergence of critical subjectivities against the background of a cultural tradition generated by language and work, which is only possible through the development of skills to appropriate content and the ability to take a critical stance towards it.

According to the excerpt above, the formation of a critical conscience is desirable while the process of individuation goes through socialization, because just like in school, life in society or in the world of work is established from the relationships between subjects. In view of this, it is necessary to develop a critical awareness in order to promote the capacity of perception regarding the cultural production arising from language and work in the context in which it is inserted.

If, as a result, “some would argue that that’s all there is to education and that that’s all education should be focused on—that it should be restricted to the ‘basics,’ the ‘facts,’ and leave difficult questions that have to do with values in the hands of the family or the community” (Biesta, 2018, p. 23). Also, according to the author, “Education, in other words, is never just to qualify children and young people and offer them a particular place in society. The ability to assume a critical perspective towards existing traditions, practices, ways of doing and being, also occurs after leaving school” (Biesta, 2018, p. 24).

Although a critical and social education is desirable, it is still understood that the stimulus to flexible curricula results from business demand and is gestated in different political periods in Brazil after the 1990s. Essentially, it is important to emphasize that only in the PNE (Brazil, 2015), 2014–2024-decade, curricular flexibility appears as normative, until then non-existent in previous PNEs.

It is then marked the advance of the business community and the current neoliberal conjecture in the propositions for educational policies and curriculum, in which the principle of “learning to learn” aims to provide the individual with more “(...) freedom and autonomy, which is the function of public policies in general and educational policies in particular” (Brazil, 2015, p. 10). To this end, the flexibilization of the training itinerary, aiming at the world of work, is present in the BNCC-EM and in the PNE, which is recurrent in previous enactments. Flexibility was previously praised in the DCN (Brazil, 2013)⁵. Regarding this document, it should be noted that

The training path must, in this sense, be open and contextualized, including not only the mandatory core curricular components, provided for in the legislation and educational standards, but also, as each school project establishes, other flexible and variable components that enable training paths that meet the numerous interests, needs and characteristics of the students.

(...) education systems should provide for flexible curricula, with different alternatives, so that young people have the opportunity to choose the training path that best meets their interests, needs and aspirations.

(...) 2.5.1.3. High School

II - the basic preparation for work, taken as an educational principle, and for the citizenship of the student, in order to continue learning, in order to be able to face new conditions of occupation or subsequent improvement; (...). (Brazil, 2013, p. 27, 39, 40, 66)

Based on what the DCN presupposes, these changes imply the formation of pre-adults, those entering high school. The “keep learning” accentuates the curricular norms that equally impact Youth and Adult Education (EJA). The opportunity of education lies in the preparation for the world of work and the generation of income, which impels the individual to constantly update his knowledge. Also, according to the excerpt quoted above, terms such as interests, needs, and aspirations are recurrent in other subsequent passages of this document and appear written *ipsis litteris* in other educational guidelines analyzed throughout the article. Flexibility is configured in a device that aims to guide the curriculum designed for the formation of young people and adults, both in regular high school and in EJA.

EJA courses should be guided by flexibility, both in terms of curriculum and time and space, so that they are:

I - Symmetry with regular education for children and adolescents is broken, in order to allow individualized paths and meaningful content for young people and adults. (Brazil, 2013, p. 41)

Prior to the proposals on curricular flexibility, it is necessary to stick to the institution of continuous learning, in which the neo-subject must develop the ability to configure himself

according to the demands of the market and the information society (Werthein, 2000). Regarding this concept, the DCN (Brazil, 2013, p. 163)⁵ provides that:

An immediate consequence of the information society is that survival in this environment requires continuous lifelong learning. This new way of being requires that the student, in addition to acquiring certain information and developing skills to perform certain tasks, must learn to learn, in order to continue learning.

These new demands require a new behavior of teachers, who must cease to be transmitters of knowledge and become mediators, facilitators of the acquisition of knowledge; They should stimulate research, the production of knowledge and group work. This necessary transformation can be translated into the adoption of research as a pedagogical principle.

Thus, the Government's justification for making the curriculum more flexible lies in the promotion of autonomy, which understands the old educational model as something limiting to the development of knowledge and of the student himself. The intention of promoting "lifelong learning" and "keep learning" is justified in the face of the current scenario and the lack of financial resources that afflicts many of these young people. An education that enables them to enter the labor market in the short term becomes more attractive than preparation for entry into a higher education course. By opting for technical-vocational education, supposedly, there would be no harm since the ability to "continue learning" would overlap in importance with the appropriation and "accumulation" of content itself.

It is from these assumptions of lifelong learning that the devices of flexibility (curricular and individual) and responsibility are intertwined. Flexibilization is required as the neo-subject needs to constantly adapt to the demands that socioeconomic circumstances expose him too almost daily. Impelled to self-formation and life choices, this individual takes responsibility for himself, which results in the internalization and naturalization of the success or failure of his life choices. In other words, the neo-subject under neoliberal rationality is called upon to manage himself similar to a company, anticipating crises and seeking solutions in order to become attractive to the market, which, in turn, becomes his customer. Thus, the relations of forces that operate between employer and employee are reversed.

