

ARTICLE

## EDUCATING WORKING YOUTH THROUGH MARKET METRICS<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** The control over the Brazilian high school reform amidst the 2016 Parliamentary Coup became symbolic of the business community's influence on education policies. This paper therefore attempts to answer the following question: What are the content, characteristics, and rationales behind the public education project for young people proposed by the business community and set in motion through the high school reform? How can we state that this project conforms to the interests of capital in the current stage of social reproduction within the framework of productive restructuring? This analysis arises from research that used primary and secondary sources: documents produced by corporate foundations, notably the organization *Todos pela Educação* [All for Education] and Instituto Unibanco; regulatory and normative documents; and public hearings on MP746/2016 [Provisional Presidential Decree 746/2016]. This paper seeks to answer the proposed question based on three analytical categories: competence pedagogy, accountability, and youth protagonism. It concludes that the business community's action to promote an education project for the working class is a device to adjust the instruction of young people to the demands of new work management organizations, to consolidate the expansion of capital's rationality from the point of production to that of social reproduction – in this case, the education of the working class – and materializes in school through discourses and practices that subjectivize this rationality, such as social-emotional skills, accountability, and youth protagonism.

**Keywords:** business community, competence pedagogy, accountability, youth protagonism, high school.

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## EDUCANDO A JUVENTUDE TRABALHADORA PELAS MÉTRICAS DO MERCADO

**RESUMO:** Pautar a reforma do ensino médio em meio ao golpe parlamentar de 2016 caracterizou um traço emblemático da influência empresarial na política educacional. Assim, este artigo se propõe a responder à seguinte pergunta: qual o conteúdo, suas características e as racionalidades subjacentes ao projeto de educação pública para a juventude proposto pelo empresariado e colocado em marcha com a reforma do ensino médio? E por que se pode afirmar que esse projeto se coaduna com interesses do capital na fase atual de reprodução social e no contexto da reestruturação produtiva? Esta análise tem origem em uma pesquisa com fontes primárias e secundárias: documentos elaborados por fundações empresariais – com destaque para o Todos Pela Educação e o Instituto Unibanco –; documentos legislativos e normativos; e audiências públicas da MP746/2016. O texto procura responder à pergunta proposta a partir de três categorias analíticas: a pedagogia das competências, o *accountability* e o protagonismo juvenil. Conclui-se que a ação empresarial que promove um projeto educacional para a classe trabalhadora se constitui em dispositivos que adequam a formação dos jovens às demandas das novas organizações gerenciais do trabalho, consolidando uma expansão da racionalidade do capital do espaço de produção para o espaço de reprodução social – nesse caso, a escolarização dos trabalhadores – e se materializa na escola por meio de discursos e práticas que subjetivam essa racionalidade, como as competências socioemocionais, o *accountability* e o protagonismo juvenil.

**Palavras-chave:** empresariado, pedagogia das competências, *accountability*, protagonismo juvenil, ensino médio.

## EDUCANDO LA JUVENTUD TRABAJADORA POR LAS MÉTRICAS DEL MERCADO

**RESUMEN:** Orientar las políticas educativas durante el golpe parlamentar de 2016 caracterizó un rasgo emblemático de la influencia empresarial en la política educativa brasilera. Este artículo propone responder la siguiente pregunta: ¿cuál es el contenido, características y racionalidades subyacentes al proyecto de educación pública para la juventud propuesto por el empresariado y puesto en marcha con la reforma de enseñanza secundaria? Y ¿por qué podemos afirmar que ese proyecto combina con los intereses del capital en la fase actual de reproducción social e en el contexto de reestructuración productiva? Este análisis proviene de una investigación que utilizó fuentes primarias y secundarias, como documentos elaborados por fundaciones empresariales - con énfasis en Todos Por la Educación y en el Instituto Unibanco -; documentos legislativos y normativos; y las audiencias públicas de la MP 746/2016. El texto busca responder a la pregunta propuesta a partir de tres categorías analíticas: la pedagogía por competencias, o *accountability* y el protagonismo juvenil. Se concluye que la acción empresarial que promueve un proyecto educativo para la clase trabajadora se constituye en dispositivos que adecuan la formación de los jóvenes a las demandas de las nuevas organizaciones gerenciales del trabajo, consolidando la expansión de la racionalidad del capital del espacio de producción para el espacio de reproducción social – en este caso, la escolarización de los trabajadores – y se materializa en la escuela por medio de discursos y prácticas que encarnan esa racionalidad, como las competencias socioemocionales, o *accountability* y el protagonismo juvenil.

**Palabras clave:** empresariado, pedagogía por competencias, *accountability*, protagonismo juvenil, escuela secundaria.

## INTRODUCTION

It was 2016. During President Dilma Rousseff's crisis of governability, the parliamentary coup was successful and installed Michel Temer as president. The political climate, after the coup, was an opportune moment to respond, through a provisional measure, to an important concern among groups of Brazilian businesspeople: an educational reform in secondary education in the interests of capital.

Business community influence has been prominent since 2013, with the special parliamentary committee aimed at promoting studies and proposals for the reformulation of secondary education, chaired by Deputy Reginaldo Lopez (PT-MG). A conviction was formed among the business community and parliamentarians that it would be necessary to reform secondary education, which would no longer meet the demands of young people, especially about professional life, nor would it contribute to the economic and social development of the country (BRASIL, 2013; FERRETTI, 2018; KRAWCZYK, 2014; SILVA; KRAWCZYK, 2016; SILVA; SHEIBE, 2017).

This commission had a strong presence from business *Think Tanks*, which could be considered a rehearsal for the reform published in 2016 in the dark of night. The strong resistance of the student movements – Brazilian Union of Secondary Students (UBES-*União Brasileira dos Estudantes Secundaristas*) and National Union of Students (UNE-*União Nacional dos Estudantes*) – and the National Movement in Defense of Secondary Education (*Movimento Nacional em Defesa do Ensino Médio*),<sup>2</sup> made up of academic and class entities, PL6840/2013 resulted in a substitute that was not voted on, remaining in the drawer of the offices of businesspeople and their allied parliamentarians (SILVA; KRAWCZYK, 2016).

After the parliamentary coup, Michel Temer published, as a provisional measure, a reform like the initial proposal prepared by the special parliamentary committee in 2012 and the proposal constructed in CONSED's GT with the broad participation of business entities (BUENO, 2021). This device, reserved in the Constitution only for cases of extreme urgency (BRASIL, 1988, Art. 62, § 3º), had never been used in democratic regimes to approve an educational reform.

