

ARTICLE

CHANGES OF SECONDARY STUDENTS' MOVEMENT IN THE FLEXIBLE LEARNING THROUGH THE HIGH SCHOOL COUNTER-REFORM

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ABSTRACT: Before a framework of strategic reorientation from a new configuration of the Brazilian hegemonic political bloc given from the institutional coup of 2016, new educational policies are consolidated from the Secondary Education Counter-Reform (Law nº 13.415/2017). By analyzing the antecedents and main developments of these policies, their impacts on high school student self-organization are investigated articulating, in qualitative research, bibliographic and empirical material. For that, the specialized literature was verified in order to rescue the main fundamentals and objectives of the New High School. In the empirical analysis, interviews were carried out with leaders from Rio Grande do Sul youth movement of outstanding intervention with secondary student movement, in the hope of understanding the movement's reading of the impact of these new policies on its bases. Using Grounded Theory, codes were identified referring to trends provoked by the Counter-Reform that aggravated a previous situation of political-organizational reflux, contributing to the significant immobilization of this sector in face of the processes of disinvestment in education and degradation of the living conditions of Brazilian youth.

Keywords: Flexible learning, High School Counter-Reform (Law nº 13.415/2017), secondary students' movement, social movements, youth.

TRANSFORMAÇÕES DO MOVIMENTO SECUNDARISTA NA CONSOLIDAÇÃO DA APRENDIZAGEM FLEXÍVEL ATRAVÉS DA CONTRARREFORMA DO ENSINO MÉDIO

RESUMO: Diante do quadro de uma nova configuração do bloco político hegemônico brasileiro dada a partir do golpe institucional de 2016, novas políticas educacionais se consolidam através da Contrarreforma do Ensino Médio (Lei nº 13.415/2017). Ao analisar os antecedentes e os principais desdobramentos dessas políticas, investiga-se neste artigo seus impactos sobre a auto-organização estudantil secundarista, ao articular, em pesquisa de natureza qualitativa, material bibliográfico e empírico. Para tanto, verificou-se a literatura especializada a fim de resgatar os principais fundamentos e objetivos do Novo Ensino Médio. Na análise empírica, realizou-se entrevistas com dirigentes gaúchos de organizações juvenis de destacada intervenção junto às entidades estudantis secundaristas, na expectativa de compreender a leitura do movimento a respeito do impacto destas novas políticas sobre suas bases. Utilizando a Teoria Fundamentada, identificaram-se códigos referentes às tendências provocadas pela Contrarreforma que agravam um cenário de refluxo político-organizativo anterior, contribuindo para a significativa imobilização deste setor frente aos processos de desinvestimento na educação e degradação das condições de vida das juventudes brasileiras.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem flexível, Contrarreforma do Ensino Médio (Lei nº 13.415/2017), juventude, movimentos sociais, movimento estudantil secundarista.

CAMBIO DEL MOVIMIENTO DE ESTUDIANTES DE LA SECUNDARIA EN LA CONSOLIDACIÓN DEL APRENDIZAJE FLEXIBLE

RESUMEN: Frente a un marco de reorientación estratégica desde una nueva configuración del bloque político hegemónico brasileño dado a partir del golpe institucional de 2016, se consolidan nuevas políticas educativas a través de la Contrarreforma de la Enseñanza Media (Ley nº 13.415/2017). Analizando los antecedentes y principales desarrollos de estas políticas, investigamos sus impactos en la autoorganización de los estudiantes de secundaria articulando material bibliográfico y empírico en una investigación cualitativa. Para ello, se verificó bibliografía especializada con el fin de rescatar los principales fundamentos y objetivos de la Nueva Preparatoria. En el análisis empírico, se realizaron entrevistas a líderes de organizaciones juveniles de Rio Grande do Sul, con destacada intervención en las entidades estudiantiles secundarias, con la expectativa de comprender la lectura del movimiento respecto al impacto de esas nuevas políticas en sus bases. Utilizando la Teoría Fundamentada, se identificaron códigos referentes a las tendencias provocadas por la Contrarreforma que agravan un reflujo político-organizativo previo, contribuyendo a la significativa inmovilización de este sector frente a los procesos de desinversión en educación y degradación de las condiciones de vida de la juventud brasileña.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje flexible, Contrarreforma de la Enseñanza Media (Ley nº 13.415/2017), jóvenes, movimientos sociales, movimiento estudiantil secundario.

INTRODUCTION

Changed since the institutional coup of 2016, the configuration of the hegemonic political bloc in Brazil has allowed a strategic reorientation of government policies in important sectors of the economy and public service. Among the most significant transformations that have caused the massive mobilization of the working class in the course of these last years are changes in Petrobras' pricing policy, the spending ceiling (derived from the so-called "PEC of Death," PEC 241/2016, crystallized in Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016), the Labor Reform (Law No. 13.467/2017), the Pension Reform (EC No. 103/2019) and the High School Reform (Law No. 13.415/2017), as they became known.

The objectives of this study elude the in-depth analysis of the particular characteristics and purposes of each of these changes and their interrelationships, as well as other substantial changes that respond to this strategic reorientation of a neoliberal nature and, especially from 2018, explicitly neo-fascist government policies. Despite the recomposition of this political bloc with the result of the 2022 elections, the maintenance of the so-called reforms is still a controversial issue: the stances around the repeal of the New High School and the new labor and social security policies divide supporters and opponents of President Lula's third term, keeping the discussion on the training and work of Brazilian youth on the agenda.

In order to contribute to this debate, the research aims to develop an analysis of the organizational framework of the secondary students' movement in the context of consolidation of flexible learning through the Secondary Education Counter-Reform, identifying the main correlations between school development and student political movement during the implementation process of the New High School. Two paths were taken in order to verify the design of emerging political trends in this context: the systematic review of the literature¹ referring to the Secondary Education Counter-Reform and its political context in order to give a basis to the theoretical foundation of this study and identify the different recent interpretations on the subject, and the field research with the directions of the secondary students' movement present in Rio Grande do Sul.

Thus, especially aiming to verify gravitations in the conditions of organization and mobilization that could result from the new educational policies implemented in 2017, we sought to understand, through the analysis of interviews, the conjuncture readings developed by the students' movement's own leadership regarding Education and teaching-learning conditions, students' autonomy and freedom of choice, as well as the purpose of High School and the future prospects present within the movement, especially at its summit. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this study, confronted with the literature raised, will allow researchers and students interested in the secondary school struggle to qualify their conjectural analysis from the new trends opened by the change of these government policies in the course of what still seems to be a roaring high school crisis.

In addressing Law No. 13.415/2017, we prefer to treat it as a *Secondary Education Counter-Reform* since it concerns an essentially restorative movement in which the presence, maintenance, and deepening of structuring elements of the capitalist mode of production in its new phase of flexible

¹ In researching the bibliography, descriptors related to the New High School and the process of student and popular resistance to its approval were used in the screening of articles published from 2016 to 2022, primarily in five scientific journals Qualis CAPES A1 in the Education field. From this initial material — consisting of essays, exploratory research, case studies, etc. —, the texts that prioritize themes such as "Secondary Education Counter-Reform (2016)", "New High School," "High School Common National Curriculum," "National Curriculum High School guidelines" and "2016 student protests" were selected; to which were added reference productions that were related to the research problem and/or that mobilized central categories for the development of research.

accumulation² — and, therefore, of its specific educational characteristics — exceeds the fulfillment of the demands expressed by social movements, especially the secondary students' movement. Law No. 13.415/2017 — whose main antecedent is Bill No. 6.840/2013, authored by Deputy Reginaldo Lopes (PT-MG) — sought to present conservative proposals in the face of a chronic identity crisis of High School, which, as we will see, deepens the main school difficulties from the point of view of infrastructure, conditions of teaching, access and attendance in Basic Education Institutions, low income and dropout students, lack of identification of the youth with Education, among others.

