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School management regulation via interactive school development: world bank, management and monitoring

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ABSTRACT. The main goal of this paper is to problematize the *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola Interativo (PDDE Interativo)* and the objectification of school management regulation mechanisms. The reflection has as reference the movement of administrative modernization and the regulation called 'post-bureaucratic', in which changes in the role of the State are identified, with a focus on managerial management. The analysis is done considering the World Bank's prescription for the reform of the education systems of its partner countries, especially those in its '2020 strategy for education'. We highlight a movement of constriction to a given model of educational reform, based on strategic monitoring, carried out through the creation of online databases. Regulation is discussed from the perspective of the economic imperative, control over the work of the school management, the systematic and strategic collection of school data, as well as the result-oriented financing mechanism. Final considerations indicate the conflict of the *PDDE Interativo* with the Political Pedagogical Project, as well as pointing to the need to reinforce the autonomy of the school units and the commitment of organized civil society in the search for quality public education and socially referenced.

Keywords: education administration; education productivity; education planning.

A regulação da gestão escolar via plano de desenvolvimento da escola interativo: banco mundial, gerencialismo e monitoramento

RESUMO. O artigo tem por escopo a problematização do Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola Interativo (PDDE Interativo) e a objetivação de mecanismos de regulação da gestão escolar. A reflexão tem como referência o movimento de modernização administrativa e a regulação denominada 'pós-burocrática', na qual se identificam alterações no papel do Estado, com orientação à gestão gerencial. A análise se faz considerando as prescritivas do Banco Mundial para a reforma dos sistemas educacionais de seus países parceiros, em especial a constante em sua 'Estratégia 2020 para a educação'. Destaca-se um movimento de constrição a um determinado modelo de reforma educacional baseado no monitoramento estratégico realizado por meio da criação de bancos de dados *online*. A regulação é discutida sob a ótica do imperativo econômico, do controle sobre o trabalho da direção escolar, da coleta sistemática e estratégica de dados da escola, bem como pelo dispositivo do financiamento orientado para os resultados. As considerações finais indicam o conflito do PDDE Interativo com o Projeto Político Pedagógico, bem como apontam para a necessidade de reforçar a autonomia das unidades escolares e o empenho da sociedade civil organizada na busca por uma educação pública de qualidade e socialmente referenciada.

Palavras-chave: administração da educação; produtividade da educação; planejamento da educação.

La regulación de la gestión escolar mediante plan de desarrollo de la escuela interactivo: banco mundial, gerencialismo y monitoreo

RESUMEN. El artículo tiene como propósito la problematización del *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola Interativo (PDDE Interativo)* y la concreción de mecanismos de regulación de la gestión escolar. La reflexión tiene como referencia el movimiento de modernización administrativa y la regulación denominada 'pós-burocrática', en la cual se identifican alteraciones en el rol del Estado, con orientación a la gestión gerencial. El análisis es hecho considerando las prescritivas del Banco Mundial para la reforma de los sistemas educacionales de sus países miembros, en especial a lo que consta en su "Estrategia 2020 para la educación". Se señala un movimiento de constricción a un determinado modelo de reforma educacional basado en el monitoreo estratégico realizado a través de la creación de bases de datos *online*. La regulación

es discutida bajo la óptica del imperativo económico, del control sobre el trabajo de la dirección del colegio, de la recogida sistemática y estratégica de datos de la escuela, así como por el dispositivo del financiamiento orientado para los resultados. Las consideraciones finales indican el conflicto del *PDDE Interativo* con el Proyecto Político Pedagógico, asimismo apuntan para la necesidad de reforzar la autonomía de las unidades escolares y el empeño de la sociedad civil organizada en la búsqueda por una educación pública de calidad y socialmente fundamentada.

Palabras clave: administración de la educación; productividad de la educación; planificación de la educación.

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Introduction

The expansion over the theme of quality in school management, especially since the 1990s, has placed the school with obligations and responsibilities that do not always match its real and objective conditions of operation. The movement of 'effective planning' and 'doing more with less', created in the context of Fundescola (implemented in 1998), became the guiding slogans of what was later called the School Development Plan (or PDE Escola, in 2006) and, secondly, the Interactive School Development Plan (or PDDE Interativo, in 2012), when an online platform was created for this program. We start from the assumption that, in addition to financial and structural conditions not always favorable to the best performance of schools, there are technical and bureaucratic obstacles, such as the definition, a priori, of where, how and how much to invest, sometimes plastering the school manager in an inversion of the autonomy that it proposes and that the Interactive PDDE only computerizes such bureaucracy, although officially it is called the 'modernization of education'.