MP746/2016 was publicly endorsed by business organizations working in education and their allied parliamentarians<sup>3</sup> who argued during public hearings that the debate around the ideal reform for secondary education had already been in Congress for more than five years, referring to PL6840/2013, ignoring all the manifestations of resistance and the substitute that the special commission had proposed. As the Minister of Education at the time, José Mendonça Filho, claimed: “*So, you are talking about a debate that has practically completed five years within Parliament, just around the project that is being processed in the House [PL6840/2013]. A very long debate*”<sup>4</sup>.

Business community influence in the preparation and approval of the MP, later transformed into Law 13 415 of 2017, appeared in several ways: advocacy in the National

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<sup>2</sup> The entity is made up of: Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPED), Centro de Estudos Educação e Sociedade (CEDES), Fórum Nacional de Diretores das Faculdades de Educação (FORUMDIR), Associação Nacional pela Formação dos Profissionais da Educação (ANFOPE), Sociedade Brasileira de Física, Ação Educativa, Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação, Associação Nacional de Política e Administração da Educação (ANPAE), Conselho Nacional das Instituições da Rede Federal de Educação Profissional Científica e Tecnológica (CONIF) and Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação (CNTE).

<sup>3</sup> The participation of deputy Thiago Peixoto (PSD-GO), an effective member of Todos Pela Educação (TPE), and deputy Maria Auxiliadora Seabra Rezende (Professora Dorinha, DEM-TO), founding member of TPE, stands out.

<sup>4</sup> 11th Meeting of the Mixed Committee of Provisional Measure 746/2016, held on 11/28/2016. Available in: <https://www12.senado.leg.br/ecidadania/visualizacaoaudiencia?id=9977>. Acesso em: 30 ago. 2022.

Congress, started in 2012 with PL6840; participation in public hearings, with convergence in the indication for the approval of MP746/2016; support for the reform in publications – before and during the law’s processing – from different business entities, mainly *Todos pela Educação* (TPE, 2016) and Instituto Unibanco (IU, 2016); the similarity of MP746 with proposals for curricular reforms from the TPE and IU (TPE, 2013); also the participation of these groups in the formulation of the Common National Base (ANDRADE; NEVES; PICCININI, 2017) and the proposal constructed in the GT for the reform of secondary education, within CONSED with strong induction from the business community (BUENO, 2021)<sup>5</sup>.

This articulation and corporates induction were clear and aimed at a systemic, profound, and rapid change in the construction of a public education project for Brazilian youth. The induction of this articulation in the secondary education reform has a significant feature due to the authoritarian way in which it was imposed by the post-coup government and the support and influence of business actors in this proposal. Therefore, the following problem arises: what are the content, its characteristics, and rationalities underlying the public education project for youth proposed by the business community and implemented in the secondary education reform? And why can we say that this project is in line with the interests of capital in the current phase of social reproduction and the context of productive restructuring?

This is what we will cover in this article. To this end, we will seek to answer some questions that will contribute to thinking about the problem raised: (1) what is the origin of the business community discourse around education?; (2) what is the role of education for business community?; (4) what subjectivity underlies this project?; (3) what is the impact of entrepreneurial influence, due to its rationality and subjectivity, on the form of organization and understanding of public education?; (5) how does this subjectivity relate to the demands of productive restructuring?

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This article originates from research entitled *The influence of business community on secondary education reform (A influência do empresariado na reforma do ensino médio)*,<sup>6</sup> which analyzed primary and secondary sources: documents prepared by business foundations, with emphasis on *Todos Pela Educação* (TPE) and Instituto Unibanco (IU); legislative and normative documents, such as Provisional Measure 746/2016 (BRASIL, 2016a); Law 13 415/2017 (BRASIL, 2017a); the New Curricular Guidelines for Secondary Education (BRASIL, 2018a); the New High School Implementation Guide (BRASIL, 2018b); the National Common Curricular Base for Secondary Education (BRASIL, 2018c) and the ordinances implementing Full-Time Secondary Education – EMTI- *Ensino Médio em Tempo Integral* (BRASIL, 2016b, 2017b, 2018d). Newspaper and magazine reports and speeches from the nine hearings of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on provisional measure 746/2016 were also analyzed, focusing on the speeches of parliamentarians and the business community.

The category found that provides the basis for business community discourse is the economic role of education or, in other words, the economic view of education. This category will guide the following analysis. To better organize the text, the exhibition will be divided into three blocks defined by analytical categories: pedagogy of skills, accountability, and youth protagonism. This analysis will occur in the presentation of the articulation

<sup>5</sup> More about the influence of business community in this reform was published in Quadros and Krawczyk (2019) and Quadros (2020).

<sup>6</sup> Master's thesis by Sérgio Feldemann de Quadros, carried out in the Postgraduate Program in Education at Unicamp, with a FAPESP/CAPES scholarship, under the guidance of Dr. Nora Krawczyk and defended on February 28, 2020.

between business community demands for education and the process of productive restructuring, in which Toyotism has its most emblematic feature.

## **PRODUCTION RESTRUCTURING AND THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION: Human Capital Theory (HCT) and skills pedagogy**

Although the idea of the potential of education to improve workers' skills and abilities and their return in productivity is as old as the first ideologues of capitalism (MEULEMEESTER, 2003), it was based on the concept of human capital, initially developed by Schultz (1967) and revised by his successors, that the economic foundation of education started to be as we currently have it.

The Theory of Human Capital (THC) was created in the 1960s at a historical moment in the Western world that we can consider exceptional due to a certain capital-labor alliance in the recovery and growth of the capitalist economy through the development of the process of industrial production. This period, characterized by the welfare state, was more inclusive and distributive in terms of income and access to state services in central countries, with great emphasis on increasing education.

Liberal economists at the time were faced with large growth rates in national income between 1945 and 1960 that were not explained by growth rates in national resources. The explanation for Schultz would be that “[...] the rates of return related to investments made in man were equal to or greater than those of investments made in non-human capital, in material capital” (LÓPEZ-RUIZ, 2007, pp. 202-203). This meant that the expenditures made by Nation-States on education would contain positive externalities, that is, although they had not been initially allocated with this intention, they returned in productivity. This variable was called human capital and would denote a set of capabilities, skills, and talents that, with the advancement of capitalism, would become an exchange value (LÓPEZ-RUIZ, 2007). This concept was extremely important for public and private investment in training workers to increase productivity.

With the structural crisis of capital that emerged in the 1970s, a crisis of overaccumulation, a movement began that undermined the Fordist commitment and the post-war Keynesian consensus. Harvey (2012, p.140) called this process a flexible accumulation regime, which would be based on “the flexibility of work processes, labor markets, products, and consumption patterns”. This process would register significant changes not only in production management but also in the financialization of the economy as an alternative to excess liquidity – a surplus of capital that does not find profitable ways to absorb itself (HARVEY, 2005, 2011).

