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New Secondary Education: full-time schools policy analysis

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ABSTRACT – **New Secondary Education: full-time schools policy analysis.** This paper analyzes the Policy of Promoting Full-Time Secondary Schools, which prompts the Brazilian New Secondary Education to identify possibilities for ecosystemic education. Its theoretical basis is plural, based on complexity and governance. Methodology includes document analysis, survey with schools, and immersion in a school in the Brazilian Federal District. Based on critical discourse analysis, it concluded that there is room for self-eco-organization of local policies, indicating that reform does not take place in norms or resources but in people's actions, in the context of practice. Failure to allocate financial resources and information can compromise sustainability.
Keywords: **New Secondary Education. Full-Time School. Ecosystemic Education.**

RESUMO – **Novo Ensino Médio: análise da política de escolas em tempo integral.** O artigo analisa a Política de Fomento a Escolas de Ensino Médio em Tempo Integral, indutora do Novo Ensino Médio Brasileiro, para identificar possibilidades de educação ecossistêmica. A base teórica é plural, baseada na complexidade e na governança. A metodologia inclui análise documental, levantamento com escolas e imersão em escola do Distrito Federal. À luz da Análise de Discurso Crítica, concluiu-se que há espaço de auto-eco-organização de políticas locais, indicando que a reforma não está nas normas ou recursos, mas na ação das pessoas, no contexto da prática. A não alocação de recursos financeiros e de informação pode comprometer a sustentabilidade.
Palavras-chave: **Novo Ensino Médio. Tempo Integral. Educação Ecossistêmica.**

Introduction

Most diverse intellectual currents state that the last stage of basic education requires reformulations and revitalization. If recent mobilizations of high school students have drawn attention in the form of an expressive movement held in several Brazilian states, the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova* (Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education) of 1932 already stated that secondary education was the crucial knot of education as whole (Azevedo, 1944). If, as stated in the Manifesto, we consider that school is for society something like a candle in the middle of darkness, the way secondary education has excluded young people from an educational journey capable to ensure them an adequate formation for a decent life suggests that here as well there is a "tunnel at the end of light" (Bauman, 1998, p. 33).

It was in the report of poor results and the "[…] mismatch between objectives proposed at this stage and youngsters it effectively trains" (Brasil, 2016) that the Ministry of Education (MEC, initials in Portuguese from Brazil) proposed what has been labeled as the Reform of Secondary Education (REM, initials in Portuguese from Brazil) or New Secondary Education (NEM, initials in Portuguese from Brazil), launched by Provisional Measure No. 746, of September 22, 2016, and then converted into Law No. 13.415, on February 16, 2017, with some changes regarding the initial norm, while maintaining its essence. Central elements are related to the workload expansion, properly combined with curricular flexibility, highlighting the possibility of student choice for different educational itineraries and reduction in the number of mandatory curricular components (Brasil, 2017).

It is noteworthy that, when the mentioned provisional measure was published, its first words were *"Institui a Política de Fomento à Implementação de Escolas de Ensino Médio em Tempo Integral" (Establishes the Policy to Promote the Implementation of Full-Time Secondary Education Schools) (PEMTI*, initials in Portuguese from Brazil). It was not about curriculum flexibility, technical and vocational education, changes in the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (Law on Education Guidelines and Bases), Law No. 9.394/1996 (Brasil, 1996), but rather a policy to encourage longer school days, specifically for high school, forecasted* to reach about 10% of students in high school; unlike the NEM, which would have total coverage. Therefore, there is a policy (or program) within the policy.

For this reason, we pay special attention to the reflexes on financing, observed from the perspective of *governance*. What we propose is to investigate how much PEMTI is aligned with a complex conception of education, or ecosystemic education (Moraes, 2004). For this purpose, "[…] we need to conceive of education policy and governance at a different scale and through new conceptual lenses; sharpness is not an option" (Ball, 2014, p. 44). To this end, we seek the combination of theoretical frameworks, which will be discussed below.

We assume that public policy refers to a "[…] flow of public deci-
sions, oriented to maintain social equilibrium or to introduce imbal-
ances aimed at changing this reality" (Saravia, 2006, p. 28). Flow and
imbalances are keywords for our approach, whose general objective is
to analyze whether imbalances generated by PEMTI contribute to ap-
proach NEM in an ecosystemic way (Moraes, 2004). Therefore, in addi-
tion to analyzing the policy in its constitutive features (Arretche, 2009),
we are interested in identifying "[…] how schools make policy" (Ball;
Maguire; Braun, 2016).