References to the current called 'effective school' adduce the feasibility of adopting the managerial (or business) administration model in the field of educational management from the reform. The master's dissertation entitled: *The School Development Plan (PDE-Escola), as an expression of managerialism in education* (Speck, 2012) highlights the fact that the PDEE Escola, through its manuals and official texts, can be considered a 'management tool' that aims to 'facilitate' and 'modernize' school management and, for that, it uses tools such as strategic planning and goal setting, as well as accountability. According to the author, there is a constant effort by the program to attribute rationality to management processes, emphasizing efficiency and quality. To this end, in order to fulfill the objectives concerning this alleged efficiency and quality, the program defends the creation and improvement of management monitoring and control mechanisms with a view to the results to be achieved.

The discussion about the regulation of school management through public educational policies, in Brazil, necessarily leads us to the discussion about the modernization of the administrative apparatus of the State, objectified from the 1990s, in the light of the principles of the New Public Management (Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus, 1995). The NPM incorporates international experiences, such as those in England, the United States and New Zealand, as well as guidance from international agencies, such as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD), that spread to developing countries the need to adopt administrative reform as a means of providing financial assistance by these bodies. The emphasis of such guidelines lies in the adoption of management practices imported from the private sector, aiming at greater efficiency for the public administration.

The World Bank guidelines in the document entitled '2020 Strategy for Education' (The World Bank Group, 2011) prescribes, to the so-called partner countries, the creation of information systems and monitoring of educational management, which will converge towards the creation of a 'global knowledge base', guiding educational reform. This global base, in turn, refers to an information system developed by the WB itself, called the System of Evaluation and Comparison of Results in Education (SABER). In this article, we problematize the main aspects of the Interactive PDDE, seeking to point out its links to the guidelines recommended by the World Bank in the document '2020 Strategy for Education'. In this document, the 'partner countries' are guided to develop a 'monitoring culture', indicating the creation of tools that allow the construction of an online database, which will serve to guide reforms in the educational system (The World Bank Group, 2011).

The aim of this article is to discuss the regulation as a political and administrative measure, engendered in strategic fields such as school management. Throughout the text, the Interactive PDDE is also discussed as

an expression of regulation on school management, insofar as, from the moment the School PDE becomes an Interactive PDDE, the practical, legal and institutional bases are created to the expansion of control and monitoring of school results, through strategic evaluation axes. It is evident that such measures are in accordance with the guidelines of the '2020 Strategy for Education' (The World Bank Group, 2011), a guiding document from the World Bank to its partner countries. As a result of a contract clause between the Ministry of Education and the World Bank, the PDE Escola introduces a business administrative logic to school management and associates mechanisms that aim to increase the degree of management over 'what' the school produces and 'how' it produces.

In this scenario, the objectification of the intensification of control and regulation over school management and its results, in Brazil, finds space in the Interactive School Development Plan (PDDE Interativo), a MEC program for school management, launched in the year of 2012 by the federal government and presented as an online institutional planning tool. Based on the perspective of managerialism, accountability, effective school and self-development, the Interactive PDDE is anchored in the currents called 'effective school' and 'school-based management', principles also sponsored by the WB.

To achieve the proposed objectives, the methodology adopted was bibliographic research and document analysis, in primary and secondary sources, having as a reference document the World Bank Report called: *Learning for all: investing in people's knowledge and skills to promote development* (The World Bank Group 2011), in portuguese 'Aprendizagem para Todos Investir nos Conhecimentos e Competências das Pessoas para Promover o Desenvolvimento'. This document is also known as the '2020 Strategy for Education'.

Regulation as policy

During the modernization movement of the Brazilian State, undertaken from the 1990s onwards, regulation in the educational field is constructed as a political and administrative measure, aimed at monitoring and control, materializing in strategic fields of the school system, such as in the area of management.

In education, political and administrative measures are promoted, discussed and applied, which, in general, aim to change the modes of regulation of public authorities in the school system (often using market devices), or to replace these public authorities by private entities, in many of the areas that were, until then, a privileged field of State intervention. These measures can either obey (and be justified), from a more 'technical' point of view, according to criteria of modernization, debureaucratization and combating the 'inefficiency' of the State (*new public management*), or justified by imperatives of a 'political' nature, according to neoliberal and neoconservative projects, with the aim of 'freeing civil society' from State control (privatisation), or even of a 'philosophical' and 'cultural' nature (promoting community participation, adapting to the location) and of a 'pedagogical' nature (centering teaching on students and their specific characteristics) (Barroso, 2003, p. 83, our emphasis, our translation).

Whether technical, political, cultural or pedagogical, such administrative measures have in common the fact that they express forms of State intervention in education. In this scenario, regulation would have the role of assessing public educational policies the status of quality, efficiency and modernization, in the promotion of technical and political means that make it possible to obtain results (this is the case of large-scale evaluations and quality indicators), promote greater local participation (social control, participatory management and transparency) and make those involved in the educational process responsible (*accountability*).