This financialization changes the economic mechanisms in the current phase of capitalism. The appropriation of surplus value is now not limited to business units, delivering increasingly larger fractions to financial systems that appropriate the “right to the social product through public and private debt” (DOWBOR, 2017, p.132). These globalized power capture mechanisms make governments accountable not to the population but to the interests of the financial market. In the case of the analysis presented here, this is expressed through the majority presence of the financial sector in the definition of educational policies.

From the point of view of production management, in conjunction with the productive restructuring and financialization of the economy, Toyotism was the management model that became hegemonic. Among the changes that differ from the Fordist/Taylorist model, the following stand out: production linked to demand; breaking the partial nature of Fordism with the emphasis on teamwork and the multivariety of functions; flexible production requiring worker versatility and polyactivity; better use of time (Just in Time); horizontality of the structure, including through outsourcing (expanding the model to other companies); organization of Quality Control Circles (QCCs), in which workers are

encouraged to discuss work and performance, becoming an important device through which capital appropriates workers' intellectual and cognitive *savoir-faire*, an element that Fordism despised (ANTUNES, 2009, p. 56-57).

Antunes (2018) and Alves (2011) highlight that these phenomenal manifestations of Toyotism, together with competition, goals, and competencies, shape the field of work under a more participatory, more engaging, and less despotic appearance when compared to the model Fordist/Taylorist.

Thus, in a symbiotic way with productive restructuring and Toyotism, THC underwent an important update stimulated by criticism of the Welfare State and the costs of its social policies and its low returns on investment (KERSTENETZKY, 2018), as well as with the advancement of machinery and technology and its consequent induction in structural unemployment (HARVEY, 2013). This update occurred, above all, from Gary Becker, Schultz's successor at the University of Chicago. The interest of their research began to focus on individual behaviors and quantify them through economic metrics, which implies economic subjectivity<sup>7</sup> (FRANCO et al., 2021).

This context resulted in strong changes in the understanding of the formation of the subject due to innovations in social metabolism related to technical-organizational changes in the complex of productive restructuring, which resulted in intense and systematic cultivation of fetish values, expectations, and market utopias disseminated by devices of the socio-reproductive apparatus of capital (ALVES, 2011), among which the school has become a privileged space by its consolidation, especially through the inclusion of larger portions of working-class youth.

Alves (2011) called this process the “capture” of subjectivity – with quotation marks meaning the understanding of a contradictory process that encounters resistance and confrontations of individual and collective dimensions – which means a process that involves

[...] on the one hand, the constitution of a “process of subjectivization” that articulates the instance of production and the instance of social reproduction. On the other hand, the process of expropriation/appropriation of the complex wealth of human subjectivity, which arises in the historical conditions of the late civilization process, requires an improved mechanism of social manipulation. (ALVES, 2011, p.118, emphasis added)

According to the author, these fetish forms are made up of images, signs, and values that make up, among other things, social objectification, permeated by commodity fetishism and its unconscious mechanisms. Both commodity fetishism and the unconscious are marked by timelessness, which is why they constitute one of the main characteristics of fetish forms: the denial of history and memory. One of the characteristics of the rationality of our time is the production of a notion of a continuous present, a naturalization of forms of social relations. In the lexical field, through discourses such as employability, protagonism, human capital, skills, etc. It will be detailed later how some of these lexicons appear in the educational field.

In this sense, organic intellectual production begins to operationalize modes of subjectivation – “discourses and practices of socialization, through which a human being can transform into a subject” (SILVA et al., 2021, p.77) – relying on neoliberal discourse (BROWN, 2015; DARDOT; LAVAL, 2009; FOULCAUT, 2008). “The new capitalist

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<sup>7</sup> Gary Becker understands the economic method as follows: “The combine assumptions of maximizing behavior, market equilibrium and stable preferences, used relentlessly and unflinchingly, form the heart of the economic approach as I see it.” (BECKER, 1990, p.5, free translation). From the understanding that the market has natural relationships of balance, Becker builds a psychology of preferences, taking choice as the elementary unit of analysis, which characterizes methodological individualism and an individual-centered approach (SILVA et al., 2021).

school”, an institution that was shaped by the conception of the neoliberal subject, is characterized by the incorporation of economic discourse, transforming education systems into “[...] vast networks of human capital formation companies” (LAVAL et al., 2012, s/p., free translation).

The economy as a priority objective granted to education, under THC hegemony, is evident in speeches by the business community, such as in the base document of *Educação Já*<sup>8</sup> (TPE, 2018a, 2018b), in which recent studies in the economic area are mentioned<sup>9</sup>, in which an increase of 100 points in the average assessment of the *Programme for International Student Assessment – PISA* – would result in two percentage points of GDP growth.

The statistical calculation [...] points out that an increase of 100 points in the average result of a country in the PISA international assessment of school performance, promoted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is associated with two percentage points more in the average annual growth rate of GDP per capita in this country. (TPE, 2018a, p. 14)

Understanding education as a key element for economic development does not mean that any education responds to these demands. Since the beginning of theorization about human capital, the hypothesis was already put forward that only some aspects would contain positive externalities, those fragments with potential return on investment. With the development of this Theory, new research sought to better identify what these fragments would be. The research, previously cited by TPE, for example, relates PISA performance to economic growth. The PISA assessment focuses mainly on checking **skills** in reading (native language) and problem-solving (mathematics), although it also measures them in science and, in recent years, in financial literacy<sup>10</sup>.

The orientation towards the pedagogy of skills aimed at education is defined based on practical use, in a utilitarian way, going beyond the notion of school as we have historically and relating directly to the stock of human capital of a nation.

Skills (or abilities) are defined as a group of knowledge, attributes, and capabilities that can be learned and that enable individuals to carry out an activity or task successfully and consistently and that can be built or expanded through learning. **The sum of all skills available to the economy at a given time constitutes a country's human capital.** (OECD, 2014, p.12, emphasis added)

The entry of the notion of skills and its importance for organizing curricula and school practices in Brazil appeared in the curricular reform of the 1990s when a new era of influence by international organizations began in the reforms of social, economic and educational policies, oriented by multilateral organizations<sup>11</sup> and reinforced through

<sup>8</sup> This is a series of documents, with proposals for the federal government, prepared by the TPE in 2018. The entity intended to deliver these documents into the hands of any president who would be elected. They contain a set of measures, ready to be applied, presented as if they were the result of debates, which, evidently, they promoted and whose actors they chose.