THE COUNTER-REFORM AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS

According to Da Motta and Frigotto (2017, p. 358), the justifications that anchored the edition of Provisional Measure No. 746/2016 focused, for its articulators, on: "investing in human capital aiming at greater *productivity*; *modernizing* the curriculum structure, making it more *flexible* by areas of knowledge; and improving the results of school performance" (emphasis added). However, the so-called "modernization" process of High School, in fact, rescues educational models first experienced during the civil-military dictatorship, especially from Law No. 5.692/1971, which proposed compulsory professionalization and instituted training itineraries that were carried out by choice of educational systems³.

In this vein, the literature also points out that, with the Counter-Reform, the tendency to detach in High School, general and technical-professional training is heightened, diminishing the basic training of Secondary School students and expanding the detachment between the categories of *integral Education* and *full-time Education*. In view of this, the program to promote the implementation of full-time schools (created through Provisional Measure 746/16 and instituted through Act No. 1,145/2016) is based on a typical proposal of the so-called Pedagogy of Competencies that aims to "provide individuals with flexible behaviors that allow them to adjust to the conditions of a society" (SAVIANI, 2013, p. 437 *apud* DA SILVA; BOUTIN, 2018, p. 528). The motto that crystallizes it, "*learning to learn*," expresses a pedagogical project that not only shifts social responsibility over Education from public power to the private sphere⁴ — whose promiscuous relations with the public sector, within the Ministry of Education, especially the Council of Secretaries of Education, reveal a broader framework of disputes for hegemony in the direction of basic and professional Education — but also translates the formation of a type of worker in which "prior qualification matters less than adaptability" (KUENZER, 2017, p. 341).

Through the imposition of training itineraries, the flexibility of Secondary Education is realized in the implementation of a proposal for *fragmentation* of Education to replace the guidelines, expressed in Resolution CNE/CP No. 02/2012, of the *integrity* of human formation (*ibid.*). Thus, the curricular and workload changes operated through Law No. 13.415/2017 have a direct impact on the quality of training offered by the country to its youth. By making only the subjects of Portuguese and Mathematics mandatory throughout the school course⁵, a series of difficulties also unfold for the exercise of teaching itself, starting with the very weakening of student training, tending to overload educators with

² Cf. COUTINHO, 2012.

³ Cf. LEÃO, 2018; HERNANDES, 2019; DA MOTTA e FRIGOTTO, 2017; PONCIANO, CASTANGE, 2019.

⁴ Macedo (2014, p. 1532 *apud* HERNANDES, 2019, p. 5) offers an inventory of private organizations that influenced the construction of the Counter-Reform: "Itaú [Unibanco], Bradesco, Santander, Gerdau, Natura, Volkswagen, among others — in addition to the Victor Civita Foundation, the Roberto Marinho Foundation, the Lemman Foundation (owners of the Anheuser-Busch InBev brewery and the 3G Capital Equity Fund, which, in turn, owns Burger King, BeW [which comprises Lojas Americanas, Submarino and Shoptime]), CENPEC, Todos pela Educação (non-governmental organization created by entrepreneurs)".

⁵ English is also a compulsory language, and other languages are optional. The other traditional disciplines such as Sociology, Philosophy, Physics, Biology etc., must also be offered, but not for the entire school track.

large contingents of students, including in more than one discipline, in which they often do not have training, since these teachers can "teach content from areas related to their training or professional experience as long as their *notorious knowledge* is attested [...]" (*ibid.*, pp. 335-336, emphasis added) — especially with regard to technical and vocational Education⁶. We can see that in regard to these technical routes.

[...] the establishment of the training itinerary called "technical and professional training" reveals a strong resumption of the structural duality category, which has historically manifested itself in national Education, as a reflection of a society divided into classes, which destines poor educational processes to the most impoverished workers, characterized by the reduction and instrumentality of content directed to aspects merely of acting, to the detriment of knowledge based on scientific-technological and socio-historical. All this is in contradiction with the social totality, integrality, and interdisciplinarity, which characterize the production and appropriation of knowledge and the educational process (MOURA; LIMA FILHO, 2017, p. 124).

Access to the itineraries is defined according to the availability conditions of each education system, and the common curricular content can be reduced to less than one-third depending on the reality of each school since the law establishes only its maximum duration, making it easier to understand what would be the basic content of school education⁷. The early choice of students for an area of specialization will depend on the infrastructure and human resources conditions of the schools, which must offer at least one of the itineraries. Given the disinvestment framework by the Ministry of Education observed during the last period — substantially aggravated by the implementation of the expenditure cap — the tendency is that the massive majority of public schools (especially those located in small municipalities) restrict themselves to ensuring only what is required by law, that is, only one training itinerary per school or two itineraries per municipality. With the impossibility for students to change their training itinerary — which could only be allowed if they attended another district — the new educational policies attack the legal obligation of universalization of High School, producing a scenario of reduced conditions of student access to broad areas of human knowledge. It aggravates, therefore, the duality and inequality of Brazilian Education, in which access to the training of an integral subject is restricted to individuals from the middle and dominant classes who will more easily access high-standard institutions with a wide range of disciplines and itineraries, adequate infrastructure and a large staff of professionals.

The requirement to increase the school workload to 1,400 h/year implies a significant increase in the demand for resources in a scenario of increasing cuts and contingencies of spending by the Brazilian government. Therefore, the thesis that the student will have the opportunity to choose, autonomously, their field of interest is more a piece of marketing than, effectively, a universal consequence of the changes in High School. In addition to the difficulties imposed by the education systems themselves, youth also suffer the consequences of a national situation of widespread hunger and unemployment, which adds to the precariousness of Education the daily battles for the minimum conditions of survival that, if not met, make quality education impossible. Thus, the Secondary Education Counter-Reform consolidates, in Brazil, *flexible learning*, an expression of the pedagogical project typical of a new configuration of the world of work based on the terms of *flexible accumulation of capital*.

As a fundamental characteristic of our historical time, capital has reinvented ways of capturing worker subjectivity in the course of transforming the formal subsumption to the real subsumption of labor to capital⁸. To reconstruct the "old psychophysical nexus of qualified professional

⁶ A process of deprofessionalization unfolds from the admission of tacit knowledge of the teacher in replacement of their qualified training (KUENZER, 2017, p. 345).

⁷ Cf. KUENZER, 2017.

⁸ Cf. ANTUNES; ALVES, 2004.

work — the active participation of intelligence, fantasy, work initiative" (GRAMSCI, 1985 *apud* ANTUNES; ALVES, 2004, p.345), it becomes necessary to form, from a new pedagogy, "flexible subjectivities that relate, produce and consume in a society whose basic technique, to move the market, is microelectronics" (KUENZER, 2017, p. 340). In the wake of this movement, expressions of an entrepreneurial logic also become part of everyday school life.

SECONDARY SCHOOL YOUTH AND RESISTANCE TO THE COUNTER-REFORM

With regard to the processes of popular resistance against initiatives to dismantle the state, in general, and public education policies, in particular, mobilized since 2016 by this new hegemonic political bloc, the protagonism of Brazilian youth stands out in the course of the main mass actions promoted in this period. However, to understand the effects of the Secondary Education Counter-Reform on the secondary students' movement and, consequently, its reaction to this project, it is important, firstly, to put into perspective the notions of *youth* and *social movements* used in this work.

In general, two main criteria are used to classify someone as young: age and behavior. With regard to age, the main indicators mobilized are the lowest age required to enter the working world (14 years) and the expected age for completing studies (around 25 years)⁹. The most used age range in Brazil is, depending on this, from 15 to 29 years, as stated in the Statute of Youth (Law No. 12.852/2013). On the other hand, depending on which youth is spoken of, the classification limit can extend up to 32 to 35 years, as in the case of youth sectors of some unions.