Some of the characteristics of quality management, derived from management methodologies such as planning, establishing objectives and goals, building metrics, monitoring indicators, analyzing results and proposing preventive or corrective action plans, appear as a contract clause in the loan agreement between the BM and the MEC, which gave rise to Fundescola. There, it is specified the creation of bodies, projects and actions at the local level, expected by the WB for the transfer of installments, such as the creation of executing units for financial management, actions to strengthen the school council, promotion of public commitment in the educational process and parental involvement in school management through sub-project funding, in addition to school-administered recovery sub-projects (Brasil, 2002).

Such elements can be understood in a context of regulation insofar as they refer to measures aimed at a certain adjustment of actions, aiming to guarantee the achievement of pre-established goals and results. While they regulate, they also frame, control, make actions converge in an "[...] active process of producing game rules [...]", which "[...] comprises not only the definition of rules (norms, injunctions, constraints, etc.) that guide the functioning of the system, but also its (re)adjustment" (Barroso et al., 2006, p. 13, our translation).

The risk lurking in the forms of accountability for performance concerns the pressure for productivity on schools and teachers, with the possible (and undesirable) effect of differentiating between professionals and institutions within the same public system. This is one of the pillars of the '2020 Strategy for education', in which it proposes to condition funding to results and suggests systematic dissemination of results by school, enabling parents to intervene. (The World Bank Group, 2011).

Institutional regulation and the emphasis on school self-development

The term 'regulation', well known and used in the fields of economics and sociology, acquires greater emphasis in the social field from the privatization processes of public companies and the allocation, in the market, of social goods and services that occurred with the reforms State of the last decades (Oliveira, 2005). Alleging the need for greater efficiency in the provision of public services, the Master Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus highlights that, in the sector of production of goods and services for the market, efficiency is also the basic administrative principle, and managerial administration, the most suitable. In terms of ownership, given the possibility of coordination via the market, private ownership is the rule. State ownership is only justified when there is no private capital available – which is no longer the case in Brazil – or when there is a natural monopoly. Even in this case, however, private management will tend to be the most appropriate, as long as it is accompanied by a secure regulatory system (Plano Diretor da Reforma do Aparelho do Estado, 1995).

The regulation that takes effect within the different levels of the educational system is characterized, by Barroso (2005), as an 'institutional regulation', as it is anchored in normatives and control. In this sense, the author highlights the existence of three interdependent levels through which regulation operates: the national, intermediate level (located between the national and the local – which we infer to be the nuclei and state and municipal education departments); and the local (the school unit).

Convergent with this interpretation is the planning presented by Maués (2008), which identifies a core of national regulation (in which the State or the government is located), an intermediary (where the Secretary of Education is located) and a local (where the school principal takes action). The author emphasizes that the meaning of regulation, in this scenario, acquires the meaning of 'recognized authority', since it emanates from a constituted and accepted power, from which the rules, laws, hierarchy, power and delegated competences come, as well as control and evaluation devices. The recognized authority is represented by the one who has legitimate authority to guide and coordinate a public activity, in this case, the public manager, present in each of the explicit regulation centers (national, intermediary and local). Thus, the idea of regulation by "[...] recognized or legitimate authority establishes a set of rules, conventions and control mechanisms in order to guide the actions of the actors over which this said authority has power" (Maués, 2011, p. 82, our translation).

Both authors place regulation in the context of post-bureaucratic administration and, therefore, sometimes refer to it as 'new regulation', which concerns new forms of State intervention in education. The same expression ('new regulation') is used by Oliveira (2005), when characterizing the guidelines contained in the reform programs that focus on education. Such guidelines intend to reconfigure the regulation of educational policy, consolidating an "[...] internationally observed tendency to focus on the performativity of the school" (Oliveira, 2005, p. 764, our translation). The core of educational reform programs in recent decades follows the trend of "[...] focusing on the school as a unit of the system, transforming it into the nucleus of management and planning [...]", citing the example of the Program of Direct Money at School – PDDE (Oliveira, 2005, p. 763, our translation).

The PDE Escola is the exact expression of this trend. It arises with the purpose of being a management tool for 'the school', a diagnosis of 'the school', with a focus on its own development. This self-development is even pointed out as the 'innovative' factor in the reforms of recent decades and that the absence of this trend is what explains the failure of previous reforms.

Most governments are committed to improving their education systems. Attention to the growth and expansion of educational systems has been complemented and even replaced by the growing concern with the quality of the educational process and the control of its results. 'A distinctive feature of the approach adopted some two decades ago is the move towards a situation in which schools are encouraged and even required to take responsibility for their own development'. The emphasis on self-development is a consequence of the trend in many countries to decentralize responsibility for implementing educational reforms. The main mechanism has been to shift the governance of the education system from central authorities to schools to a greater or lesser extent. The currents

known as effective school, school improvement and school-based management are expressions of this trend (Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola, 2006, p. 5, our emphasis, our translation).