<sup>9</sup> They refer, above all, to the work “The knowledge capital of nations: Education and the economics of growth”, by Eric Hanushek and Ludger Woessmann (2015 *apud* TPE, 2018a).

<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://www.gov.br/inep/pt-br/areas-de-atuacao/avaliacao-e-exames-educacionais/pisa#:~:text=O%20Pisa%20avalia%20tr%C3%AAs%20dom%C3%ADnios,todas%20as%20edi%C3%A7%C3%B5es%20ou%20ciclos.&text=Em%202018%2C%2079%20pa%C3%ADses%20participaram,e%2042%20pa%C3%ADses%20feconomias%20parceiras.> Access on: Feb 10, 2021

<sup>11</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stands out; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); and the World Bank (SILVA, 2003).

partnerships between Nation-States and international banks that grant loans on the condition that countries adjust their social and economic policies, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (SILVA, 2003). According to Silva (2003, p.167), this training model “would place the school as a privileged instance to meet the training demands posed by the job market”.

The articulation between business community, the State, and multilateral organizations was evident in the current reform with a loan from IBRD, in April 2018, for 250 million dollars<sup>12</sup> (BRASIL, 2018g), something that had already been planned, when the former Minister of MEC, Mendonça Filho, presented the reform proposal in the USA, in March 2017 (BRASIL, 2018h). At the same time, these multilateral organizations have great coordination with national Think Tanks, especially those most active in secondary education reform, such as IU and TPE.

The OECD (2014, p.10) considers skills to be “a global currency of 21st-century economies”, which seems symbolic in its relationship with human capital. For them, just like a monetary currency, they can appreciate or depreciate and, to maintain their value, they must continually develop. For this reason, the OECD suggests a continuous assessment of the population, measuring anticipated skills determined by the labor market: “Working in this direction is everyone's task. Governments, employers, parents, and students need to establish effective and equitable arrangements to know who pays what, when and how” (OECD, 2014, p.10).

For the cited document, the relevance of skills reinforces the ideology, according to which the development of this utilitarian type of knowledge would contribute to combating unemployment, poverty, and inequality, at the same time that it would make the population less dependent on state services, such as health and education. We found this conception linked to the role of education also in the business community studied:

[...] research proves that education increases the productivity of individuals, which in turn has implications for their income and employability, allowing for better conditions throughout their lives. [...] [One of the consensuses on the relationship between education and development] refers to the impact of education on economic growth, a necessary condition, although insufficient, for us to move towards reducing poverty and unemployment and creating better expectations for social life in its most diverse facets. (TPE, 2018a, p. 13)

Approaching education as a response to the problems that result from the capitalist mode of production, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, etc., constitutes neoliberal ideas, with an economic science that starts from a utilitarian vision of the role of the school prevailing over social policies, “[...] to which political authorities limit themselves to the conviction that their only legitimate role is the promotion of collective well-being assimilated to economic prosperity” (MEULEMEESTER, 2003, p. 178, free translation). This vision discards class relations, naturalizing the capitalist mode of production and the illusion of economic prosperity, holding the individual responsible for problems that are consequences of the structural crisis of capital, and proposing responses to social problems that do not question neoliberal bourgeois society.

### **Skills pedagogy as the flagship of secondary education reform**

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<sup>12</sup> Of the total amount, 221 million dollars will be used in the Program for Results (PforR) for teacher training, curriculum construction, and feasibility studies – which could be entirely carried out by private entities. The program in question “links loan transfers to the achievement of results, which are measured by indicators that will be agreed between the MEC and the bank”, as had already been announced (BRASIL, 2017c, s. p.)

The alarmist speech that justified the approval of the secondary education reform via provisional measure was an important strategy to implement a systematic, rapid, and profound change in Brazilian public secondary education, including through changes to the curriculum based on skills pedagogy (KRAWCZYK; FERRETTI, 2017).

In the explanatory memorandum of MP746/2016, the curricular reform is justified as if the problems of secondary education were “a reflection of a harmful model that does not favor learning and induces students to not develop their skills and competencies” (BRASIL, 2016a, p. 10). Other normative documents of the reform, such as the BNCC for Secondary Education and the DCNEM, also organize the curriculum based on the notion of skills (BRASIL, 2018a, 2018c).

This notion, widely defended by the business community, is accompanied by the defense of liberal pedagogies such as learning to learn, lifelong learning, etc. (LAVAL, 2004; ZAN, 2005), presented as a form of opposition to a supposedly conservative pedagogy of the content school or the encyclopedic curriculum, using an argument that approaches a syllogism and with false premises and distorting the debate about the role of teaching knowledge historically accumulated and unequally distributed between social classes. Such fallacious discourse appears in several documents from the business community and the public hearings of MP746/2016, corroborating Tanguy's (1997) statements that the pedagogy of skills is strengthened more by a denial of traditional knowledge, supposedly outdated, than by an argument coherent proposition:

*[...] And educating for this new scenario is as if I were saying, including and especially in high school, that it is less relevant what the student learned, and it is much more relevant if, in the learning process, they managed to mature, grow his ability to know as he learns. [...] It's as if I were saying – a word that I don't like very much, but it's pertinent – that learning is becoming less relevant than learning to learn. (RONALDO MOTA, Dean of Estácio de Sá University, 4th Meeting of CMMPV 746/2016, 8 Nov. 2016)*

The main document prepared by the TPE and the IU and used by them to justify the reform claims that

The excess of subjects in the High School curriculum is a known problem, which means that content is transmitted in a superficial way using traditional and, in a certain way, outdated methods<sup>13</sup>. This results in little attractiveness of teaching and does not arouse the interest of most students, compromising the consolidation of new knowledge. (TPE, 2013, p. 79)

According to research sponsored by Itaú BBA in partnership with *Todos Pela Educação*, the orientation of training through competencies would respond to the demands for skills of the 21st century, cited in UNESCO's 2030 agenda (UNESCO, 2016) and “[...] **considered essential for performance in the job market of the future** and consolidation of citizenship” (CARDINI; SANCHEZ, 2018, p. 20, emphasis added).

Even though in other documents, mainly from the TPE, slogans from the business community appear concerning citizenship training – despite the lack of definition of what they understand by the concept –, their practical proposals reduce education and learning to the formation of skills appropriate to neoliberal society. In the base document of *Educação Já*, it is possible to find principles such as “learning for the integral development of the person” (TPE, 2018a, p. 7), among others. However, this rhetoric conceals that its practical proposals, present in the most propositional documents, restrict the conception of

<sup>13</sup> Let us pay attention to the fact that, many times, an excess of content is seen as a generator of various problems, but none of the documents studied presented any evidence that traditional methods or superficial forms of teaching were related to the amount of content.

integral – which has historically been defended by social movements – to the “development of physical, cognitive and socio-emotional **aspects**” (TPE, 2018d, p. 18, emphasis added), aspects that should be developed through skills training.