Theoretically, the individual endowed with a good curriculum would be endowed with the ability to choose, being able to select the means of work and the conditions to exercise it. At least that's what market meritocracy preaches, a seductive discourse that camouflages the precariousness of work.

In this perspective, according to Lima (2017), there is an apology for learning that refers to the utilitarianism of knowledge and insertion in the world of work, as announced by Bauman (2008). This neoliberal opportunity subordinate's education by advocating market-oriented training. The business discourse, when intertwined with education, aims to produce the erroneous sense that an emancipatory education would be based on the capacity to generate employment and income, which would supposedly largely solve the social problems of the State through self-entrepreneurship. This conception manifests itself "(...) based on the basic ideology of neoliberalism, which consists of individualism and meritocracy" (Ribeiro et al., 2020, p. 10). Thus, neoliberal rationality presupposes lifelong learning *ad aeternum* as something necessary

⁵ This guideline, in turn, is recurrent to the LDBEN (Brasil, 1996), section IV of Secondary Education, Article 35, item II.

for students to become individual and consolidate their socioeconomic autonomy vis-à-vis themselves, society and the State.

To this end, in the nexus between education and work, knowledge desirable by the market and individual skills are articulated that are mobilized within the scope and based on a flexible curriculum. Similar to what happens in the company, in which the production of goods is consolidated in networks of collaboration according to demand, the school tends to operate under this regime of truth in which it is based on the ability to adapt to the contingencies of the world of work to form autonomous and adaptable, flexible and accountable individuals.

The interest on the part of society, the State and the market in high school is justified by the fact that this is the last stage of basic education; therefore, for “(...) Do you know if a school system as a whole is of good quality? Ask for high school” (Nosella, 2015, p. 126). Moreover, in the 1990s, the priority of education in peripheral and underdeveloped (or developing) countries, such as Brazil, prioritized primary education and not secondary education. This orientation was based on predilections provided by international organizations that aimed to eradicate illiteracy and, consequently, reduce poverty (Casagrande et al., 2019, Peroni, 2003).

With regard to the theme of neoliberalism, the market, and the curriculum, which is also present in the DCN (Brazil, 2013), there is clarification about the expansion and flexibility of training as exposed in the BNCC-EM. According to this regulation, the current policies would only be putting into practice something that has already been endorsed and endorsed in the LDBEN (Brazil, 1996).

The freedom of diversification and flexibility of curricula is supported by the constitutional principles, reaffirmed in the LDB, of the “freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate thought, art and knowledge” and the “pluralism of ideas and pedagogical conceptions” (Federal Constitution 1988, art. 206, Items II and III; and art. 3, Items II and III of the LDB). in addition to what is provided for in the organization of national education, in the obligation of education systems to ensure “progressive degrees of pedagogical autonomy” to their school units (LDB. art. 15). (Brazil, 2013, p. 155)

The flexibility that imputes to individuals the condition of lifelong learners is supported by constitutional principles that are ratified in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and in the LDBEN (Brazil, 1996). The freedom to learn set out in the above-mentioned document also means the guarantee of free will to select the components that will shape the formative itinerary of each individual. These guidelines for the high school curriculum and the right to learning do not constitute innovative proposals or proposals that go against what has already been established. It should be noted, then, that these regulations only legitimize and amplify certain policies that aim to meet the interests of the market. The enactment of these laws and other guidelines has the purpose of guiding teachers in the development of their pedagogical plans, contemplating the students who would have autonomy to format the curriculum. The articulation of neoliberal discourses in the field of curriculum and the constitution of individual learners are continuously gestated within the scope of the National Council of Education (CNE), which demonstrates the gradual permeation of the Brazilian business community in educational planning (Giroto, 2018, Krawczykii & Martins, 2018).

In view of this, competitiveness combined with flexi/self-responsibility is notorious when observing the current sociopolitical conjuncture from the perspective of neoliberal rationality that is not restricted only to the field of education. Even so, it is through the school, which due to its capacity for resonance in the social body that the idea of subject and conduct to society and the world of work is configured. In short, the interest of the business community in

the field of education becomes explicit when analyzing the ways in which the high school curriculum is crossed by neoliberal principles juxtaposed with large-scale assessment policies. Despite the allusion to a training that privileges authenticity and praises the individual, paradoxically, the evaluation procedure established based on large-scale tests aims to measure and quantify the student analogous to an algorithm – bioalgorithm.

