

State, public policies and ideology as a basis for the evaluation of Professional Education Policy

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Abstract

This article is the result of research on political evaluation of professional education policy, with consequences in the face of state issues, public policies and ideological issues that permeate policies in Brazil. The political evaluation of politics as a scientific research is still recent in Brazil, having as a reference the research and studies of Souza (2013), Figueiredo and Figueiredo (1986), and Azevedo (2010). Thus, of a qualitative nature and approach, for the accomplishment of the research, the theoretical and methodological procedures of the bibliographic review and documentary analysis were adopted. The evaluations of education policies, therefore, are seen in a reductionist way and approached in a purely technical way, because neoliberal policies have been influencing and inducing the evaluations to have this character. In view of the reflections presented, therefore, it is that professional education in the field of public policies is submitted to evaluative models.

Keywords: Evaluation. State. Ideology. Professional education.

Estado, políticas públicas e a ideologia como base para a avaliação da Política de Educação Profissional

Resumo

O presente artigo é fruto de pesquisa acerca de avaliação política da política de educação profissional, com desdobramentos frente às questões do Estado, das políticas públicas e às questões ideológicas que permeiam as políticas no Brasil. A avaliação política da política como pesquisa científica ainda é recente no Brasil, tendo como marco referencial as pesquisas e os estudos de Souza (2013), de Figueiredo e Figueiredo (1986), e de Azevedo (2010). Assim, de natureza e abordagem qualitativas, para a realização da pesquisa adotou-se os procedimentos teórico-metodológicos da revisão bibliográfica e da análise documental. As avaliações das políticas de educação, portanto, são vistas de forma reducionistas e abordadas de maneira meramente técnicas, pois as políticas neoliberais vêm influenciando e induzindo as avaliações a possuírem esse caráter. Diante das reflexões apresentadas, pois, tem-se que a educação profissional no campo das políticas públicas é submetida a modelos avaliativos.

Palavras-chave: Avaliação. Estado. Ideologia. Educação profissional.

1 Introduction

2 In proposing to study the State, Public Policies and ideology as a basis for political evaluation of the vocational education policy, it has as a referential framework that the political evaluation is based on the studies of Figueiredo and Figueiredo (1986, p. 108), which conceptualizes this type of evaluation as an attribution "[...] of value to the policies, to their consequences, to the institutional apparatus in which they take place and to the very acts that intend to modify the content of these policies.

In this sense, Souza (2013), when addressing the need for suspicion in policy evaluation, states that it is necessary to unveil the ideology that underpinned the policy making, the goals, and the explicit and implicit theories. Such evaluation uses Social Research instruments and consists in assessing "[...] the degree of consistency between the social objectives, the principles of justice and, of course, the means to be used" (FIGUEIREDO; FIGUEIREDO, 1986, p. 123).

When approaching the dialectical method, one realizes, therefore, in light of Lopes (2013), that the

[...] he historical-critical approach based on historical materialism understands that subjects construct social reality, and at the same time are shaped by it. It is sensitive human activity, that is, praxis, that produces man as a social being (LOPES, 2013, p. 20).

For Marx (2002, p. 21), "[...] men make their own history, but they do not make it the way they want, they do not make it under circumstances of their choice, but those that they face directly, linked and transmitted by the past". In this perspective, for Araújo (2010, p. 3), it is "necessary to recognize that any reading that one makes about professional education, including its pedagogical practices, presupposes a political option based on the society project that one takes as reference".

Therefore, the discussion about public policies leads us to the need to reflect on the Capitalist State. In this vein, O'Connor (1977) states "[...] two major functions that the



State would have: accumulation and legitimation". Thus, Souza, C. (2006) emphasizes that:

[...]Public Policy allows us to distinguish between what the government intends to do and what it actually does. Public Policy involves various actors and decision levels, although it is materialized through governments, and is not necessarily restricted to formal participants, since informal ones are also important. (SOUZA, C, 2006, p. 36).

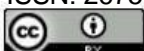
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From this perspective, most theorists conceptualize evaluation as value assignment, directing the measurement criteria: effectiveness (resources applied), efficiency (if it reached the expected goals) and effectiveness (relationship between results and objectives). However, it is necessary to go beyond, as says Souza (2013), who calls attention to a political evaluation whose reading goes beyond what is exposed in official documents, directed to the contents that are not officially expressed and that, through political evaluation, it is possible to identify the ideological components present in legal documents, which will guide the intentions of the execution of a policy.

Methodologically, the evaluation of public policies is framed as a scientific modality, with the essence of the analysis being the concern with the attributes, values, and consequences, as well as with the institutional apparatus in which the policies are developed and the acts that intend to modify the content of these policies. With a qualitative nature and approach, this work adopted the theoretical and methodological procedures of bibliographic review and document analysis, which are proper of the political evaluation of the policy, thus giving body and materiality to the discussion that we intend to present from now on in this work.