Among the skills, socio-emotional skills stand out<sup>14</sup>, also called behavioral skills. They have been widely defended by the Brazilian business community as an important demand from employers, who normally reference studies from multilateral organizations, such as the OECD (DESAFIOS..., 2017; TPE, 2018d).

When employers participate in designing curricula and implementing post-secondary educational programs, students appear to have a smoother transition between education and the job market. Compared to curricula designed exclusively by the government and implemented in school systems, workplace learning offers several advantages: it allows students to develop “functional” skills on modern equipment and “behavioral” skills such as teamwork, communication, and negotiation through real-life experiences. (OECD, 2014, p.29, emphasis added)

The notion of socio-emotional skills is incorporated into economic discourse, especially by James Heckman, professor at the University of Chicago and winner of the Nobel Prize in 2000, for the “development of theory and methods for analyzing selective samples” that can be used “to evaluate the effect of public labor market programs and educational programs” (HECKMAN, 2017, [s.p.]),<sup>15</sup> among other things. Socio-emotional skills, such as self-control, resilience, and teamwork, are also emphasized in his speech.

His ideas are found in documents from multilateral organizations, as a response to the structural problems of capital:

The current socioeconomic environment presents challenges that affect the future of children and young people. Although access to education has improved, good training is no longer the only requirement to secure a job; young people have been hit by growing unemployment after the economic crisis. Problems such as obesity and decreased civic engagement are on the rise. The aging of the population and the environmental panorama are a concern. Social and labor market inequalities tend to increase. Education has enormous potential to face these challenges by improving skills. Cognitive and socio-emotional skills, such as perseverance, self-control, and resilience, are equally important. All skills must be encouraged for individuals and societies to prosper. (OECD, 2015, p.17)

Resilience understood as the individual's ability to adapt positively to adversity, has been increasingly demanded by corporate psychology. It becomes a central skill, as it contributes to increasing performance, ensuring worker loyalty to the company. Therefore, it enters the educational universe both through the institutional context and through the training of students, as a skill that must be learned and cultivated at school (KRAWCZYK; ZAN, 2021).

The notion of skills emerges from the capital crisis and its restructuring process, with flexible accumulation and structural unemployment. It comes from employer demands, is born within companies, and expands to educational systems primarily through professional education (SILVA, 2003; TANGUY, 1997). By hiding the real relations of the struggle between capital and labor, it acts in the educational instance to produce consensus on the neoliberal bourgeois society, it characterizes a “capture” of the subjectivity demanded by the

<sup>14</sup> The socio-emotional skills model discards the deep relationships between emotion and cognition, and reduces the human personality to a few traits, possible to be analyzed differently, which goes against the most comprehensive field of science, from neurology to sociology (SILVA, M. M. , 2018; SMOLKA et al., 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Source <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2000/heckman/facts/> Accessed on: 22 Feb. 2020. Free translation.

new management organizations of work (ALVES, 2011; ALVES; MOREIRA; PUZIOL, 2009; SILVA, M. M., 2018) and demands from the employee a personal mobilization and a subjective involvement for, in addition to the internalization of the traditional functions of the professions, an obligation with performance and results (LAVAL et al., 2012).

## THE PRACTICE AND CONCEPTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE REFORM

From content to form, business community influence reaches different aspects of public schools. While the narrowing of training to the market brought the pedagogy of skills linked to standardized tests, school management began to be shaped by the pursuit of results, according to the business community model.

If there is one thing that I have invested in throughout my business career – and that has never brought me any kind of disappointment – it is good management. I believe that good management practices are universal principles that can – and should – be applied to schools when building an education project for the country. [...] (SALLES<sup>16</sup>, 2017, p. 11)

Although accountability is a dense and polysemic concept and, therefore, difficult to translate, we will use the meaning of Afonso (2009), who conceptualizes it in three articulated and articulable dimensions: evaluation, income statement, and responsibility. The practice of accountability is part of the ideology of New Public Management (NGP- *Nova Gestão Pública*) as a proposal to reform the State and institutions that apply knowledge and practices from business management and related disciplines, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness<sup>17</sup> of services. These practices at the State level had their milestones in the neoliberal governments of the 1980s, especially in the USA<sup>18</sup> and England (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2009; MAROY; VOISIN, 2013) and, implemented by governments of different political stripes, spread throughout the world as a global agenda for educational reforms, especially due to the influence of the OECD (AFONSO, 2009; OLIVEIRA, 2015; VERGER; NORMAND, 2015). In Brazil, NGP gained strength with the structural reforms of the 1990s (OLIVEIRA, 2015).

According to Cossio (2018), NGP presupposes a quality of education linked to business logic, capable of verification through standardized tests and represented by performance indicators and ranking systems that aim to respond to adequate results by externally defined standards. In this sense, we believe that the accountability mechanism is exemplary of the NGP, due to the way it was applied in the reform and defended by the business community<sup>19</sup>.

For Dardot and Laval (2009, p. 284-285, free translation), accountability comes from financial market practice and extends to “all actors in the company, from the manager to the base employee”. According to them, this would be characteristic of how the financial

<sup>16</sup> President of Instituto Unibanco, Pedro Moreira Salles is heir to Unibanco and the ninth richest billionaire in Brazil. He is the son of Walter Moreira Salles, one of the supporters of the 1964 military coup and direct beneficiary of the dictatorship's monetary policies (BRANDÃO, 2018).

<sup>17</sup> “Efficiency has as its criterion the best solution to a problem, while efficiency presupposes the financial evaluation of the most economical solution” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2009, p. 381, free translation).

<sup>18</sup> In the United States, the “No Child Left Behind Act” educational reform, undertaken by the Bush administration, stands out. (AFONSO, 2009; FREITAS, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Other NGP provisions found in business community and reform documents could also be cited, such as the *Melhores práticas* (*Best Practices*) and *Política focalizada* (*Target Policies*) (QUADROS, 2020).

market became a “disciplinary agent”, that is, an important part of the dissemination of a rationality.

School rankings have been examples of what accountability practices result in, by stimulating competition between schools, through a logic that the literature has called quasi-market, in which state schools compete both for State funding and by those considered the best students (NOGUEIRA; LACERDA, 2014). This logic has been defended in the name of an educational diversity desired by parents and necessary for economic and social development, including, in some places, starting from an entrepreneurial ethic and valuing competitive behaviors (VAN ZANTEN, 2014).