Behavior, on the other hand, is the indicator that generates the most controversy. As a social category, youth can only be understood if it is historically situated; that is why, if in the 1950s, they were considered delinquents by nature, in the 1960s and 1970s, Brazil had looked at its young people as agents of transformation and, therefore, of subversion. After the Years of Lead, whether by pathology or individualism, they were accused of rejecting their historical task, contrasting with the previous generation; they were the depositories of the thesis of the "end of history" (ABRAMO, 1997).

Whether as transgressors or as revolutionaries, over the past century, the youth have embodied a threat to the system, whether through their interference or apathy. Thus, youth has always been the promoter of a certain fear (*ibid.*): Sometimes, it needed restraint, and sometimes, it was the object of intervention or salvation. If, in PT governments, young people come to be understood as *subjects of rights* and, therefore, targets of public policies¹⁰, the consolidation of youth as a legal category does little to alter the structure that makes them victims of a particular type of violence: *generational oppression*. The origin of this violence, according to Guaraná (2010), is found in the bourgeois family structure that consecrates to the paternal male figure the representation of power and that, therefore, relegates to the wife and children the most degraded positions within this hierarchy, subordinating them to the father. In the midst of this family structure, the construction of a conception of youth from the nineteenth century "marks the identification of this population from physical-biological elements and the association of these with certain social and psychological behaviors," or rather, potentially attributable to this sector (*ibid.*, p. 18). The construction of this conception guarantees social reproduction, a form of limitation and control of youth and its transformative potential.

In this perspective, being young, fundamentally, is about this *becoming*¹¹. To become sufficiently capable, educated and independent that one can effectively occupy a legitimate place in society. What brings this youth together is precisely the *non-place*, so that one of the main trends of this

⁹ Cf. GUARANÁ, 2010.

¹⁰ Cf. FONSECA; MORAES, 2010.

¹¹ Cf. GUARANÁ, 2010.

historical time is the increasing expulsion of these sectors both from the world of work and from educational institutions.

On the other hand, as an experience of *transition* par excellence, being young implies living a period of consolidation of perceptions of the world and expectations of the future, resulting in true ideological bombardment¹² by the family, the hegemonic media, the school, the church, and even organized crime¹³. To the extent that this conception becomes peremptory and, therefore, conservative, it makes us believe that we have *learned* — probably as a result of a *bad example* — to be deviant.

It is also important to consider that the issue of youth often appears, in common sense, as something apparently arbitrary, supported simply by decontextualized age indicators that generate certain contradictions. Since the current conception of youth is expressed above all in the non-identification of young people with the world of work — which appears isolated from a "student world" — by an age restriction, the young student-worker must necessarily be classified as less student or less worker. It does not thus belong to any of these places because it does not occupy them fully: it must be only a student (because working interferes with studies), or it must be only a worker (because studying interferes with work).

In this way, we understand that *youth* cannot be analyzed solely on the basis of age or behavioral criteria — given that they are also determined as such by political and economic criteria. Moreover, it is necessary that we know that, even within "a" youth adjectivated from its class — the working youth — there are countless other determinations that intersect and that shape it. In general, as stated by Nunes and Gama (2020, p. 100-101),

[...] it is important to point out the impossibility of speaking of youth in the singular, as a social being with an indissoluble unitary body and characteristics that would correspond to a standard model. Instead, talking about youth means dealing with plurality, a category "socially constructed, permeated by different interests" (CASTRO, 2005, p. 12), which represents a composition of increasingly disparate realities. As social subjects, young people have specific ways of acting, thinking, and identifying in which they depend on the social extract, the spaces, and the groups to which they are linked, often manifesting characteristics that are even antagonistic and conflicting with each other. This means that youth cannot be explained, much less understood, through the prism of homogeneity nor summarized from reductionist characterizations. *It is not possible to think of youth only by what is common within it, and it is also necessary to pay attention to its internal contradictions* (emphasis added).

Perhaps the most obvious contradiction of this category concerns precisely its polyclass character. As we argued earlier, the deepening of the structural duality of Education responds, in particular, to the sharpening of the super-exploitation of the working classes from a new phase of flexible accumulation of capitalism — in this case, on the periphery of the world. In Education, this project is affirmed with vigor from the 2016 Secondary Education Counter-Reform, although it did not, in fact, suffer a hiatus during the era of class reconciliation — precisely due to the hybridism sustained by it. Thus, a discrepancy in the formation of young people from the working class and those from the ruling classes is increasingly consolidated, which has an unequal impact on their realities and expectations for the future.

Within these recent social and cultural transformations, the intellectual debates around the associations and distances between the category of youth and their role in the educational process also

¹² *Ideology* is here understood in Marxian terms. In its classical formulation, it means that "dominant ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of dominant material relations [...]; therefore, of the relations that precisely make a class dominant, therefore the ideas of its domination" (MARX; ENGELS, 2009, p. 67).

¹³ Cf. ABRAMO, 1997.

gain notorious importance. This is the case of discussions about the idea of *youth protagonism*. Ferreti *et al.* (2004) argue in a literature review article that analyzes the different conceptions about the themes that unfold from the national curriculum guidelines for High School (DCNEM) in force at the turn of the Millennium (Resolution CEB/CNE No. 03/1998), that youth protagonism "is faced [...] as a promising way to account for both a social urgency and the personal anxieties of adolescents and young people" (*ibid.*, p. 413) in the face of the challenges imposed by the new configurations of work in societies called "post-modern" or "post-industrial". The material analyzed by the authors is crystal clear in demonstrating that, fundamentally, the abstract defense of autonomy — once presented as *protagonism*¹⁴ — deliberately confuses educational agents. That is, this "hybridism of discourses" — or, more precisely, "semantic hell" — to which Ferreti *et al.* (*ibid.*, p. 422) refer to mobilizing other authors, in the case of protagonism, it can sometimes evoke more conservative meanings, sometimes more emancipatory meanings — articulated to the notions of *popular Education*. While the latter trigger the need for a complete human development, the former guide "the depoliticization of youth participation and call for adaptation to the new world order and the individual overcoming of social segmentation" (*ibid.*).

Commenting on a text by Costa (2001)¹⁵, the authors are assertive in evidencing a certain way through which the idea of protagonism can be presented, in fact, as a preparatory phase through which youth would supposedly acquire the necessary instruments to — once again — become fit for the citizen exercise of political action. This restricted type of citizenship is expressed in the mobilization of the issue of integral human formation more from interests related to the formation of multipurpose workers than, effectively, from an *omnilateral* and *polytechnic* conception¹⁶ of Education. This conception [of polyvalence] has been hegemonic in Brazilian educational policies since the first DCNEM.

There will be no popular educator who opposes the need to build a curricular organization "based on research and dialogue, based on the valorization of the student as a critical subject, and not as a receiver of content, made possible by the collaborative and solidary construction of knowledge" (KUENZER, 2017, p. 337). However, the problem of the appropriation of the question of autonomy by a liberal perspective, which is enclosed in the idea of "learning to learn," is in its material results, in the fact that it deposits in students an *unusual faith* about a capacity to overcome social Segmentation by individual means (FERRETI *et al.*, 2004). Individual initiative is, in fact, an inescapable element when it comes to overcoming social inequality and its ills; however, for this to be possible, it is inescapable to consider that "men must be able to live in order to 'make history'" (MARX; ENGELS, 2009, p. 40). When analyzing the intense degradation of living conditions to which the young people who today support the New High School were subjected, it is also important to bear in mind that men make their own history under circumstances that have been transmitted to them as they were (MARX, 2011). In this context, individual initiative is sterile when it does not reflect the potentialities given by the social and educational structure.