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

We believe that "[…] the type of process to reach the object is given
by the type of object and not the other way around" (Gamboa, 2012, p.
28). In a previous work (Wathier, Guimarães-Iosif, 2016), we sought ba-
sis in classical foundations – Bacon (1999), De Montaigne (2009), Diltey
(2010), Feyerabend (2007), Kuhn (1975), Günther (2006), and Popper
(2004). Progressively, we perceived that these classic philosophy of sci-
ence authors were distant from the issue of complexity, and in this state
of knowledge we find it difficult to think of solutions to current issues,
which are as urgent as they are essential (Morin, 2015).

Morin (2014, p. 20) emphatically argues that reforming education
requires reforming thinking: "[…] this is not about a programmatic re-
form, but a paradigmatic one". According to him, reforms fail because
they do not realize that they are conceived within a model of thinking
that is part of the problem, and that it has been unable to become part of
the solution. Therefore, thinking about a Secondary Education reform
would as well be looking through other lenses, where laws and financial
resources are environmental aspects to conceive of a reform and not
the reform itself. Thus, these elements are not assumed as factors that
trigger a direct causality, but rather as measures entering the inherent
complexity of areas such as Education.

By complexity we mean here what cannot be understood by simple
sum of parts, through linearity and sequence, but rather by recogniz-
ing that the constituent elements of reality interact and organize them-
selves in such a way that they cannot be dissociated – they are woven
together, they are *complexus* (Morin, 2013). In this sense, we develop our
analysis based on cognitive operators, or principles of complex thinking.
These operators are "[…] conceptual tools, they are metaphors that
facilitate understanding and practice of complex thinking" (Mariotti,
2010, p. 137).

We highlight:

a) circularity: effects feedback causes and re-fuel them;

b) dialogical operator: there are contradictions that cannot be re-
solved, and therefore there are opposites that are simultaneously
time antagonistic and complementary;

c) hologramatic operator: the parts are in the whole, and the whole is also in the parts;

d) self-eco-organization: living beings produce elements that constitute them and self-organize themselves through this process interacting with the environment;

e) subject-object interaction: the observer is part of what he observes; and

f) ecology of action: actions can escape their authors' control and produce unexpected and even unwanted effects.

Operators, individually or combined, permeate our whole way of building the research and presenting this analysis. Because of their fluidity, we seek to understand them from the perspective of *liquid modernity*: not as solid and static compartments, in which we fit this or that concept, this or that circumstance, but as factors interacting in multiple flows' dynamics.

The *liquid modernity* metaphor contributes to our analysis, particularly by expressing that "[…] the speed of movement and access to faster means of mobility has arrived in modern times as the main tool of power and domination" (Bauman, 2001, p. 17). It is in the complex cognition, immersed in *liquid modernity*, that we address this "[…] so enigmatic thing, at once visible and invisible, present and absent, vested everywhere, that is called power" (Foucault, 2014, p. 137-138).

As for the power, we agree that "[…] where there is power, it is exercised. Properly speaking, no one is its holder; and yet it is always exercised in a given direction" (Foucault, 2014, p. 138). In this sense, we will have, as an indicative of power, in a complex and liquid reality, the ability to produce flows or to interfere in them. It is about studying power where its intention "[…] is fully invested in real and effective practices; study power in its external face […], where it implants itself and produces real effects" (Foucault, 2014, p. 283).

Thus, we focus on analyzing movements and dynamics present in localized interactions – in the context of school practicing – as an action of multiple agents, instabilities, and contradictions, rather than as determinations of a normative set. In this sense, an "old" Secondary Education is present in its structuring, but also in the mentality of managers and teachers, in the expectations of students, in the notion of education that legislators carry with them (hologramatic principle). While a model is constituted or caused, it is also the cause (circularity), both of itself – by reaffirming realities – as of other models, by highlighting new needs (dialogical principle). The school, as an organic locus of education, is not interpreted as a mere object of policy, but as an active agent (subject-object interaction), and the actions of any of the actors enter into the ecology of action, in such a way that they can get distanced and even contradict intentions that generated them.

This perspective leads us to assume public policies more through the notion of *governance*, since we recognize that education policies cannot be fully understood from state-centric approaches (Power,

2011). Nowadays, there is a shift from government toward governance (Ball, 2013), requiring a new capacity to govern. What we understand as governance in education is "The replacement of the assumption that the state always and necessarily governs education by controlling all government activities by what might be called the coordination of coordination" (Dale, 2010, p. 1113).