The emphasis on self-development places the responsibility on schools for improving the system as a whole. From this perspective, problems related to quality, efficiency, results considered insufficient could, from the perspective of self-development, be addressed only within the scope of the school itself. The shift from the axis of the 'functioning of the system' and the role of 'national authorities' to the 'functioning of the school' under the management of the 'local manager'.

Why the emphasis on leadership? Because it will lead the process of elaboration and implementation of the PDE and because the success of the school largely depends on competent leadership. [...] The school, in order to be managed as an organization, as a system, needs to plan, organize itself, have strong leadership and control of actions, processes and different resources that can make it possible [...] (Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola, 2006, our translation).

School management, in this understanding, is identified more with administrative and managerial aspects (planning, organization, control of actions and resources) and less with pedagogical aspects. The school's own success appears linked to the manager's ability to exercise 'competent leadership'. Indirectly, the construction of a systematic analogy between the school and a company appears, having the principles of this as a horizon to be pursued. Among these principles, we highlight that of 'effective management'.

In the official documents of the Interactive PDDE, there is a constant concern to "[...] give rationality to the functioning of the system [...]", to "[...] improve the quality of the system's management [...]" and in "[...] establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the results". (Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola, 2006, p. 7, our translation). The rationality that is intended to be imprinted on school management, identified as a quality factor, will be able to provide satisfaction to the users of the service provided. This is what we can learn in excerpts such as the following:

But the construction of quality schools cannot happen without effective management procedures and instruments, and must be managed as a living and solidary organization in its objectives, aimed at meeting the needs and expectations of its students, parents, community and society. In short, it must be prepared to deliver quality services. [...] The school as an organization will be successful when it manages its components and resources in order to get things right (efficiency); do the right things (effectiveness) (Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola, 2006, p. 9, our translation).

It is possible to capture the assimilation of school management to the modes of management of the private sector, in a constant analogy with the economic world and its forms of organization and production. It is the spirit of the company and the logic of management that constitute the background of the program and organize a good part of the propositions it contains.

The PDE Escola can be understood, in this context, as an attempt to build a standardization of management methods and techniques, which is effected by the implementation of the Interactive PDDE, via an electronic platform, made available by the MEC for all public schools in the country.

From PDE Escola to Interactive PDDE: a computerized management tool or a real-time regulation?

Until 2011, the school development plan was carried out only by schools with a low Basic Education Development Index (IDEB), which, therefore, were considered a priority. As of 2012, the MEC created and made available a virtual tool called Interactive PDDE, which was allocated to its Monitoring, Execution and Control System (SIMEC). Through this program, schools began to provide a significant range of information distributed in six major evaluation axes¹.

From the diagnosis generated by this tool, the school is taken to the next stage of the tool, in which it prepares its 'action plan', and it is possible to receive additional funds for its execution. This stage corresponds to what is foreseen, including the loan agreement, which specifies the preparation of pluriannual plans by participating schools, which relate to implementation procedures and instruments, establishment of specific goals for educational improvement and identification of inputs and activities, necessary to achieve these goals

¹ The axes are: 1. Indicators and Rates; 2. Distortion and Use; 3. Teaching and learning; 4. Management; 5. School Community and 6. Infrastructure.

(Baraúna, 2009). The contract also stipulates the creation of a 'SPA', which means Planning and Monitoring System, and refers to the creation of a 'computerized planning, monitoring and management system' through which the 'provision of all the information necessary for the preparation of Project Management Reports' (Baraúna, 2009).

The analyzed context shows that the elaboration and implementation of PDE Escola did not happen in a random way, isolated, but articulated with a larger project that embodied the institutionalization of regulatory processes in different areas of public activity, including in the educational field. In this case, we could consider the World Bank the regulatory agency itself, since monitoring is one of its requirements.

The regulation of the system depends on the development of a system of regulations, or 'network nodes', as coined by Barroso (2005). The education system can be understood here as one of these 'we', which is, in turn, reinforced by specific mechanisms of control and monitoring. Through these mechanisms, it becomes possible for the State to reassert itself as a regulator, while using these monitoring systems to evaluate the results.

The regulatory function of the Interactive PDDE, as an information system, can be better understood from two structural elements, to be highlighted: the *inputs* and the *outputs*. The *inputs* (or input data), as we will detail later, perform the function of standardizing the information given by the different school units, since they all use the same online platform. The closed fields of answers carry out the task of filtering the information and limiting it to what is asked. As a consequence, there is an 'alignment' of planning and organization actions by virtue of what can 'fit in the system'. In other words, these *inputs* contribute to the conditioning of what is done, considering what will need to be informed.