For this reason, when addressing the issue of autonomy, Freire (2005) recognizes the impossibility of disassociating it from the issue of *incompleteness* — which, far from being a particularity of youth, is an element of human ontology — from the *recognition of being conditioned*, as well as from the understanding that *Education is a form of intervention in the world* and, for this reason, is *necessarily ideological*.

¹⁴ Although they are distinct concepts, the ideas of *autonomy* and *protagonism* can be approximated within a general framework of initiatives developed in the school environment to promote citizenship among young people.

¹⁵ COSTA, Antônio Carlos Gomes da. *Tempo de servir: o protagonismo juvenil passo a passo; um guia para o educador*. Belo Horizonte: Universidade, 2001.

¹⁶ Cf. MARX; ENGELS, 2011.

The educational activity, in this way, cannot be disconnected from its political dimension — as the supporters of the school without party movement (2004) want¹⁷.

Despite the more or less explicit attempts to curtail political debate in schools, we are certainly a long way from determining the "end of politics" as a result of a process of "pulverization of social actions"¹⁸. On the one hand, the institutional mechanisms established by the law of guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB, Law No. 9.394/1996) open school management to the participation of students; on the other, they stimulate the depoliticized participation of youth in a process of activism restricted to differentiated projects and initiatives¹⁹ or, even, in formal decision-making spaces that very little allow the active and conscious engagement of the category²⁰.

Thus, the *political-organizational autonomy of Secondary School students*, guaranteed by the free Guild Law (Law No. 7.398 / 1985), does not seem to enjoy the necessary security and authority to guarantee the "citizen" participation of these young people in the daily life of schools and, even less, in the elaboration and implementation of public policies at any level. As an example, in the effervescence of studies around youth protagonism, Zibas *et al.* (2006) address, among other things, the involvement of student unions in school micro politics²¹ in the context of five institutions in the states of São Paulo and Ceará. The authors identify an ambiguous relationship between the guild and the management body because the latter acts both in the sense of stimulating student self-organization — once the issue is presented as a legal requirement — and in the sense of boycotting and manipulating it, although the latter positions overlap considerably.

[...] when the organization of students shows its political face, the school *establishment* feels threatened and seeks to demobilize it; when the guild serves the most immediate interests of young people, promoting parties and other types of leisure activities, the school management perceives only the objective of skipping classes and escaping from school obligations (*ibid.*, p. 78, emphasis added).

Once again, in these circumstances, the concrete negative impact of reading youth characteristics from a reductionist and stereotyped perspective in the lives of working youth is presented, through which the impossibility of responsible action by young people is assumed, often having their demands associated with mere insubordination, even with regard to the most banal claims (*ibid.*). With this, youth idiosyncrasies, when admittedly political, receive adjectivations always corresponding to those systematized by Abramo (1997), for which youth always incites a certain distrust, even at times when it receives broad recognition of its political protagonism.

In this wake, too often, the organic and historically structured student political action is confused with the occurrence of episodes of reclamation of often local amplitude motivated by immediate economic demands. The student struggle developed through *social movements* and that developed through *collective actions* are confused. These "punctual actions" or "pulverized social actions" that Novaes (2000) speaks of, understood in the literature as collective actions, can refer both to locally

¹⁷ More reliably called *The Gag Law*, the bill was presented in several legislative houses in Brazil. In Rio Grande do Sul, it was expressed in Bill No. 867/2015.

¹⁸ Cf. NOVAES, 2000 *apud* FERRETI *et al.*, 2004, p. 419.

¹⁹ These are interdisciplinary projects offered by NGOs, universities, and companies on the initiative of governments or the school's own management and teaching staff, such as short courses, workshops, cultural activities, etc. Cf. ZIBAS *et al.*, 2006.

²⁰ Cf. FERRETI *et al.*, 2004; ZIBAS *et al.*, 2006.

²¹ Using Ball (1989), the authors treat micro politics as "a process that connects two basic, contradictory and inexorable facets of the life of organizations: conflict and control, understood here as the elimination or prevention of conflict" (ZIBAS *et al.*, 2006, p. 54).

restricted initiatives and to broader mobilizations. While the structuring of a social movement as such, for Tilly (2010), refers to the necessary combination of more comprehensive factors, it is not possible to

[...] referring to any popular action, to any actions ever undertaken in favor of a cause, to all people and organizations that support the same causes, or to heroic actors with a prominent position in history. It refers to *a particular, interconnected, evolving, and historical set of interactions and practices*. It refers to the characteristic combination of *campaign, repertoire, and demonstrations* of VUNC [value, unity, numbers, commitment] (TILLY, 2010, p. 142, emphasis added).

The *student movement* composes this contemporary political phenomenon — whose origin dates from the last quarter of the eighteenth century²². It would also be possible to deal with student movements in the plural since their participants — or *self-designated demanders* — can be differentiated according to levels of education (secondary, undergraduate, or graduate students), networks, and types of educational institutions in which they operate (municipal, state, federal, or private) or even modality of Education (technical, GED, etc.). Thus, the political complex of social movements includes, in itself, networks of historically consolidated movements, such as the student movements developed in Brazil in the twentieth century and its network of general and grassroots entities.

Treating the students' movement as a category of social movement implies observing it beyond its classic Brazilian associations²³ or isolated collective actions. The student organizations that have become the main political articulators of the movement at national level can, therefore, facilitate the identification of the characteristics of the students' movement in certain historical processes — although not in an exhaustive way. The example of the schools and university occupations between 2015 and 2016, their relations of force and internal conflicts²⁴, demonstrates the variability of the claims of *program, identity, and position*²⁵ through which the students' movement passes in each historical block. If during the relative passivation of the mass struggles resulting from the conciliation of classes of the Workers' Party (PT) governments, the student entities and the student movement could be treated as almost indistinct elements, this analysis is no longer possible during the process of occupations that highlights what some youth political organizations not linked to the so-called Majority Camp²⁶ had already been calling the *crisis of representativeness and legitimacy of the entities*.

The maximum expression of this crisis occurs in the search, on the part of large contingents of school occupants, for a "non-partisan and independent character of the occupation, due to the fear of manipulation and the desire for autonomy" (GROPPO; DA SILVA, 2020, p. 414-415), rejecting the entry of partisan militants linked to student entities. In other words, if once the position of the entities and, therefore, of the leadership of the movement expressed firm ties not only with the PT governments but with the coalition of ruling base parties after the coup — or even before it — there is a clear weakening of the very identification of the bases with their representative entities — expressing the heterogeneity of a previously more or less unified *identity*. To the crisis of legitimacy of the entities is added a conjuncture in which the dualism between political institutions and civil society appears vigorously on the agenda. The threat that programmatic parties and associations could defy the radically popular, horizontal, and autonomous secondary school self-construction process produces scenes of burning flags of historical

²² Cf. TILLY, 2010.

²³ We are dealing with the Brazilian Union of Secondary Students (UBES), the National Union of Students (UNE), and the National Association of Postgraduates (ANPG).

²⁴ Cf. GROPPO; DA SILVA, 2020; CASTRO; TAVARES, 2020; PINTO, 2021.

²⁵ For Tilly (2010, p. 149), "*program* claims involve the express support or opposition to actions present or proposed by the objects of the movement's claims. Identity claims consist of statements that "we" — the claimants constitute a unified force to be faced. [...] *Position* claims affirm ties and similarities with other political actors such as, for example, excluded minorities, properly constituted citizen groups, or loyal supporters of the regime" (emphasis added).

²⁶ Directed by the Union of Socialist Youth (UJS), Youth of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB).

entities, prohibition of the entry of organized militants into the occupations, and formation of commands and autonomous associations of occupiers.