2 The capitalist state and the ideological dimension: foundations and concepts

The political evaluation of a policy fosters the discussion of some concepts of state and social policies, which are put as central factors of discussion in this work through the conceptions of Poulantzas (1980) and Offe (1986).



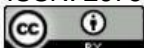


In this context, ideology is conceived as a fundamental element to understand how the State materializes its domination and constitutes its public policies. Thus, if it is the materialization of the dominant thought, the ideology that prevails takes over the State apparatuses with the function of elaborating, proclaiming and reproducing the ideology of the class that dominates.

Throughout history, marked by capitalism, domination has often been exercised through the repressive force of the dominant class against the dominated class. When talking about ideology within the state apparatus, therefore, it is conceived that the main characteristic of the components is persuasion, because one of its tools is the ideologized discourse (POULANTZAS, 1980). In light of what the author points out, it is possible to say that public policies represent the State's discourse, which is absolved by the dominated class, considering that, in a certain way, they portray a reparation to the wishes of this one, as well as bring in themselves the alienation that favors the maintenance of the existence of a class that dominates and another that will be dominated.

Thus, regarding the class struggle, Poulantzas (1980) states that it is the primacy over apparatuses and institutions, and it can even surpass the dominant interests. In view of this, it is reverberated to what extent these consensuses and class struggle can overcome the interest of professional education policy, imposed by the dominant class, and, on the other hand, desired by the working class. At this juncture, the capitalist state, according to Poulantzas (1980), is the defender and reproducer of the dominant ideology, through the ideology of the neutral state, which defends the interests of all and is the guarantor of social welfare and freedoms.

Marx and Engels (1998), in discussing the German Ideology, shows the birth of historical and dialectical materialism. This theory represents a criticism of the bourgeois ideological tendencies, having the exposure of man as a product of his history, constituted as a historical and ontological being. Thus, the concept of ideology, presented by Marx and Engels (1998), consists of a false consciousness of things, a mistaken vision of reality. For the authors, the Fetishism of Merchandise is the most





profound elaboration of what represents the ideology of the dominant class towards the dominated, especially with regard to the division of intellectual labor and manual labor.

Marx and Engels (1998), moreover, state that in the dominant class itself there is a division between those who are occupied with the practice of domination and the intellectuals who are occupied in elaborating ideologies.

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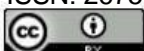
In this way, Marx and Engels (1998) argue that the way to overcome alienation would be consciousness. However, consciousness is a social product and is determined by life. For the mentioned authors, there is a contradiction between individual and collective interests, which leads the State to act in a separate and independent way, distinguishing then the individual interests from the collective whole. The struggle within the State, then, is materialized as struggles between different social classes.

As these concepts, essential to the present discussion, are unveiled, it is possible to reflect on the framework of how public policies are formed, becoming perceptible, along the way, that one is tracing the relations of this "consensus" and class struggle, which are installed from the conception of a policy to its execution.

In the relation with social policies in Brazil, we can collate in the light of the aspects depredated above, that they are mechanisms for maintaining the order of the working class' strength, besides representing, in some moments, conquests of these classes, or, in its most perverse form, they present themselves as benefits of the dominant class as an instrument to increase the wealth of the elite.

Social policies are not disconnected from class struggles. The State needs to assume the popular claims and social rights, considering that these are a legal consecration of the working class. However, one cannot believe that all rights will be fully met, even though it is convenient for the ruling group to accept some claims, since social policies are seen as mechanisms to maintain order and as arrangements of the dominant bloc.

Thus, the foundations of social inequalities lie in the form of production of wealth in capitalist society, sustained by private ownership of the means of production and by class contradictions. In this way, man becomes subject social transformation collective, e





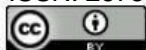
their awareness in this path is fundamental in the process of participation in the conquest of rights. According to Marx (2002, p. 1985), "the history of men is the history of their social relations, and capitalism is the expression of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

For Afonso (2013), this State model, with the characteristics described, is called the evaluating State. The author also states that there are three stages in the adoption of the evaluation system: the first is a link to market logics and neoliberal ideology to policies, called accountability; the second is the increased adherence of countries to international evaluation forms; and, finally, the third, which is the process of transnationalization of the evaluation practice.

The evaluator-state, in this sense, promotes a new administration model, and accountability, in this process, is the rendering of accounts and the accountability for performance in the evaluation process. The evaluating-state, therefore, does not abandon the old control traditions of the bureaucratic model, as demonstrated by the Weberians; on the contrary, it continues to practice its centralized models, which is apparently contradictory when compared to the neoliberal precepts of public administration, in which the State decentralizes and throws social responsibilities to individuals.