We can identify the accountability device in several documents that guide the ongoing secondary education reform, particularly the ordinances promoting the implementation of the Full-Time Secondary Education policy - EMTI<sup>20</sup>, which conditioned transfers to the achievement of performance targets and flow of students, with harsh responsibilities<sup>21</sup> (BRASIL, 2016b, 2017b, 2018d).

These ordinances were publicly highly praised by the business community, with guidelines for improvement and expansion. The recommendation of the TPE (2018c) was to maintain performance criteria but establish a range value, which in the ordinances would have remained vague. In another document, it was suggested that there be an online platform on which assessments could be made and generate more immediate responses (TPE, 2018d). In other words, the business community demands not only to expand the practice of accountability, by suggesting that new ordinances reach more schools and that target criteria be expanded, including performance in tests, but also to intensify them, by defending that school results can be evaluated more quickly through digital platforms.

Ordinance 1023/2018 also brings an important aspect in terms of evaluation “based on educational evidence” (BRASIL, 2018d, [s.p.]). This issue draws attention, as it links the program's impact assessment to ordinance MEC 950, from 2018, which “Establishes the Educational Evidence Network, coordinated by the Ministry of Education” (BRASIL, 2018e, [s.p.]). The composition of this network was defined by art. 3rd:

The Educational Evidence Network may be composed of public bodies or institutions, and their affiliates, from all powers and entities of the federation; **third sector institutions; multilateral organizations**; teaching and research institutions; and independent researchers and specialists with recognized performance in the areas of evaluation and innovation in educational policies. (BRASIL, 2018e, [s.p.], emphasis added)

The initial composition of the Network<sup>22</sup> was already attended by Ricardo Paes de Barros, an economist at the Ayrton Senna Institute and Insper (BRASIL, 2018f). It is noteworthy that the evaluation model proposed by Ordinance 1023/2018 is like business community proposals when evaluating impacts with treatment groups, which receive political intervention, and control groups, which do not receive it (IU, 2011b, 2017; TPE, 2018a).

So-called evidence-based policies are symbolic of accountability practices, by linking resources only to policies that respond to predetermined index-related questions. Research that uses this methodology, especially when linked to business community and multilateral organizations, seeks to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of a given social policy, program, or intervention, based on the isolation of variables and restricted criteria of

<sup>20</sup> Ordinance 1145/2016 (BRASIL, 2016b), 727/2017 (BRASIL, 2017b) and 1023/2018 (BRASIL, 2018d).

<sup>21</sup> The accountability criteria, which resulted in the dismissal of the ordinance, were intensified between the first, in 2016, and ordinance 1023/2018. In the latter, states or federal districts that had more than two schools that did not meet the targets could be shut down entirely. (BRASIL, 2018d).

<sup>22</sup> The network was closed in 2019 (MARIZ, 2019).

performance and school performance, such as large-scale assessments, which only capture aspects of Portuguese and mathematics and student flow<sup>23</sup> (QUADROS, 2020).

The business community's orientation towards the principle of accountability goes beyond policies focused only on education. The TPE also suggests that it is a priority for the federal government to adopt results-conditional transfer policies, in which even a possible tax reform may include “mechanisms for inducing improvements in educational results” (TPE, 2018a, p. 72) and, “[...] even if the set of goals has, at a national level, a symbolic character (since there are no sanctions or bonuses for achieving them or not), there are positive qualitative signs of their influence” (TPE, 2018a, p. 73).

Good Practices, in terms of accountability, are also usually presented in business community documents. Fiscal and tax policy experiences that follow NGP principles are repeatedly cited, especially in the case of Ceará:

Some recent experiences on Brazilian soil (such as the creation of IDEB and Ceará's experience with the distribution of ICMS linked to educational results) begin to suggest **that the introduction of incentive and induction policies at the government level may be the key to effectively facing the political challenge** (and consequently, the technical challenge) of Brazilian basic education. (TPE, 2018a, p. 30, emphasis in the document)

However, we did not find justifications that explain why these institutions consider that the introduction of these mechanisms would resolve these challenges. Although it can sometimes indicate impact assessments that measure results of accountability policies, the orientation of its documents points to a further defense that the existence of social policy, whatever it may be, must be linked to a performance result.

Therefore, large-scale assessments play an essential role in new regulatory mechanisms. Performance on standardized tests has been the only criterion of truth and validation in the distribution of resources (AFONSO, 2009; OLIVEIRA, 2015).

For Freitas (2012), this logic is part of a resumption of both behaviorisms, in the sense of punishment and reward practices, and technicalism, despite a new guise. Current technicalism would be a theory of accountability, meritocratic<sup>24</sup>, and managerial, carrying the same technical rationality as before, but now in the form of standards – learning expectations measured by standardized tests. New ways of managing the school workforce, with control through processes, bonuses, and punishments, are strengthened by disciplines such as

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<sup>23</sup> This article does not include a more in-depth critique of the use of evidence-based education methodology (randomized controlled studies). The methodology has clear scientific value in answering the questions it proposes, for example: is a given policy intervention capable of improving performance in problem-solving skills in mathematics? By isolating variables and working with control and treatment groups, the methodology can evaluate the impact of an intervention. However, unlike when applied to natural sciences, such as drug testing, for example, considering the complexity of the educational environment, this research does not measure the side effects of a given intervention, such as political formation, aesthetics, etc. An exemplary case has been the Jovem de Futuro Project, from Instituto Unibanco, which sells the idea that the program increases learning in high school by one year, although the methodology only measures the IDEB that captures school flow and performance in tests that they only assess some skills in Portuguese and mathematics and do not measure possible side effects, such as the impact of the program on training in other aspects (QUADROS, 2020).

<sup>24</sup> The concept of meritocracy was developed by Michael Young in 1958, to show how personal merit appears as a principle through which British society was structured from the 1950s onwards. The author shows how meritocracy is an ideological instrument, aimed at maintaining an unequal system. It operates through selection devices that reinforce and justify power relations in an unequal society.

The meritocratic order, under the cloak of a democratic logic of selection, carries out and/or promotes, through the implementation of different individual and institutional measurement mechanisms, the selection of students with greater skills and/or abilities who choose the school units with better indicators and are chosen by them. Young wrote, as a satirical narrative, the classic book *The rise of the meritocracy* while economists insisted on showing the importance of human capital for individual mobility.

econometrics, statistics, and information science, composing what he calls “neotechnicism” (FREITAS, 2012).