Thus, as less than a simple collective action, the movements can be presented both as part of a broader repertoire of methods and actions mobilized by the student movement and as a historical campaign directed against the Temer government, its educational agents, and local governments, against the successive dismantling of schools and teaching careers, against the Secondary Education Counter-Reform, against the privatization of public schools through the transfer of school administration to social organizations and against the Gag Law. Thus, the fact that national entities have joined the campaign less as a vanguard and more for the political constraint of their bases in no way harms the analysis of the phenomenon as a contentious policy that is based on organizational traditions of a consolidated social movement. Proof of this is that, although the articulation between occupations often did not take place through these entities, the role of student unions — as basic entities of the movement — was central to the whole process.

The discussion around youth autonomy (in its emancipatory perspective), in this sense, articulated the notion of social movement, and, in particular, the student movement, provides the opportunity for self-identification of the student with a powerful *place* of youth, in which political action is not only a possibility but a citizen responsibility. The occupations have given a generation of students a distinctive look at school, deeply contrasting with the traditional image of students silent and lined up in classrooms (CORTI *et al.*, 2016), in which the roles of the doorman, the cleaner, the lunch man and the teacher were exercised by the students themselves — actively responsible for the daily work of the school. Instead of expecting to be sufficiently fit for political participation in adult life, these young people recognized in the non-place of "development" and "transition" the right to make decisions for themselves about their own future (GROPPO; DA SILVA, 2020). In such a way that,

for teenagers, the experience of occupations was a transformed experience of educational and political relations. It enabled processes of political subjectivation that also meant processes of disidentification in relation to the previously formulated social roles of the *student* (passive learner) and *teenager* (with little capacity for political action). The memories of the occupation, in the reports, highlight rupture, innovation, and discovery, both in the daily and school dynamics and in the very way of conceiving politics (*ibid.*, p. 420, emphasis added).

The occupations are also illustrative of the three main characteristics self-identified by the student movement. First, regarding *conjuncturality*, occupations are added to other historical moments of effervescence that responded to conjunctural demands of a more immediate nature. Some examples of the last period are the general strike of April 28, 2017 — held on the centenary of the first Brazilian general strike — and the so-called Tsunami of Education of 2019. In the first case, the main catalysts of the struggle were the Labor and Social Security Counter-Reforms; in the second, the budget cuts in federal education institutions operated by the Bolsonaro government²⁷ and the resuming of the threat of the Social Security Counter-Reform — now executed. The dependence and reactivity in relation to the conjunctural demands associated with the crisis of legitimacy of the entities reduces the capacity of intervention of the student movement to the extent that these spontaneous peaks of effervescence are not accompanied by permanent processes of political organization of the students and of articulation with the union entities of Education. In other words, the structure of the student organizations offers the movement little capacity to overcome the moments of reflux, being hostage to conjunctures favorable to popular mobilization and therefore not always able to constantly present its specific agendas to society.

²⁷ Budget cuts followed after the Tsunami of Education. Throughout 2022, numerous threats of closure or stoppage of activities at universities and federal institutes were registered due to the lack of funds for their daily maintenance.

Unlike the trade union movement or the Landless Movement, the student movement is less guided by ordinary and permanent demands. This means that if, among organized workers in a given sector, there will always be a periodic demand for a wage increase or, as far as the Landless Movement is concerned, the *campaign* for agrarian reform will continue on the agenda until its deepest *program* demands are met, in the student movement, the conjectural gravitation will determine to a greater degree its programmatic demands. In this way, this permanent organization, which has not yet been realized, would be fundamental to giving the movement a powerful scope at the national level, linking its network of general and grassroots entities. Since "the relative prominence of claims to program, identity, and position vary significantly between social movements, between claimants within the movement, and between phases of the movement" (TILLY, p. 149, 2010), what we call student movements have a particularly accelerated and transient dynamic.

This second characteristic, its high *transience*, requires that the links between generations and the transfer of political-organizational accumulations between bases and directions be operated with outstanding efficiency. For a social movement whose demands are located on the border between the first years of high school education and the last years of Graduate School, the age cut corresponds to essential criteria of grouping. Although the period may represent around a decade of a young Brazilian's life, the level of engagement with the movement varies substantially²⁸ in this period — not least because access to the university student movement ultimately depends on the conditions of access to higher Education itself. In such a way, the high turnover of its militancy and its leaders harms the generational transmission of its political culture, methods, and accumulations.

Finally, the last characteristic of the student movement concerns the *polyclass* character of this social category and its bases. Although educational inequality segregates large portions of young students, at the end of the day, schools and universities embrace the daughters and sons of diverse social classes. For this reason, although its directions have historically corresponded to the defense of popular interests, it is a movement in which programmatic and ideological conflicts reach, to the limit, class antagonisms. For this reason, it is inevitable that there will be a constant struggle between interesting conflicts within this movement that can, at certain times, demobilize and limit the political objectives of the student movement due to the intervention of interests of the ruling classes within it.

METHODOLOGY

This empirical research was developed from a qualitative approach in a critical-dialectical perspective to consider the problems of student self-organization in the New High School implementation context. Being a scientific production in the Education area, whose focus necessarily goes through the understanding of the meanings elaborated by the subjects that make possible the construction of a student movement in school institutions, the incorporation of the subjectivity of these actors in the analysis presents itself as an inescapable factor of research among human beings in action (GHEDIN; FRANCO, 2011). This approach allowed the identification of issues related to identity, emancipation, and autonomy, as well as the analysis of the student organization process in its dynamism, valuing the discourses and meanings interpretation mobilized by the study participants²⁹.

²⁸ In the comparison between participants in the largest decision-making forums of the secondary and postgraduate student movement, the 44th CONUBES (2022) had the participation of 3,655 delegates, a number that, in the 39th Congress (2011) reached up to 11,897 registered; the 26th Congress of the ANPG (2018) gathered around 400 participants, according to data from the entities themselves. Information available at <<https://ubes.org.br>> and <<https://www.anpg.org.br>>. Access on October 24, 2022.

²⁹ Cf. GHEDIN; FRANCO, 2011.

Adopting a dialectical idea responds to the understanding that "subject and object are in continuous and dialectical formation, evolve by internal contradiction, not in a deterministic way, but as a result of human intervention through practice" (*ibid.*, p. 118). Hence, the analysis of discourses and meanings serves as a commentary on the phenomenon's study (MARTINEAU, 2021) based on Marxist theoretical and methodological assumptions. That is, the historicity of the analyzed phenomenon, its internal contradictions and syntheses, the inseparability between subject and object, and the recognition of the essentially transformative character of the knowledge produced are necessary epistemological principles.

For the field research, semi-structured interviews conducted between May and August 2022 through a virtual platform with leaders of the secondary students' movement in Rio Grande do Sul were used – due to the objective conditions for making in-person meetings unfeasible. The research sampling was defined by screening political organizations with outstanding state representativeness³⁰ and wide political-ideological diversity, verified by their presence in different political fields traditionally represented in the electoral disputes of the Brazilian Union of Secondary Students.

Seven youth organizations were selected: three belonging to the so-called Majority Camp³¹, three linked to the Left-wing Opposition³², and one not tied to any specific political field³³. Of these, only four agreed to grant interviews: MEP (UJC), Rebele-se (UJR), Mutirão (JPL), and JAE (JPT) – with leaders assigned to participate in the research by the organization itself. The profile of the interviewees³⁴ corresponds to young people aged 16 to 21, students of Polytechnic High School and Technical Education organized in the student movement from 2016 to 2021, residents of the Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre and the north of the state, and mostly, directors of general entities³⁵. The interviews focused on topics related to the new High School, student demands, and the organization of the student movement.

The transcripts were analyzed using Grounded Theory methods, with the aim of developing theories from the collected data (CHARMAZ, 2009). For this, the coding strategy adopted allowed data segments to be classified to categorize, summarize, and describe them (*ibid.*) with reliability, respecting two main stages of the procedure:

- 1) an initial phase that involves naming each word, line, or segment of data, followed by 2) a focused and selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to classify, synthesize, integrate, and organize large amounts of data (*ibid.*, p. 72).