The *outputs* (or output data) refer to the diagnosis generated by the program itself, which, in theory, indicates the critical schools problems, in addition to forming the basis of their action plans. In this context, we verified the forwarding of solutions at the school level, and not at the system level, since the program assumes that such critical points are problems of school management while emphasizing the need for self-development.

The elaboration of the School Development Plan represents for the school a moment of analysis of its performance, that is, of its processes, of its results, of its internal and external relations, of its values, of its conditions of operation. 'Based on this analysis, it projects itself, defines where it wants to go, what strategies to adopt to achieve its objectives and at what cost', what processes to develop, who will be involved in each stage and how and to whom they will be accountable for what is being done (Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola, 2006, p. 11, our emphasis, our translation).

It is evident, in this passage, that it is up to the school to plan, stipulate its results and its strategies and objectives, the costs and, also, perform the accountability. There is an incentive for self-development 'of' and 'by' the school itself, from the beginning to the end of the process.

A distinctive feature of the approach adopted about two decades ago is the move towards a situation in which schools are encouraged and even required to take responsibility for their own development. The emphasis on self-development is a consequence of the trend in many countries to 'decentralize responsibility for the implementation of educational reforms'. The main mechanism has been to shift the governance of the education system from central authorities to schools to a greater or lesser extent. The currents known as effective school, school improvement and school-based management are expressions of this trend (Como Elaborar o Plano de Desenvolvimento da Escola, 2006, p. 5, our emphasis, our translation).

The tool that is available to 'help the school and improve its management' is, in fact, an accountability mechanism for the implementation of educational reforms. The *outputs* have the function of pointing out the weaknesses of the school, thus considered, and promoting an adjustment of its practice. This is, as we will show, the *modus operandi* of regulatory processes, insofar as they allow alignment with major guidelines. In this alignment, the conflicts and divergences of a system are not fully evidenced and, when there are distortions, they do not become incompatible with the reproduction of the larger system, even if permeated by contradictions.

International organizations and the transnational regulation of education

Until the 1980s, many countries had a model for organizing educational policies based on 'state, bureaucratic and administrative' regulation, also called the bureaucratic-professional model, based on an alliance between the State and teachers (Barroso, 2005). In opposition to this model are the current arrangements, which are designated as 'post-bureaucratic' and are consolidated around the concepts of 'evaluator-State'² and 'quasi-market'.

² The expression 'evaluator State' appears to illustrate the strong presence of the State in guaranteeing the fulfillment of the goals proposed by the management administration and in
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When carrying out a comparative study between Argentina, Brazil and Chile, Oliveira (2009) observed that there are common traits that allow us to suppose the existence of a logic in the dynamics of the reforms. Among these common traits, the author highlights “[...] a new educational regulation based on three axes: local management; per capita funding; and the systemic evaluation [...]” (Oliveira, 2009, p. 46, our translation).

In turn, emphasizing the transformations in the productive organization and in the world of work, Laval (2004) brings up the discussion about the 'new school order', based on neoliberal assumptions, arising from the transformations in the capitalist economy.

The new school and educational model that tends to impose itself is based, initially, on the more direct subjection of the school to economic reason. [...] The 'flexible man' and the 'self-employed' thus constitute the references of the new pedagogical ideal. A double transformation tends to redefine the articulation of school and economy in a radically utilitarian sense: on the one hand, the competition developed within the economic space that has become global; on the other hand, the increasingly decisive role of qualification and knowledge in the design, production and sale of goods and services (Laval, 2004, p. 3, our emphasis, our translation).

The understanding of the unfolding and configuration of educational reforms in the international scenario, from what is presented, is far from being the result of simple coincidences in the adaptation of different education systems to the model enunciated by the world economic field. Before that, we can infer that such similarities are, in fact, the result of an objectified standardization of educational models on a world scale.

Both the similarity of the underlying rhetoric – the explanatory memorandum, the social contextualizations and the general objectives – whose main features are almost transferred from country to country, or the simultaneity of their enunciation, are factors that show, from the outset, not only a relative ideological consensus between national educational policies in different countries, but also a progressive degree of standardization of organizational structures and curricular models (Azevedo, 2007, p. 13, our translation).

The construction of this ideological consensus regarding educational models, which aim at adapting local educational systems, can be understood as a “[...] homogenizing internationalization [...]” that reflects the “[...] growing domination of modern sectors of the economy and society in the process of their integration into the modern world society” (Azevedo, 2007, p. 61).

It is evident the adaptation of school systems to the pressure exerted by the prevailing economic structure worldwide and the appeal of this sector to the 'modernization' of the school. This appeal, in turn, is anchored in the generalization of prescriptives for greater 'effectiveness' and in 'doing more with less'. This is, by the way, the motto of the School Development Plan.