Within this coordination, there are multiple institutions involved, all of them with their resources, interests, preferences, and priorities. Considering asymmetries, conveniences, and opportunities, governance defines "[…] invitation-based policymaking spaces" (Shultz, 2012, p. 36). Then, public policy cannot be interpreted as an isolated decision or action but as a flow; an action in some direction but without power of determination, interacting through non-linear causalities, subject to the ecology of action.

Although produced and planned in teams, organizations and institutions, the creation and implementation of the public policies is performed and developed through the action of a singular and unique being, capable of creating symbols, producing knowledge, transforming reality, while simultaneously transforming itself, organizing itself, being both an observing and an observed object. In short, a human being whose nature is, in turn, erratic, contradictory, and selfish, *sapiens-demens*, that is, a being of an extraordinarily complex nature (Moraes; Batalloso, 2017).

In Brazil, we live with a preponderant federal government toward the federation, and its decisions have repercussions throughout the country. In this sense, "[…] if the social complexity of an extremely unequal country […] imposes strict vigilance over researchers, one must add to this complexification the federative character of the Brazilian State" (Cury, 2011, p. 111-112). It means that when analyzing policies coming from the federal government, even if the same design applies to the whole country, we need to consider that the local configuration at each school occurs in the context of much more complex interactions than a vertical or unidirectional determination.

Shultz (2012, p. 30) clarifies that we need to assume that education policy "[…] is not the result of the expression of citizens or the Minister of Education's will, but of a national education policy that is based on broader global policies".

To this theoretical perspective we combine the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, initials from Portuguese from Brazil) approach, based on Fairclough (2012), because it combines "[…] a negative appreciation in diagnosing the problem with a positive appreciation in identifying possibilities" (Fairclough, 2012, p. 312). With this approach, we seek to identify what is emerging "[…] and also to indicate existing alternative directions unperformed" (Chouliaraki; Fairclough, 1999, p. 4). We synthesize our methodological goals and resources as follows:

Table 1 – Specific Objectives and Methodological Resources

Specific Aims	Methodological Resource
Analyze the PEMTI	Documentary analysis: 1) provisional measure and explanatory memorandum; 2) documentation of parallel legislative proposals; 3) Law No. 13.415; PEMTI edicts; *Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (National Education Development Fund) (FNDE, initials from Portuguese from Brazil) resolutions; *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (Common National Curriculum Base) (BNCC, initials from Portuguese from Brazil), *Curricular Guidelines for High School* (Diretrizes Curriculares para o Ensino Médio) (DCEM, initials from Portuguese from Brazil); pedagogical proposal of the selected school.
Survey with state schools regarding general perceptions about NEM	Structured virtual questionnaire sent by email
Analyze with local actors how a school participating in PEMTI has perceived and acted in the context of the Policy practice	Immersion in a school participating in PEMTI. Field visits; observation reports; semi-structured interviews; focus group
Identify possibilities within PEMTI for schools to position themselves toward ecosystemic education.	Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2012), fed by the adopted theoretical framework

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Secondary Education Reform

In the first stage, we analyzed the constitutive features of the Public Policy and performed a general scope verification in quantitative and direct aspects to then move on to organic elements observed in the context of practice. Presented as a precursor, Provisional Measure No. 746/2016 brought much of what was previously discussed in the National Congress in a proposal for the Secondary Education Reform, which did not reach approval. Thus, one element that distinguishes the proposal that was conceived and soon published in 2016 is the fact that it became a norm. Additionally, lacking further discussions with society, it was materialized based on recurring arguments, which mostly followed massive diagnoses on education, without facing more complex issues on social dynamics involving secondary education. In this context, NEM came into force having the following main pillars:

a) curricular flexibility, with the creation of formative itineraries and the possibility of choice by students;

b) progressive expansion of the course load – from 800 to 1.400 hours/year – with a minimum of 1.000 hours per year after 03/02/2022;

c) compulsory teaching of the English language, beginning in the sixth grade of elementary school and prevailing during high school over other foreign languages;

d) compulsory teaching of the Portuguese language and mathematics during the three years of High School, with flexibility for other school subjects;

e) acknowledgement of contents studied during high school on Higher Education or of different studies to compose education itineraries;

f) creation of the Policy to Promote the Implementation of Full-Time Secondary Education Schools (PEMTI) (Brasil, 2017).