³⁰ The delegation to the 45th CONUBES (UBES National Congress) was used as a criterion, which was necessarily combined with a second criterion due to the high incidence of irregularities complaints during the student entities' electoral processes. If treated in isolation, the first criterion could represent a framework of political forces incompatible with the movement's concrete bases.

³¹ Union of Socialist Youth (UJS, linked to the Communist Party of Brazil), Collective Mutirão (linked to the Pátria Livre Youth), and Collective Kizomba (linked to the Socialist Democracy of the Workers' Party, PT).

³² Collective Juntos! (J!, linked to the Socialist Left Movement of the Socialism and Freedom Party), Movement for a Popular School (MEP, directed by the Union of Communist Youth, partisan Youth of the Communist Party of Brazil) and Rebele-se Movement in the UBES (directed by the Union of Rebellion Youth, Youth Organization of the Revolutionary Communist Party, in turn, linked to Popular Unity for Socialism).

³³ Left Articulation Youth (JAE, linked to the PT tendency Left Articulation).

³⁴ One of the interviewees chose not to provide information regarding his identity.

³⁵ These are: Metropolitan Union of Secondary Students of Porto Alegre (UMESPA), Gaúcho Union of Secondary Students (UGES) and National Federation of Students in Technical Education (FENET).

The results obtained are linked to the previously raised and systematized categories, starting from the phenomenon's complexity, dismembering it into its units, and, thus, reconstructing a provisional composition of its articulated determinations. In addition to verifying the trends that open up to student organization in the context of flexible learning, priorities, generalized sensations, and daily demands are identified that drive the movement's structures and participants to maintain their struggles in a new open scenario of challenges and perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

However heterogeneous the positions expressed in the student movement may be, the movement's merit is the powerful claim of identity described in the declarations and unity flags that proudly fly, in the case of UBES, since Flamengo Beach, winter of 1948. These shared dreams are also translated into collective diagnoses, often based more on a method of analysis developed in the movement's daily life than on the articulation between theory and practice. Analyzing the discourses of this movement's leaders involves considering the potentialities and limitations of the current interpretations of the student movement in the face of their reality and the struggles they deal with to carry out their political projects. That is what we intend to do at the moment.

Far from a passivated and alienated place, often attributed to the articulators of this invented phenomenon that, several times, pushed the course of history in different directions, a student says:

Because this new High School is not for us, it is for the rich and millionaires, who will have at their disposal a more brutal layer of the population that is not aware of their political rights. This even deepens this conception of petty-bourgeois ideology that the poor will be able to be entrepreneurs, that they will be able to change their reality through individual initiative. And for us, there is no [alternative]: we live in society, so the solution to collective problems is collective.

Those faced with an internal division of labor assume greater responsibilities in maintaining and projecting the student movement and have the task of directing and representing large contingents of young students to defend their interests. From the point of view of these leaders, the Counter-Reform of Secondary Education is, without a doubt, a measure that does not solve, since it aggravates the main problems Brazilian schools face. In addition to the above fragment, the rejection of Law No. 13,415 was presented through several codes generated by the analysis of the interviews. Among them, the following stand out: "demanding infrastructure/meals/social rights/mental health"; "demanding reform," duly distinguished from counter-reform; "rejecting full-time education" and "claiming integral education"; "difficulty adapting," "evasion" and "disinterest in the new disciplines," interrelated; "maintaining class position"; "diagnosing depoliticization/apathy" etc.

Although they reject the new curriculum model, students are not oblivious to what we have historically observed as a High School Crisis.

So, there is a very big dissatisfaction among the students; almost all of them do not like this New High School and do not see any sense in it. They think there needs to be a change, but they don't think *this* must be the change, this New High School. High School would need a change, a reform, really in the previous model that it had, but not in this way, which harmed and made education more precarious.

It is not just about the change itself, but the method chosen to execute it. The interviewees also cite what they consider to be a process of authoritarian implementation of the Counter-Reform that, in our analysis, benefits from the challenges imposed by the transience of the movement, hindering the transfer of accumulations between the generation that occupied their schools against the Counter-Reform and the generation that today receives the New High School - especially from the perspective of bases entities. With the hiatus caused by the pandemic, the emersion of numerous demands in an accelerated manner due to the high dynamicity of the Brazilian conjuncture and the brutal worsening of living conditions during the last period, new priorities are put to the movement so that the fight against the Counter-Reform of High School no longer appears, for all its sectors, on the agenda - as denounced by the speech of a leader who presents the need to adapt to the New High School, which has been “normalized” in schools and evokes a certain conformism on the part of the students themselves: “even with the difficulties, schools are so adapting, in a sense that they are obliged to adapt to the Reform of High School, in the sense of structure, of organization of the school itself. So we [...] also need to adapt to what is imposed on us.”

The difficulty of transmitting accumulations has not affected the entities' analysis since the edition of the Provisional Measure, the tendency to expand duality, and the educational inequality that has resulted from the new policies. Students speak in particular of the *school overload* due to the changes in the calendars and the intense routine of evaluations: there are fourteen occurrences, distributed among all interviews, of codes referring to the “rush” of their routines. According to the same leader, “[there have been] reports of students feeling overwhelmed because, like, things happen very quickly; you study two weeks and the other two weeks of the month is test. So [...] it has been very *heavy* [...]”.

This acceleration of learning impacts students' adequate apprehension of the content, making it unfeasible, and teachers' intense workload. In addition, the manifest need to reconcile work and studies is highlighted, as seen in at least eighteen mentions in the analyzed reports that refer to the codes related to the theme. Although it does not stem directly from changes in High School, this necessity is substantially driven by the combination of counter-reforms and disinvestment in public goods.

In this way, by verifying an evident tendency to aggravate school dropout³⁶ in the context of the deterioration of social rights and the obligation of full-time education in the face of the potentially necessary abandonment of studies for the minimum reproduction of their existence, students see in the New High School a precise instrument for maintaining their lowered class status, as is evident in the first fragment of the interview exposed in this section. By reducing the conditions of entry into a University — since it reduces content and disciplines and minimizes the conditions of apprehension in the teaching-learning process— the structure of Secondary Education limits the intellectual aspirations of these young people, represses their expectations about the future, and *brutalizes them*, directing them to precarious, informal, and low-skilled jobs.

[...] there is a very high number of people who leave school, right, a high number of school dropouts, because of the fact that people work very early, by the age of 14, 15, 16 they already start having jobs of 6, sometimes even 8 hours a day. Underemployment, but that they are already beginning to take because, anyway, the crisis that our country has been going through that affects lower-class families a lot. So with the full shift, you're going to have an even greater number of

³⁶ The evasion code is cited six times in total, at least once in each interview. Often, it appears articulated to the disinterest in the new disciplines.

people leaving school because if people used the afternoon and the night shift, for example, [...] to be working, now they will only have the night shift. You know, they used to wear their time after school all the time. [...] And the night shift will get more complicated to continue existing, right?

The technical specialization that ultimately serves the same objective promotes a particular understanding among these adolescents of the dispensability of College ³⁷since, supposedly, High School itself would guarantee the necessary qualifications for a professional career. Concretely, students even report the impossibility of implementing the technical and professional itineraries, as expressed in the mentioned codes, given the lack of funding and adequate infrastructure, in most of the schools where they build the movement, to guarantee laboratories and equipment necessary for these disciplinary segments.