At the forefront of this homogenizing movement are the international organizations that, with financial power and political influence, have led to the construction of a common line in educational reforms around the world.

International organizations (WTO, OECD, World Bank, IMF, European Commission) contribute to this constriction by transforming 'findings', 'assessments', 'comparisons' in many occasions to manufacture a global discourse that draws its strength more and more of its planetary range. At this level, international organizations, in addition to their financial power, tend to increasingly play a role of political centralization and considerable symbolic normalization. If exchanges between school systems are not new, it has never been so clear that a homogeneous model could become the common horizon of national educational systems and that its power of imposition would come precisely from its globalized character (Laval, 2004, p. 14, our emphasis, our translation).

Acting in the sense of serving as a normative reference at an international level, it is possible to verify the punctual action of these organizations in the direction of validating and legitimizing certain changes. Aligned with each other, its guidelines become a normative reference in the organization of educational systems. Their recommendations are based on 'technical studies', 'diagnostics' and considering 'best practices' in education.

Having great capacity to influence local governments and public policies, these bodies, however, do not always seek to understand, in fact, the characteristics of the educational systems for which they offer remedies.

However, the policy recommendations of regional and international organizations seek to impose themselves beyond the histories and specificities of the different educational systems, in such a way as to install issues on the agendas on which their form of implementation is discussed, but not their incorporation as public policy. In this sense, the implementation of national and international quality assessment systems is eloquent: how to define and implement these systems is discussed, but their existence is not a matter of debate, even though their impact in terms of quality improvement is far from being the case. In this sense, it is worth asking how these issues manage to condition the policy priorities of national governments (Feldfeber, 2007, p. 447, our translation).

The orientations advocated by international organizations do not have, how could it be understood, the objective of solving the problems of two different educational systems, but, first, a global 'agenda' and a pre-established and always referenced form of implementation in the international arena matter.

It is also that, for example, the World Bank is preparing its forecasts for Brazil, identifying the main problems (or what it calls priority restrictions, such as deficiencies in the public sector and institutional fragmentation) and the remedy that will bring a solution to the problems (or that lists potential opportunities, such as the encouragement to provide services for the private sector and management based on results).

There is an effort to highlight the benefits of a management approach (focus on quality and results, partnerships, provision of services) for the public sector. At the same time, it is suggested that the formulation of policies needs to be based on evidence, teaching the adoption of evaluative instruments, markers of policies and that function as important instruments of regulation.

There is a constraint exercised by these organizations in the sense of formatting educational systems, always presented from the point of view of their limitations, with reference to the global needs of economic development. It is these needs, ultimately, that will drive the reconfiguration of systems.

In fact, the evolution of national educational policies, in any country in the world, is the expression of a continuous, tense, silent and almost imperceptible social construction, the world education system. It acts as a perfume that pierces the typical national, regional and local clothes to reveal enchanting and legitimating fragrances, whose source is far from being local, regional or national. (Azevedo, 2007, p. 7, our translation).

The conduction of local and national educational policies towards a global educational policy is verified from the observation of a 'growing convergence' between educational systems (at least in industrialized countries) that are reformed and reordered, launching similar effects on the education organization. To this phenomenon, Barroso et al. (2006, p. 44) called "[...] transnational regulation [...]", which indicates the "[...] set of norms, discourses and instruments (procedures, techniques, various materials, etc.) that are produced and circulated in international decision and consultation forums".

This is how, for example, the World Bank justifies the creation of a global instrument for educational monitoring, called SABER (which, as explained above, derives from the acronym of *System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results*, in portuguese: *Sistema de Avaliação e Comparação de Resultados em Educação*), counting today with 140 connected countries. The objective, they say, "[...] to assist countries in defining a framework for data collection, analysis, and usage, helping develop a culture of results monitoring and assessment to raise the effectiveness of domestic investments and international aid" (The World Bank Group, 2011, p. 62)³.

The cooperation programs elaborate diagnoses on the education of partner countries, pointing out the gaps and also the solutions. As a reference, they use the reforms of partner countries that, in theory, worked, often using the numerical axiom to endorse the strategy offered. For example, in *2020 Strategy for Education*, the World Bank states that the document reflects "[...] reflects the best insights and knowledge of what works in education [...]", and that the information about what works originated "[...] from our worldwide consultations with governments, teachers, students, parents, civil society, and development partners in over 100 countries" (The World Bank Group, 2011)⁴.