In this direction, for Afonso (2013), the evaluation policies become one of the structuring axes, as the evaluation strategies of public administration in the context of neoliberal reforms, so that this whole process, according to Offe (1986), is cause and consequence of capitalism, which has its driving force in the strategic rationality of capital accounting of the separation of man from his domestic units, meaning the expropriation between manual and intellectual labor.

It is necessary to understand, therefore, the existence of these two State models within public policies, since, in the case of Brazil, the 1990s saw the installation of the Rule of Law as of the 1988 Federal Constitution. However, the installation of this Rule of Law (called the welfare state, or welfare state, or welfare state, as it is called in Brazil) was not a success in non-democratic societies, marked by the presence of the In the





1990s, when there were advances in economic policy, we have a reality that, instead of strengthening the formation of a welfare state, what was constituted, in fact, was the realization of a state of social unrest, with public policies focused on neoliberalism and private interests. In this way, we will discuss below how the professional education policy was marked within this Brazilian State in the context of the educational reform.

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3 State and policy evaluation in the context of educational reform

According to Azevedo et al. (2015), the 1980s marked a period of transition in Brazil between the military regime and the resumption of democracy. In this context, the following decade was characterized by the implementation of educational reforms, with the World Conference on Education for All, in Jomtien, Thailand, which took place in March 1990. In this perspective, the government of President Fernando Collor de Melo established itself in the context of globalization and neoliberal policies, a political and economic scenario whose watchword was the downsizing of the State, initiating in the country a reality of privatization of state companies.

The 1988 Constitution, despite bringing advances in the conquests of social rights, runs counter to this process of downsizing the State. Moreover, as a consequence of this state behavior, there has been a reform of the Brazilian State, whether in the economic, political, or social fields, with direct impacts on education policy.

Still on the context of the 1990s, in 1992, President Collor was impeached. Thus, the government was taken over by the then vice-president Itamar Franco, who continued the process of minimizing the State, having to put into practice, in the following year, the Education Development Plan (PDE), which had its elaboration conceived after the aforementioned Conference that took place in Thailand, and was valid for a decade, that is, until 2003.

It is worth mentioning that the PDE of 1993-2003 was not characterized as a National Education Plan (PNE), so that the initiatives of the PDE (1993-2003) came to an end and the process of processing and approving the so-called current Law of Guidelines





and Bases (LDB), approved in 1996, and with principles oriented by international organizations, in which the logic printed is that of privatization or delegation of responsibilities to social civil organizations, influenced by market logic.

The LDB (1996) was approved during the first mandate of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), who was sworn in as president in 1995. Among his actions as president was the creation of the Ministry of Administration and State Reform (MARE), thus shaping the strategies and direction that social policies, and specifically those related to education, would take in the country, since the Brazilian state is built on a more flexible and efficient managerial model (PERONI, 2003; AZEVEDO; SILVA, 2012).

Also in this same period, the education policy undergoes reforms with four guiding axes: quality, equity, management and financing (AZEVEDO; SILVA, 2012). All these elements are arranged and distributed in 92 articles that make up the LDB (1996), so that contemplate principles, purposes and organization of Brazilian education. It is also noteworthy that Brazilian education is currently organized into two major levels (basic education - early childhood education, elementary school, high school - and higher education) and three modalities (Youth and Adult Education - YAE; professional and technological education; and special education).

The LDB (1996) guides, therefore, the competencies of each federated entity (municipalities, states, and the Union). For the Union, it is the competence to prepare the PNE, which, according to Azevedo et al. (2015), has its production idealized since the 1930s and its approval materialization by the executive power, belatedly, with the Law n° 10.172, of 09/01/2001, with ten-year validity. It is emphasized that, although it was the first PNE submitted for approval by the National Congress, the Plan did not add anything new to the education policy, except the reaffirmation of the guidelines of what had already been implemented by the Ministry of Education (MEC). About this Plan, Saviani (2007a) adds that it does not match the educational interests desired by the Brazilian population.

Another important milestone, which took place during President Lula's government, was the Base Document produced at the National Education Conference (CONAE), in 2010. This document states that social exclusion in education is a process



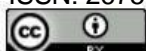


history of public policies in this country. In this event, it was also realized the need to conceive the planning of systemic policies and practices of monitoring and evaluation of plans, projects and programs carried out in the Brazilian educational policy. This fact was discussed because it was understood that the Brazilian education scenario and the evaluation process have been characterized by a strong evidence focused on the performance of education systems and on the reforms that Latin American countries have been undergoing. With regard to state reforms, from the 1990s on, especially in education, inter-ministerial commissions were created to evaluate programs and projects on management, the teaching-learning relationship and the performance of teachers, and not necessarily on the set of educational policies (AZEVEDO et al., 2015).

Moreover, it is noticeable that education in Brazil has been governed by the logic of the market, focusing on the control and measurement of actions that aim to compare the levels of skills and performance evolution indicators of schools, following the determinations of international organizations (AZEVEDO et al., 2015).