[...] considering the way it [referring to the New High School] leaves the student exhausted, what it seems is that it takes away the prospects of access to College, which takes away the will to access [...], even because we leave with this idea that we are going to be professionalized to work, so there is no reason to seek extra professionalization. What it seems is that this New High School keeps lower-class, working-class students in that position of simply workers, not academics or something else. There is no stimulus [...]. And it's sad to even talk about job prospects and the New High School because we realize [...] how there are several students in the situation – which will come at some point if this reform is not prevented from being contemplated in its entirety – that students will choose between work and study because they will not be able to do both. And a lot of people will choose to work. Many people in my personal life would choose to work, by the way. Because it is a matter of survival, and this only exposes young people more to a situation of underemployment, right, of poverty, of little opportunity for development both personally and for the group, right, for society. And that's it, it takes away the prospects for an academic future, it takes away the prospects for a professional future... And encourages one... The word is not convenience, it is... To settle for the situation, you know? To conform to the perspectives you have received.

If among the objectives of this Counter-Reform were the need to improve school performance indexes and free adolescents from the “boredom” of traditional subjects, it will be surprising to note that, in fact, the curricular components implemented with the New High School are, for the interviewees, emptied of meaning, as is explicit in the code “disinterest/disorientation about the new subjects,” expressively cited. Who are the most qualified professionals to teach them? What functions do they occupy in human education? What content should they concretely address? These are current doubts that also seem to be pursuing teachers responsible for applying these new disciplines, according to these students. In addition to a collective place of exhaustion and impotence, the leaders identify in their bases a process of *disidentification with the school* and, in such a way, also of *disidentification with the struggle in your defense*, the result of more profound questions about their social function. While the integral human education for the exercise of citizenship appears in the reports as a necessary priority of the school institution, the demand for productivity and high performance is associated with excessive charging and exhaustion because “no matter how difficult it is, we have to study more and try harder, right, *for the results*.”

³⁷ As expressed in the occurrence of the codes, “reduction of the horizon of expectations” and “denying/rejecting technical professionalization proposal.”

I did not particularly have any lessons from the Life Project, but from the reports that come to us, it is very in the sense of... There was a student who even said that this issue is “bullshit talk,” so it ends up not being what we want to discuss at school, right, which is, in short, to discuss problems and everything else. So I think at the same time there's been this loss of several debates that [...] happened before, and I think that, because of this whole bimester rush, this issue of subjects ends up generating a lack of interest not only in classes, [...] tiredness, but also on the issue of involvement, of engagement in the student movement itself.

This situation intensifies the trend of worsening psychological suffering among young Brazilians. The overload, the reconciliation of multiple working hours, the lack of material stability and future perspective combined with the overexploitation of the workforce is, among teachers and students, the origin of depressive disorders that rapidly increase victims³⁸. In Brazil, suicide is already the fourth leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 29³⁹, a public problem that demands, for its solution, not only the expansion of social rights for this population but also the guarantee of educational institutions that are configured as safe spaces, of socialization and reception, and of full guarantee of rights, which is not compatible with this “fast education.” When narrating the case of a colleague, a fellow militant, a student says that “[it is] an absurd charge for results, and it is an expectation that, if she is in the student movement, then she has to have exceptional results, and her mental health is disregarded, the cases of weekly collapses that she has to the point of ending up in the hospital are disregarded.”

However, it is precisely at school that, for the student movement, the demand for social and political rights is evident. Appear as principal *objects of demand* for the school infrastructure, the guarantee of student permanence and assistance policies, and the guarantee of labor rights for teachers and employees. Regarding the first question, mentioned at least nineteen times in the codification, it is not only about enabling urgent reforms in school buildings and expanding learning environments - in which there are demands for multi-sports courts, coexistence centers, laboratories, bathrooms, etc. - but above all the guarantee of minimal, daily and indispensable equipment and materials for the maintenance of the institution. For student permanence, full access to school meals and transportation is emphatically claimed, understanding the satisfaction of these needs as a health issue and a pressing condition for full involvement in the teaching-learning process. From the point of view of guaranteeing labor rights, the demand for urgent recomposition and qualification of the teaching staff stands out, in addition to the demands for reducing the workload, decent remuneration, and expanding public tenders to resolve undue function deviations that entail overload and impediment to work specialization.

This class solidarity⁴⁰ among students and education professionals expresses the student movement's claims of political-ideological position, which are not always mediated by the trade union movement. The research verified, through the analysis of the interviews, specific difficulties for the establishment of struggles in common with the unions when their directives do not belong to the same

³⁸ Among teachers, data from the Ministry of Health obtained by the Union of Workers in Public Education of Paraná (APP-Union) illustrate a broader scenario of growth in cases of suicide: between the years 2014 and 2018, the state reached the mark of 40 cases. Available in <<https://appsindicato.org.br/suicidio-de-professoras-no-parana-aumenta-15-vezes-em-cinco-anos/>>. Accessed October 30, 2022.

³⁹ According to data from the World Health Organization (2019) published by DW. Available in <<https://www.dw.com/pt-br/a-preocupante-alta-de-suicídios-entre-jovens-brasileiros/a-59374207>>. Accessed October 30, 2022.

⁴⁰ The code, cited eighteen times throughout the interviews, is associated with solidarity between professional categories of education and students, between the students themselves and between them and the communities weakened by the pandemic.

political field as the students in question, although the data are insufficient to determine their specific causes. However, this position claim is somewhat ambiguous since the teachers and school staff are also agents of tensions and conflicts. This is illustrated by the demand for political rights, which refers to the reports of persecution and intervention of the school managers with the student guilds presented by the leaders, expressed in the codes “demanding political rights” and “demanding political independence of the movement.” This demand for autonomy is also associated with the fight against civic-military education, understood as an instrument of reproduction of ideological hegemony that serves the context of fascist escalation in the country.

There was already that in the scenario of them being workers, but it increased very big. [...]. And then it made the students have less time to organize themselves, and this process of intervention, of the student guilds, anyway, being directed by the school managers, right; the managers choose the slate, make the election the way it wants, or sometimes does not even make the election, and then the students who are so in the guild's board are only a continuity of the management, do not have independence, autonomy to do their activities; the persecution also against those who try to fight to make a more independent guild... And this came in the context of High School Reform. So as the workload has increased a lot, more activities, a lot of time, many schools now have classes in the afternoon also, so it takes even more time (which could be used for student organization).

Another critical theme addressed by the interviews is the fight against harassment – which returns to happen abundantly in the context of the re-establishment of in-person activities after the pandemic, according to the report of two interviewees -, an agenda that mobilizes large contingents of students to exert pressure on the managers to react to the cases. In addition to sexism, racism, LGBTphobia and ableism are oppressions intensely experienced in the school context without firm and efficient public policies to combat what is usually abstractly called “bullying.” Although the answer to these problems also involves requiring the inclusion of these debates in curricula⁴¹, oppressions also appear as *combat objects* for which the movement mobilizes a repertoire of actions (such as the School Without Harassment campaign, mobilized by UMESPA and UGES) to meet objective program demands, such as the expulsion of a racist student or the dismissal of a harassing teacher. Some of the program claims respond to *objects of demand* - namely, more public investment—and occupy space in the movement's agendas during this period. These include the repeal of the Teto de Gastos (a Brazilian law that freezes spending, including education), reversing federal budget cuts, and installing a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry to investigate allegations of corruption within the Ministry of Education.

The most significant differences between the political organizations interviewed start with establishing *priorities* of the movement, that is, in the definition of tactical-strategic objectives based on assessing risks and potentialities offered by mobilization relative to objects of demand or combat or directly about objective programmatic claims. Thus, the demand for repealing the Secondary Education Counter-Reform appears as a priority objective only for the organization that carries out a deeper diagnosis of its effects on secondary self-organization and, for this reason, combines it with the irrefutable

⁴¹ The codes referring to the theme – “combating harassment/oppression” and “campaign (against harassment)” – appear in almost all interviews and reinforce the need for firm policy formulation on the topic of oppression in the school context. In the same way, they rescue the demand to ensure the full implementation of already approved legislative directives, such as laws No. 10,639/2003 and 11,645/2009, which require the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous History and Culture in schools.

need to broaden the ideological dispute as a method of enhancing the movement's political scope. On the other hand, organizations that, even if they belong to antagonistic political fields, emphatically present the priority given to the demand for infrastructure, financing, and student assistance — which can be expressed in different programmatic demands — identify fewer impacts resulting from the High School Counter-Reform on the secondary student movement. After all, the most profound effects of the New High School on the secondary student movement lead to the exact cause that weakens, by fatigue, the school performance itself: *fast education*.