The prescriptions are accompanied by a numerical reference regarding how many countries have been consulted, or how many countries are implementing them, even if we cannot know for sure the scope and effectiveness of their application. The '2020 Strategy for Education' document is full of these 'best practices', which are presented as a model to follow. There is, for example, a description of a public-private partnership in Pakistan, which offers a monthly allowance per student who attends low-cost private schools. The grant is conditional on a minimum of test performance. There are bonuses for groups of teachers and incentives for competitiveness. The bank states that "[...] although the program has been in effect only for a short period, initial impact evaluation results suggest significant positive effects on enrollment and school inputs, such as teachers, classrooms, and blackboards [...]" (The World Bank Group, 2011, p. 69)⁵.

Suggestions or prescriptions based on examples considered successful are also voiced by 'experts' or consultants, local and national authorities and even public figures, who support the formulated guidance.

³ Original: "The aim is to assist countries in defining a framework for data collection, analysis, and usage, helping develop a culture of results monitoring and assessment to raise the effectiveness of domestic investments and international aid".

⁴ Original: "This strategy reflects the best insights and knowledge of what works in education, gleaned from our worldwide consultations with governments, teachers, students, parents, civil society, and development partners in over 100 countries".

⁵ Original: "Although the program has been in effect only for a short period, initial impact evaluation results suggest significant positive effects on enrollment and school inputs, such as teachers, classrooms, and blackboards".

This is what happens with the numerous cooperation, support, research and development programs originating from different international organizations (World Bank, OECD, UNESCO, European Union, Council of Europe, Soros Foundation, etc.) that bring together specialists, technicians, or officials from different countries. These programs suggest (impose) diagnoses, methodologies, techniques, solutions (often uniformly) that end up constituting a kind of 'ready-to-wear' that specialists from different countries call on to whenever requested (by the authorities or national public opinion) to comment on the most diverse problems or to present solutions (Barroso et al., 2006, p. 45, our emphasis, our translation).

Through the strategy of endorsing educational reforms in other countries, highlighting the supposed positive results, we seek to legitimize and validate the reforms, creating a consensus around their convenience. Azevedo (2007) calls these 'examples from abroad' as 'the externalization of national systems', and defines it as follows:

[...] externalization is presented as a particular way of affirming the world education system and building homogeneity in national education systems, that is, comparisons are made with foreign models and with world situations, international indicators are mobilized and visit other countries, in order to capture ideas and stimuli for the development of domestic policy. Through this process, of a political nature, countries resort [...] to a 'transnational contemplation'. In other words, looking outside one's own borders, towards comparable countries, constitutes an act of 'absorption of supplementary meaning'. Externalization tends to be used as a source of additional meaning, authority and legitimation of national reforms, a kind of resort to 'flags of convenience' [...] even though the use of these flags [...] is an act predominant in the preparatory and initial phase of educational reforms and which fades as they are implemented. (Azevedo, 2007, p. 93, our emphasis, our translation).

International indicators and comparisons between countries have gained increasing visibility. The international ranking, originated from standardized assessments, quantifies and positions national performance on a scale that will serve to 'certify' how efficient education is in that nation. It is the pure and simple comparison that aims. Its character is not pedagogical. On the contrary, it is a political act, which will serve to justify the possible solutions, pointed out by the reform trend, whose formula, in turn, should contain the ingredients of successful reforms in developed countries that have a 'quality education'.

References to 'good practices in education', translated into OECD indicators, 'excellent teachers' from the World Bank (WB) or even 'education for the 21st century' from UNESCO are well known. In the case of the OECD, for example, data on education, evidence, education policy analysis and statistics are published in the *Educational Indicators in Focus* series. These refer to periodical publications of the agency and made available on the website of the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Inep), which informs that the indicators disclosed allow educational policy makers and managers to "[...] compare their education systems with those of other countries and, together with the OECD, reflect on the efforts made in education policies" (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira [INEP], 2017).

Such references help to make countries more comparable, compelling them to change their policies, adapting them to parameters that allow them to 'compete' with better statistics. Indeed, such externalization acts with the symbolic effect of 'lending', to educational reforms, the guarantee of their indispensability.

Although it disregards the local conditions in which statistics are generated, this strategy compels countries to rethink their educational policy, exerting strong regulatory and local adjustment action. Robertson (2013) states that there is a global agenda with governance strategies for education, encouraging demonstrable results and competitive actions. Says the author:

[...] while taking the risk of exaggerating my argument, these technologies of global governance have many of the characteristics of the 'unmanned military aircraft' (*drones*) which are increasingly preferable in difficult spaces of military struggle. Similar to these drones, rankings and indicators (*benchmarks*) are powerful when they are able to penetrate national borders not only as data collectors but as agents at a distance, when they are able to modulate, direct, act, refine and redirect without being physically present. Like unmanned aircraft, these global technologies [or regulatory, as the author uses it elsewhere in the text] are able, over time, to collect sufficiently accurate data from a terrain and its topography and use this information to prepare an action (Robertson, 2013, p. 22, our translation).