Given the above, the evaluation model installed for education has been guided according to external guidelines, loaded with strong economicist content and inducing the control of results, without concern for the qualitative dimension. They are, therefore, evaluations that are distant from the subjects involved, which makes them just pieces arranged on a board, and not with the ability to analyze and think in an emancipatory perspective. In this direction, for Fernandes (2010), the field of evaluation is in permanent mutation, and this is challenged by changes in the theoretical-methodological and practical scope occurred in global, national and local phenomena.

Thus, still, for Fernandes (2010), to evaluate is the social practice that should contribute to understand, disseminate and help solve the problems that affect society, such as full access to education. Afonso (2010), in turn, considers that the problem of accountability in education is brought in neoconservative or neoliberal connotations; while the evaluation processes, in accountability. Accountability, in the author's perspective, can and should be accompanied by values linked to citizenship, participation,





empowerment, transparency, argumentation, and intersubjective and critical communication, in order to make education more democratic and fairer.

The evaluation process to which education is subjected causes a race in schools to work the ranking, that is, the index that highlights each school within the ranking system. In this regard, Afonso (2010), when addressing accountability in education, states that:

[...] Accountability has three structuring dimensions: one of information, one of justification, and one of imposition or sanction. In a more immediate understanding, accountability can be the pillar that supports or condenses the first two: the right to request information or to demand justifications, being expected, in any case, that there is an obligation or duty (legally regulated or not) on the other party to comply with what is requested. Informing and justifying are two dimensions of accountability, which can thus be narrowly defined as the obligation or duty to respond to inquiries or requests (answerability) (AFONSO, 2010, p. 149).

What currently happens in education, with the National High School Exam (ENEM), Provinha Brasil and many other assessment programs, demonstrates a model of sharpening and formation of position of what are the best schools and the best students; from this scale, the spaces and policies are being defined, resulting in an increasing loss of state power as a result of autonomy and decentralization processes (AFONSO, 2010).

Being public policies endowed with the three fundamental issues mentioned above, a deepening in the analysis of educational assessment practices becomes basilar. As mentioned, there is an increasing demand for more effective schools and according to the position in school rankings, determined by comparative tests that are influenced by an international policy that aims at an increasingly competitive state (RAVITCH, 2011).

Moreover, the evaluations of education policies are seen reductionist and approached in a merely technical way, given that neoliberal policies have been influencing and inducing evaluations to have this character, as it is possible to identify in the standards set for exams, such as ENEM and Prova Brasil. Therefore, what can be seen is that, in the educational field, neoliberal policies have focused on teacher education policies, on large-scale evaluation models, on models of managerialist





management, in curricular policies defined by parameters and competencies, in the incentive to public-private partnership, among other aspects linked to the mercantilist logic, to the detriment of the social quality of education.

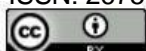
Thus, evaluations in education work as devices for regulation and control that articulate between market, management, and performativity. Managerial actions, such as ENEM, ENADE, and SINAES (National System for Evaluation of Higher Education) represent some of the guidelines of international organizations as a solution for public education in Brazil.

4 Final considerations

Vocational education, with a history of 111 years in Brazil, in the 1990s, post-democratization period, brings in its core extremely contradictory government policies, which marked more markedly the presence of a neoliberal state, with privatization and changes in the profile of vocational education introduced by Decree No. 2.208/1997, which divided the supply of high school and technical vocational education. This change made it possible for both to be offered separately, which, at the moment, for Professional Education, was characterized as a step backwards, reinforced by the neoliberal ideas in force.

In this context, it is essential to ensure education as a right for all and a duty of the State, and, therefore, also to ensure its compulsory nature through public resources. We must, therefore, guarantee students the same conditions to complete their course, considering that those with low purchasing power are in disadvantage, giving them the same prerogatives, from basic access to their survival, such as housing and food, to scholarships, transportation, health, access to computers and knowledge, through language courses, libraries and updated laboratories, participation in academic events, as well as access to culture and leisure.

One can affirm the experience of a singular moment in the expansion of professional education, coated, however, by numerous challenges, since the application





of what was planned in the PNE (2014-2024) was not observed, in addition to the context of dismantling in which education found itself, through the new actions, measures and reforms of the government of President Michel Temer, such as Law No. 13.415/2017, which establishes the new guidelines and bases for the New High School.

Finally, the development of this work allowed the authors to understand that the political evaluation of the policy is an approach that provides the condition to unveil the meanings that public policies present, contributing, therefore, to overcome the apparent line and enter into its essence, this permeated by all the challenges and advances present in the professional education policy.

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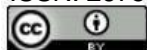
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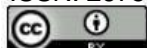
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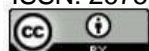
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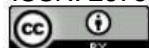
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