Knowing that "[…] in most research on education policy, money is rarely mentioned and is replaced by a focus on ideas and practices" (Ball, 2014, p. 222), we outline an approach that seeks to interconnect funding issues with curricular and pedagogical conceptions. To this end, focus is directed to PEMTI, since it establishes significant resources.

The promotion policy aims to reach schools that start working full time after the NEM comes into effect and that adapt their political and pedagogical projects to Art. 36 of the LDB, which was substantially changed by the reform and now provides for education itineraries that, in turn, are complemented by the BNCC (Brasil, 2018).

> The education systems must establish a schedule for implementing the changes in Law 9.394, of December 20, 1996, according to articles 2, 3, and 4 of this Law, in the first school year following the date of publication of the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC) and start the implementation process according to that schedule from the second school year following the date of approval of the Common National Curricular Base on (Brasil, 2017).

While PEMTI began in 2017, BNCC was only approved in 2018, causing changes in the LDB and, therefore, the education itineraries themselves, to only come into force from 2020 on. Infra-legal norms, especially the FNDE Deliberative Council Resolution and the MEC Ordinances, which serve as a public notice to choose schools, establish detailed criteria, which are discussed in Wathier (2019). As for funding, the amount of BRL 2,000/year was established for each new full-time high school enrollment generated in schools participating in PEMTI. This amount is initially transferred based on the targets and adjusted according to the actual enrollments, according to the subsequent school census.

The first two calls for proposals resulted in the selection of 900 schools, distributed throughout the 26 Brazilian states and the Federal District, with a projection of reaching 434,000 students. Therefore, the numbers were slightly below MEC projection, which aimed at reaching one thousand schools. The following chart shows the number of schools per federal state:

Chart 1 – Number of Students by Federal State – Targets for 2017, 2018, and 2019
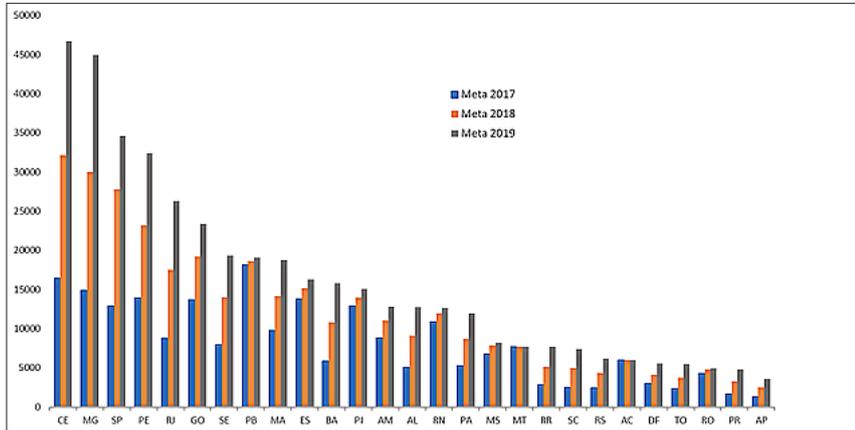
Source: Organized by the authors with data obtained through the Access to Information Low from MEC.

Prior to the PEMTI, there was already a tendency to expand full-time Secondary Education. In absolute and rounded numbers, between 2013 and 2016, it went from 300 to 400 thousand students; in 2018, it jumped to 600 thousand, as expressed in the chart below, already a Policy effect:

Chart 2 – Historical Series of Enrollments Number in EMTI
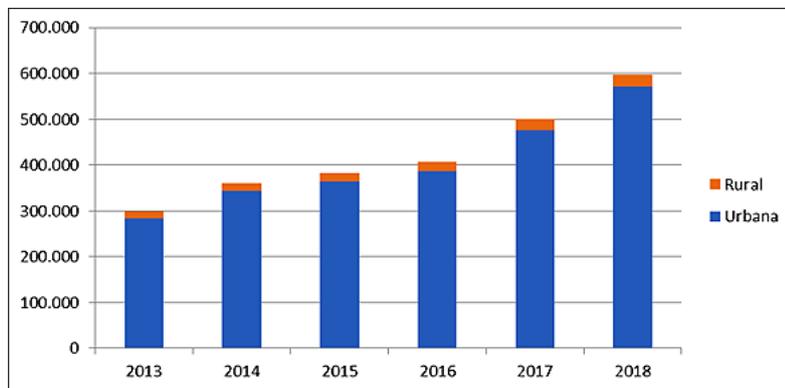
Source: School Census data (INEP, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). Organized by the authors.