The practice of accountability therefore constitutes a management device that has implications from the State to the individual. This appears in some documents from the business community, which seek to understand young people's issues, especially based on research that articulates developmental psychology with economic assumptions. Proposals appear, for example, to make students directly responsible, such as awards for performance or for carrying out activities; or income transfer, conditional on permanence and/or performance (IU, 2011b).

### **THE DISCOURSE OF YOUTH PROTAGONISM AS A FORM OF ACTIVE SUBMISSION TO NEOLIBERAL RATIONALITY**

In the context of the business lexicon that encompasses the pedagogy of skills and accountability, youth protagonism seems to characterize how young people would come to embody mercantile rationality. The hypothesis we raise is that the devices implemented, based on the discourse around youth protagonism, seek to capture the energy or desire of young people – just as the desire was captured by companies in the new business management, as described by Gaulejac (2007) –, tensioning the direction of youth rebellion for purposes that corroborate the neoliberal and bourgeois societal project.

This strategy, focused mainly on poor youth, seems to create a less coercive form of action, when compared to the repression of the student movement (although coercion has not ended), through devices disseminated by the business community and applied in the reform: now the youth protagonism is encouraged, however, its content and form are well guided by the actors who were often targets of students, that is, the State and the business community.

According to Souza (2009, p.2-3), the expression youth protagonism, always vaguely defined, “began to circulate in the discourse, especially of third sector organizations that work with poor youth [...] in the mid-90s”. Often, these actors approach youth protagonism as a method, principle, or pedagogical axis, whose emphasis on young people’s activity “would move them from a position considered passive, as a mere beneficiary or repository of knowledge, to a position of active participation” (p. 3). When they refer to the concept imprecisely, they reproduce a “strategy, or a peculiar discursive operation, of manufacturing” (idem) consensus around the societal model, treating the issue of young people’s participation and engagement as something individual to be constructed for harmonious coexistence in a society of atomized individuals.

In the secondary education reform, the need for youth leadership appeared as one of the main arguments in defense of its approval, both in official and business community documents and in speeches at public hearings. Curricular flexibility, adopted as a slogan in defense of the reform (KRAWCZYK; FERRETI, 2017), had protagonism as one of its main justifications, that is, young people could choose an itinerary. *“I believe in the importance of curricular flexibility, I think this has to do with contemporary society, it has to do with what young people are expressing themselves, it has to do with a need for authorship and protagonism that contemporary society has presented to us”* (MARIA ALICE SETÚBAL<sup>25</sup>, 4th Meeting of CMMPV 746/2016, 8 November 2016).

Although there is no direct mention in MP746/2016 of the notion of protagonism, subsequent documents incorporated this discourse. The reform was consolidated, so to speak, in an undertaking of the ideology of youth protagonism through its official documents, understanding it as a “backbone of the New High School”, by encouraging “young people to make choices, take decisions and become take responsibility for them” (BRASIL, 2018b, p. 6); demanding the inclusion of the topic in the pedagogical

<sup>25</sup> She is a billionaire heiress to Itaú and a philanthropist.

projects of schools participating in ordinance 1023/2018, linked to socio-emotional skills and life projects (BRASIL, 2018d); and activating the MEC's official propaganda, which ran slogans such as “it's the freedom you wanted to decide your future”<sup>26</sup>.

Let us remember that the perspective of human training involved in the reform is closely related to the formation of human capital and adaptation to the labor market, especially through skills pedagogy. The participation or engagement of students is also seen by the business community and highlighted by the OECD (2015, p. 84-85, emphasis added) as an effective way of “developing skills necessary for democracy, such as negotiation, group work and appropriation of responsibilities. According to them, “students can take on tasks in the classroom that increase their **self-efficacy** and sense of responsibility.”

In the official documents of the reform and the business community, the New Secondary Education would provide protagonism, by offering the possibility of choosing training itineraries, which the student does not always have in fact as an alternative, considering that the law does not guarantee the provision for all the itineraries everywhere<sup>27</sup>. In the official documents of the reform and the business community, the New Secondary Education would provide protagonism, by offering the possibility of choosing training itineraries, which the student does not always have in fact as an alternative, considering that the law does not guarantee the provision for all the itineraries everywhere. It seems that the reform and defense of protagonism by the business community would constitute a subjective mobilization of young people, seeking to make them believe that their destinies were the result of their choices. This analysis corroborates Souza's thesis (2009, p.20, author's emphasis), according to which youth protagonism would be a form of active submission, in which the young person would embody the rule, materializing the discourse of power and attesting to its effectiveness, that is, “the active individual himself maintains power and his discourse in operation, and, therefore, 'contributes' (according to a frequent term in the discourse in question) to his domination”.

It is, therefore, a controlled and guided protagonism, capable of being managed. When representatives of the student movements for UBES and UNE participated in the hearings and expressed their rejection of MP746/2016, they were completely disregarded by the business community and parliamentarians who supported the reform<sup>28</sup>. It is, therefore, a controlled and guided protagonism, capable of being managed. When representatives of the student movements for UBES and UNE participated in the hearings and expressed their rejection of MP746/2016, they were completely disregarded by the business community and parliamentarians who supported the reform. At the same time, the business community sought to appropriate the discourse on the occupations of high schools in 2016 and transform resistance into collaborative participation. One of the main agendas of the occupations at a national level was the opposition to MP746/2016<sup>29</sup>, when the business community was in public hearings, defending the reform.

<sup>26</sup> Disponível em: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdERkLO3eTs>> Acesso em: 18 fev. 2021. A frase citada aparece aos 20 segundos da propaganda.

<sup>27</sup> Art. 36 defines that “the high school curriculum will be composed of the National Common Curricular Base and training itineraries, which must be organized through the offering of different curricular arrangements, **according to the relevance to the local context and the possibility of educational systems.**” (BRASIL, 2017a, [s. p.], our emphasis).

<sup>28</sup> At the public hearing held at the fifth meeting of the joint parliamentary committee (CMMPV 746/2016, 11/09/2016), the representatives of UBES and UNE students were banned from entering the meeting room by the president of the senate, Renan Calheiros. Meanwhile, the first panel was starting, with Olavo Nogueira Filho (TPE) speaking. The president of the commission, Izalci Lucas, only allowed UBES and UNE to enter, when the other participants at the table, Monica Ribeiro da Silva, from the Movement in Defense of Secondary Education, and Iria Brzezinski, from ANFOPE, refused to speak without the participation of student entities. The TPE representative had little to say about the matter.

<sup>29</sup> “Contrary to the provisional measure that provides for a reform of secondary education (MP 746, published in September) and the proposed constitutional amendment that establishes a ceiling for federal public spending

Without access to formal channels of expression and participation, many students occupied their schools between 2015 and 2016, to express their dissatisfactions and demand a school that was more vibrant and connected to the desires of young people. The demonstrations were reinforced by the multiplication of collectives and other face-to-face and virtual association formats for teenagers and young people, aimed at promoting various causes.