So the student movement, it currently has this routine that, what I would say is: *rush!* You know, people who try to organize, they have a lot of difficulty because this change in teaching, it has an impact on the teenager's life. And then he leaves school, whether he is a worker or not, he has a much more intense and much more complex study routine, right, for, really, the number of subjects [...] And then you think: these students all overloaded, how does the guild organize itself? *It doesn't, right!?* It is very complicated, and then when the guild manages to carry out some activity, it is usually stopped by the school calendars themselves that are so increasingly [...] *intense*, yes, that is the word!

The general picture of overload causes damage not only to organic political action through the student movement but also the guarantee of that limited and pulverized youth protagonism previously mentioned – since the so-called “differentiated activities” also demand resources that institutions lack. Disidentified with the school content and, consequently, with the school itself to some extent, students are anesthetized in the face of broader social problems, with which formal education no longer puts them in reflective contact since it fragments their formation through the reduction of disciplinary areas.

The little political debate that existed in schools was done with these disciplines [in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities], so students who are more aware, so, put it to us that it is more difficult to talk to colleagues without these spaces, right. And also to learn more about our reality, our society.

Thus, the data analysis allows us to identify that, although its support structures were already weakened before the approval of the Counter-Reform, **the implementation of the New High School produced ideological and organizational orientation trends, disarticulation, and weakening of the secondary student movement**. These weakened structures relate to the combination, in campaigns, of VUNC demonstrations (value, unity, numbers, commitment) and repertoire presented by general entities – notably, UBES. The responsiveness to the conjuncture, the privilege to mobilize repertoires of a more institutionalized nature and distant from the so-called direct actions, the articulation with historically opposing sectors and groups - on the occasion of the establishment of broad political unions -, the low presence of independent militants⁴² and political minorities in the national debate and decision-making forums⁴³ and the distance between bases and directions are demonstrations of a political-organizational reflux that produces a reduced capacity for intervention in the Brazilian reality. This reflux, aggravated by the pandemic, also causes the adaptation of organizational methods to reoxygenate the movement. The repertoire is updated and starts to count voluminously with virtual resources of

⁴² It refers to militants who made up the movement autonomously, detached from party-political organizations.

⁴³ General entity congresses are presented as privileged moments of movement reorganization and potentization, although evaluating their balances does not always indicate the perfect use of this potential.

mobilization and campaign, despite a certain attenuated permanence of classic actions such as the convening of acts or even the organization of occupations during this period. The petitions, the construction of parliamentary initiatives, and the articulation with other social movements – as in the occasion of carrying out solidarity campaigns during the pandemic – are resources activated more frequently in the movement's daily life and add to a consolidated repertoire of broader actions that often unfold from nationalized initiatives.

The trends of disarticulation of the movement that emerged as a consequence of the new educational policies, however, are not immediately linked to the repertoire chosen by its leadership but are an indirect result of the very impacts of the Counter-Reform on the education and life of Brazilian youth. This intense overload to which students are subjected has already been producing obstructions to the time expenditure of energy for the daily construction of the movement, tending to worsen particularly in the most economically vulnerable layers of the student category. This situation should provoke a process of destructuring and imposing obstacles to the maintenance of the base movement in schools that concentrate larger contingents of young workers and may generate a process of elitization and, in this way, a change in the profile of its representatives – aggravating the already identified distance between bases and managers. The suppression of debates in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities also impacts the conditions of ideological dispute on the part of the movement, now having fewer resources and spaces for the undertaking of base work.

On the other hand, the research also identifies the spaces of the student movement as generators of bonds of solidarity and belonging, sources of hope for those who immerse themselves in them, and transformers for those who take root in their projects of counter-hegemony. In the words of a militant,

[despite the attempt to] disarticulate the student movement through fatigue, [...] the guilds, they still exist, you know? You can see it... [...] the guilds like this, in this situation of being unstructured, but we look at the students and they are so there... They seem to energize just like that... from beyond to be doing things. It's really very tiring, but they are there: no, okay, let's try! No, let's try! No, let's try until it works out! [...] Sometimes it doesn't work, right, but they try, they're always there. It is an energy that I believe only the Secondary Movement brings, from the youth, from the *will to change the world*.

Despite identifying their anxieties, teenagers are not always able to articulate the origins of the problems they face, and they may translate into apathy and passivity generalized feelings of exhaustion and frustration in front of their student occupation, as perhaps their peers in the 1980s did. In this sense, the student movement also presents itself as a powerful source of encouragement and identification not only about education itself but in its qualification and democratization in the struggle in its defense.

CONCLUSÃO

As a policy of *Counter-Reform*, the New High School adapts Brazilian education systems to professional training needs in the context of flexible capital accumulation. This means preparing young people for the versatility required by a new super fragmented division of labor, endowing them with adaptability for functions that increasingly require the subsumption of their creative capacity and, in particular, their ability to respond quickly to work demands that emerge in a scenario of the universality

of instant information and communication technologies. In Brazil, the processes subsidizing the consolidation of flexible learning predate the High School Counter-Reform since they correspond to a process of productive restructuring that began during the last century.

However, emphatically since the mid-2010s, the initiatives of political reorientation operated by the Brazilian State based on commitments signed in private negotiation desks, with open management of international multilateral organizations, collide with the popular organization consolidated through the social movements active in our territory. In the meantime, the student movement, a privileged space for youth - understood as inescapable political operators of the class struggle, even if they are not conceived as such for physical and biological reasons - has ahead of it a decisive historical moment for the consolidation of a new ground of ideological dispute. In these new milestones, the self-organization of secondary school students appears strategic about the definition of the conditions of education, professionalization, and, therefore, employability and life of working youth and, thus, of the whole class itself.

The New High School, as an education to impose an even more subordinate and brutalized class position for most Brazilian teenagers, disrupts the movement that confronts it by weakening the conditions of this ideological dispute through the mutilation of the right to an integral human education, the expansion of duality and educational inequality. It also does this by aggravating a situation of school overload, psychological suffering, and deterioration of social rights that are necessary to sustain adequate conditions of study and life. Thus, the review of academic production on the subject and the empirical verification of these impacts require the recommendation of the repeal of the High School Counter-Reform. The overcoming of this thriving High School crisis, in turn, should be nourished by experience, observing the different education projects formulated not only by students but by the set of categories that occupy Brazilian schools. In its place, the construction of a real educational reform on a widespread basis seems to be more and more urgent every day.

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Submetido: 16/08/2023

Aprovado: 27/05/2024

Preprint: 13/06/2023

CONTRIBUIÇÃO DAS AUTORAS

Autora 1 - Participação ativa na operacionalização da pesquisa teórica e empírica, bem como na elaboração do manuscrito.

Autora 2 - Coordenadora do projeto, contribuição na revisão do manuscrito e orientação das etapas do processo de pesquisa.

DECLARAÇÃO DE CONFLITO DE INTERESSE:

As autoras declaram que não há conflito de interesse com o presente artigo.

DECLARAÇÃO DE APROVAÇÃO DE COMITÊ DE ÉTICA

As autoras declaram que o projeto de pesquisa Organização e Desenvolvimento do Trabalho Escolar no Contexto de Implementação de Políticas Educacionais para o Ensino Médio, que deu origem ao presente trabalho, foi devidamente registrado junto à Plataforma Brasil sob o CAAE 60302416.0.0000.5346, observando os princípios de ética, transparência e boas práticas acadêmicas.