The modular and directive character of the externalization of educational policy is evidenced, via classifications and indicators. As an example, one of these global (or regulatory) technologies, which was developed by the BM, is called SABER-Teachers, a program that aims to gather information about teaching work in order to create the profile of the 'good teacher' (Robertson, 2013).

The creation of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), according to the organization in question, will enable it to gain knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of each country, so that it can

guide local reforms, between actions ranging from training and hiring teachers to holding schools accountable. This “[...] The new strategy emphasizes the importance of aligning governance arrangements, financing, incentives, accountability mechanisms, and management tools with national educational goals” (The World Bank Group, 2011, p. 46)⁶.

Final considerations

The 'new' strategy announced by the bank, which culminates in the promotion of reforms around the world, aiming to adapt the education systems of its partner countries to economic competition, is not, however, new. In the Priorities and Strategies for Education (Prioridades y Estrategias para la Educación, 1995) report, the objective of closing the gap between educational reform and the reform of economic structures is posed as a fundamental challenge. The new element, then, is perhaps the creation of a global knowledge base, which guides the implementation of those and the way of capturing information.

The creation of a global knowledge base is endorsed in the Bank's 'Strategy 2020', justifying it as a “[...] high quality knowledge base on the reform of the education system” (The World Bank Group, 2011, p. 46). According to the document, gathering information regarding education programs and policies is essential for analysis work, based on concrete evidence and to improve the performance of education systems around the world. Through this global foundation, the bank says it looks forward to helping partner countries answer the key questions that inform education reform.

In the context of capital internationalization, there is a growing decrease in the autonomy of national States, which are increasingly constrained to new forms and instances of global regulation, based on a global political agenda. The regulation exercised by international organizations, in this context, represents a decrease in the decision-making autonomy of nation-states (Afonso, 2001).

Such actions, which in the contract appear associated with the expansion of the quality of school management, impose obligations and responsibilities on the school that are not always consistent with their objective conditions. In addition to financial and structural conditions not always favorable to the best performance of schools, there are technical and bureaucratic obstacles, such as the definition, a priori, of where, how and how much to invest, sometimes putting the school manager in an inversion of autonomy. what is proposed.

The operational efficiency, recommended by the Interactive PDDE, is, as we have highlighted, a consequence of its managerial approach, anchored in the modernization of management, in the adoption of the strategic planning model, in the rationalization and in the income statement. In this program, although the importance of building the school's autonomy is evident, there are important obstacles to its implementation. Among them, we highlight the external conditions regarding the use of financial resources, carried out by bodies higher than the schools (such as municipal and state secretariats and also the MEC), but, above all, by the co-financier of the program, the World Bank, which establishes the criteria for the application of available resources.

The realization of decentralization and autonomy, in the same way that it occurred in the Interactive PDDE, resulted in the creation of an operational methodology in which the possibilities of involvement of the school collective, with the act of planning and carrying out a participatory management, were practically annulled. The image of the online user and the possibility of their autonomous action, regarding the discussion and problematization of program and diagnosis issues, reduced the possibility of involvement of the school collective. In other words, by its methodology, the Interactive PDDE changes the institutional conditions of participation, as it weakens the official mechanisms of participation.

We understand that it is through the exercise of democratic participation, mediated by the critical reflection of the political and economic conditions that influence the educational process, that it will be possible to perceive management beyond a merely bureaucratic instrument, and that such instruments do not come to be configured as the very reason for being of school management.

The technical and operational rationality, which constitutes the Interactive PDDE, conforms to a type of centralized management, which removes the school collective from the discussion of the main problems of the school. Furthermore, because it is called an information system, the program presents itself as unquestionable and the numbers 'attest' the results obtained and justify what the school is or is not, does or

⁶ Original: “The new strategy emphasizes the importance of aligning governance arrangements, financing, incentives, accountability mechanisms, and management tools with national educational goals”.

does not do. This situation reveals itself to be conflicting insofar as its obligatory nature and linkage to forms of financing end up superimposing such a program on the schools' own Political Pedagogical Project, an instrument of collective planning and based on the local context.

As it consolidates itself as a technical and information instrument, which does not presuppose participation and collective planning, the program assumes the contours of educational regulation, conforming and standardizing a certain type of educational planning of an instrumental nature, inducing, in turn, to a normalization of the internal parameters of the school.

It is urgent to rethink public educational policies aimed at school management. It is necessary to strengthen school units and the role of public and free education in Brazil. A good start is perhaps precisely the unveiling of the contradictions between external prescriptions and local needs. Likewise, the implementation of participatory and democratic administrative and financial management can contribute to the progressive autonomy of school units, a situation in which, unlike the goals projected from outside, educational planning will be effectively responsive to local management demands.

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