As one of the consequences of the impact of neoliberalism in the field of education, it is noted that the influence of the business community in the constitution of curricular educational policies is overwhelming. From this perspective, the ways in which the student, the school and the teacher are named are re-signified in order to adapt such nomenclatures to neoliberal rationality. Thus, we start to

(...) refer to pupils, students, children and adults as “learners”, as “learning supporters” or “learning facilitators” to teachers; as “learning environments”, “places for learning” or “learning communities” to schools, and in the redesignation of the field of adult education in the sense of a “lifelong education”. (Biesta, 2018, pp. 22-23)

As mentioned above and analyzed by Biesta (2018), the growing permeation of economic thinking in educational policies stems from “learning policies” whose opportunity for the business community is camouflaged in the intention of improving the quality of teaching and fostering student autonomy. The core of this intention lies in forging individuals flexible enough to adapt to market contingencies, while naturalizing the precariousness of work that is already underway in Brazil, as explained in the course of this article.

Final Words

In the development of this study, we opted theoretically and methodologically for historical-documentary genealogy due to the need to map how the field of education has been systematically crossed by the neoliberal spectrum. The time frame was restricted to the years that correspond to the period between 1996 and 2018, while highlighting the contribution of political redemocratization (1985) and economic opening (1990) of the country in the process of neoliberalization of education.

According to the analyses developed in the course of this research, it is evident that neoliberalism has been constituted at the global level since the 1980s and systematically entered the national policies of education and curriculum in the second half of the 1990s. The interest of the business community in the educational field is justified by the school’s ability to disseminate knowledge and practices throughout the social fabric. These discourses based on the principles of “keep learning”, which has the effect of “learning to learn”, range from young people of school age to adults who return to school institutions, universities and technical schools in order to complete or continue their studies. “keep learning” marks the beginning of the flexibilization of the formative itinerary in curriculum policies, while “learning to learn” is articulated with the interests of the market.

Through a discourse based on meritocracy, the condition of citizenship has been relativized, imputing to the individual who works and generates income the right to social affiliation (Castel, 2005, Santos, 2010). It is noted that it is within and from education that neoliberal rationality re-signifies the individual’s conduct through the device of flexibility pertinent to social and work relations (Hardt & Negri, 2012). This process results in the new learner – autonomous, flexible and accountable. Consequently, supposedly detached from the condition of subordination and from the consciousness of social class, where the employee becomes a collaborator or associated with the company.

If, on the one hand, the “subjective engagement” produced by the logic of productive flexibilization makes workers submit to the ideas of capital when they introject the values of the organizational culture and the feeling of being part of the “big family” that it intends to ideologically represent, on the other hand, it concretely gives them a feeling of belonging to a collectivity, a feeling that is effectively felt in their daily experiences. However unstable and transitory this may turn out to be and however much tensions there may be between the workers and the company. In general, this situation creates a scenario in which the idea of greater responsibility in the production process can be assimilated in a relatively positive way by a large contingent of workers. (Barbosa, 2011, p. 134)

The old labor relations are re-signified in the present, as stated in the excerpt above, the neo-subject dissociates himself from the condition of employee and assumes the function of collaborator or associate according to the perspective of self-entrepreneurship. To this end, the individual is similar to a company, operating from innovation and constant updating of their knowledge. By mapping the conditions of possibility related to the crossing of neoliberal rationality in the field of education, it is evident that this process began in Brazil, from the second half of the 1990s, and is consolidated in the present.

In this way, the learning neo-subject is instituted, which results from the transposition of the principle of “keep learning” to “learning to learn”. In order to consolidate lifelong learning, it is first necessary to sensitize the individual still in the New High School so that he/she/they is familiar with the current scenario configured by neoliberalism. Thus, the student forged under the neoliberal paradigm would be endowed with the ability to decide autonomously about his formative itinerary and life management, according to the juxtaposition of market aspirations and demands. Likewise, there is a tenuity between responsibility and accountability for their life choices, which are linked to the business conceptions of flexi/self-responsibility and pedagogical governmentality based on market-oriented precepts.

The enactment of the LDBEN (Brazil, 1996) established the basis for the development of a flexible and continuous education in order to adapt the training of the individual learner to the needs of the market, without abandoning citizenship and critical awareness. Even so, he advocated the education model focused on the world of work and the generation of employment and income. The simultaneity of “keep learning” and the formative flexibility in the analyzed documents demarcate the imbrication between neoliberal rationality and educational and curriculum policies under the principle of “learning to learn”.

In relation to educational evaluation policies, it is emphasized that when measuring education through large-scale tests, the local aspect of each school institution is disregarded, community, although, paradoxically, in Brazilian educational documents, the need to observe the sociocultural reality of the school and the student in curriculum planning is emphasized. In summary, it is through individuation and autonomy that, inferred in the remodeling of the school curriculum (high school), the aim is to forge new subjects capable of formatting their formative itinerary and managing their life choices. Education, under the neoliberal aegis, aims to make the individual more flexible enough to adapt to the economic crises, the needs and the market contingencies to which neoliberalism exposes him and blames him (blames him for his own failure) in the daily life of his predilections.

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