The interest of young people in participating is expressed in an increasingly powerful way, as is the desire to not only be listened to but to feel that their contributions are relevant. (TPE; IU; INSPIRARE, 2019b, p. 11)

At the same time, the concept of young people found in some documents from the business community well characterizes the formation of a neoliberal subject. When seeking to understand reasons for dropout rates among young people, Instituto Unibanco (2011b, p.5) is guided by the question: “If the [economic] benefits of education are so high, why do some teenagers drop out of school so early?”. The entire construction of understanding regarding evasion is done in a similar way to how human capital theorists seek to understand the role of education in terms of return on investment. Attendance or non-attendance at school, for example, is measured in the form of costs for individuals.

According to studies endorsed in this document – which combine behavioral psychology, neuroscience, and economics –, adolescents would have a preference for presenteeism and would not recognize the “benefits” of education: “A great emphasis on the present would help to explain why those who drop out the school give up such a high return” (IU, 2011a, p. 7). Also,

Some economists have suggested that young people have hyperbolic preferences, which generates temporal inconsistencies. For example, young people may prefer R\$100.00 today to R\$110.00 in a month, but, at the same time, they would prefer R\$110.00 in a year and a month than R\$100.00 in a year. (IU, 2011a, p.10)

Understanding young people as those who calculate their opportunities, self-capitalist, even if myopic, as described by the document, denotes how the business community sees youth: a *homo oeconomicus* in formation, a subject who must incorporate the market ideology (BROWN, 2015; DARDOT; LAVAL, 2009; FOUCAUT, 2008; LAVAL et al., 2012).

This notion is related to new governance practices. The understanding of individuals pursuing their interests naturally, as understood in classical liberalism, is altered by a constructivist perspective of the subject. The market, now, is not only the metric by which all conduct must be guided, but it is also the educator, through practices that seek to build consensus in the individual (BROWN, 2015).

As Wendy Brown (2015, p.84) considers,

[...] the notion of individuals naturally pursuing their interests has been replaced with the production through governance of responsabilized citizens who appropriately self-invest in a context of macroeconomic vicissitudes and needs that make all of these investments into practices of speculation. Homo oeconomicus is made, not born, and operates in a context replete with risk, contingency, and potentially violent changes, from burst bubbles and capital or currency meltdowns to wholesale industry dissolution.

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(PEC 55, approved in December), high school students across the country occupied more of 1,000 schools in protest” (OSHIMA; MARRONE, 2017, [s.p.]). Although it was not the secondary education reform that initially mobilized students to occupy schools, with the publication of MP746/2016, the occupations joined other demands for its annulment.

This characteristic is evident in the official documents of the reform, regarding what they understand by comprehensive training [educação integral] and guided choice:

Comprehensive training: is the **intentional development** of the student's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional aspects through meaningful educational processes that promote autonomy, citizen behavior, and **protagonism in the construction of their life project**.

[...] His [Reform] proposal considers three major fronts, among them the **development of students' protagonism and their life project, through a guided choice** of what they want to study. (BRASIL, 2018b, p 2-3, emphasis added)

The idea of a guided project is linked to the notion of constructing young people's identities, a way of subjectifying the ideology that represents these discourses. Both youth protagonism and life projects are presented as an atomized way for the subject to perceive themselves and adapt to society, disregarding, for example, the systemic crisis we are going through and the lack of decent jobs with rights that can cover everyone. By defining the form and content of young people's participation and engagement, seeking to instill notions about what a young protagonist is, these new devices construct a way of active submission, in which young people come to understand themselves as responsible for their future – within the structural crisis of capital and its consequences on work –, calculator of its opportunities and entrepreneur of its destiny. Confronting society's social and structural problems can take a backseat when the life project of an atomized subject starts to be incorporated by the young protagonist himself.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

To understand how neoliberalism is effective in practice, it is necessary to interrogate how specific collective forces and oligarchies (small groups with a preponderance in power) implement it. As Dardot and Laval (2016, [s.p.], free translation) consider, “neoliberalism is not limited to globalized commodification or anonymous financialization. As a project and system, it has a face and bears names.” It is important to remember that neoliberalism, although it is also expressed as a rationality, is, above all, a class project (HARVEY, 2005).

The prevalence of the financial sector in guiding social policies grows with the current stage of capitalism and its regime of financial accumulation. As we have seen, especially with accountability, the primacy of the logic of financialization subjects power relations and subjectivities to the norm – in the sense of rationality – of accumulation of financial capital. It is through this business community “that the mimetic, irrational, immediate behaviors of the financial market spread throughout the economy, the State and society” (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, [s. p.], free translation).

The educational project implemented in the secondary education reform bears names from different segments of the business community, but the banking sector prevails, especially linked to Itaú-Unibanco. The names of bankers are not even disguised in the foundations that receive their funding, such as the heirs of this conglomerate, Maria Alice Setúbal (working in several foundations) and Pedro Moreira-Salles (presiding over Instituto Unibanco). *Todos Pela Educação*, despite having a plurality of parties, has as its main supporter the same conglomerate through four institutions<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Although we did not find the amount that each supporter donates to the TPE, according to its Bylaws (TPE, 2019), the voting power is equivalent to the amount donated by each supporting member. Having a large

This business action towards an educational project for the working class materializes in practices and devices that adapt the training of young people to the demands of new work management organizations that consolidate what Giovanni Alves (2011) calls the “capture” of subjectivity: an expansion of the business rationality of capital from the space of production to the space of social reproduction – in the case of our analysis, the school of workers.

In the context of neoliberalism, with the discourse of human capital, a renewed reflection is required on the new forms of subsumption of work about how workers are governed today. Neoliberal subsumption confuses the process of capital valorization, in which surplus value is extracted from work, into a subjectivization of the worker as an active subject of valorization. As stated by Laval et al. (2012), if labor exploitation forced workers to sell their labor power to physically survive, today the capitalist buys their soul.

If socio-emotional skills seek to embody self-control, teamwork, and resilience in young people – within the structural crisis of capital – and accountability intends to subjectify the neoliberal rationality arising from financial capital, with its quantaphrenic pursuit of results of increased human capital, youth protagonism is the strategy by which capital seeks to actively subject young people to its rationality, that is, through discourses and manipulation strategies, to make young people believe that they are the author of their domination.

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presence of supporters from the banking and financial sector, and due to its economic power, we believe that the segment has hegemony of votes within the institution.

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