Full-time classes went from less than 5% of High School students to approximately 10%. This is still a slight increase, considering that PEMTI goal was for about 10% of High School students to migrate to full-time.

Considering only schools covered by the policy, in all federal states there has been an increase in full-time secondary enrollments, totaling

an increase of 140,954 enrollments (from 37,818 to 178,772). Although significant, this number is less than half of the target for 2018, which was 331,608 new full-time enrollments for these schools. In the same period, the number of part-time students fell by 271,583 (from 433,093 to 161,510). This shows that in these schools there was an exchange of two part-time slots for one full-time slot.

Deepening the relationship between target/enrollment versus actual/census, we also analyzed the values passed on in 2017 and 2018, from which we measured the number of vacancies considered to calculate the amount of the transfer. In the chart below, we can see that actual enrollments were substantially below the targets. On the other hand, the amounts passed on to states in 2017 were substantially higher than the targets, and in 2018 even though they were lower than the target, they remain substantially higher than the effective enrollments.

Chart 3 – Targets, Enrollments, and PEMTI Projection

Source: Organized by the author.

In 2017, the corresponding amount of BRL 8,764 was passed on per effective enrollment. In 2018 there was supposedly a correction process. However, even if there is a reduction in the imbalance, what the norms anticipated was the deduction of values corresponding to not carried out enrollments, and this did not happen; for each enrollment in 2018, values equivalent to BRL 3,355 were passed on.

At the time of this research conclusion, in June/2019, there were no transfers in fiscal year 2019, nor enrollment data that would allow extending this evaluation beyond schools where immersion took place. In general analysis, resources were provided by the Federal Government, moreover in amounts inexplicably higher than projected. Therefore, if we have already concluded (Wathier; Guimarães-Iosif, 2017) that the funding policy *per capita* value was much higher than those of other programs, it was found that provision was even higher.

When analyzing the specific case of the selected school, one can see an indication of one of the plausible causes of this problem, namely the goal set for 2017 was already 400 full-time enrollments. This would

only be feasible if the school performed a leap from 100% partial enrollments to 100% full-time enrollments, which does not correspond to the adopted strategy, namely an incremental introduction of full-time enrollments: 1st high school grade in 2017; 1st and 2nd grades in 2018; all three grades in 2019.

In 2016, the school had 458 part-time High School enrollments and served Elementary Education (EF, initials from Portuguese from Brazil) students in the afternoon, besides the *Educação de Jovens e Adultos* (Young Adults and Adults Education) (EJA, initials in Portuguese from Brazil) program in the evening. The flow of the Full-Time Secondary Education implementation included no longer working with EF and EJA. As for the full time itself, the school showed an evolution in enrollments in counterbalance to the part time numbers; in 2016, 0 and 458; in 2017, 132 and 228; in 2018, 309 and 412[1], according to the Brazilian School Census (INEP, 2017; 2018; 2019). For 2019, we concluded that there are no more part-time students in the school and the enrollment number is 440 students. That is, the target for 2019 in PEMTI has been achieved and exceeded, leaving the need to address the problem arising from the initial target setting.

These first results showed that, even in the quantitative aspects and in direct compliance with the norms, financial and enrollments outreach flows did not follow a logic of direct causality. There was a financial resources flow from federal government to state secretariats of education that was out of line with the projection, exceeding it. The flow of students into Full-Time Secondary Education was below projections, while it was perceived that there was a side effect of discontinuity in the attendance at regular elementary education or at *Educação de Jovens e Adultos* (Young Adults and Adults Education) (EJA), both on elementary and secondary education. This is a first layer of the flows promoted in the High School educational environment, from which we advance to the following layers, seeking to understand the complexity of these movements.

Survey on Secondary Education Schools

By means of a virtual questionnaire sent to 27,548 High Schools from all over Brazil, we gathered information about their performance profile and perceptions about the New Secondary Education and the Policy of Promotion. If we assume that all actors exercise power actions, this search is for a minimal understanding of their inclinations in undertaking such actions. From the results analysis, we highlight:

a) there is a general and relatively uniform perception that the NEM effects tend to be more positive than negative;

b) in most schools, there is no full-time secondary education and no proposals for implementation, indicating that the effects of full-time education will be restricted to those participating in PEMTI;

c) respondents who felt less knowledgeable about the NEM tended to have a less positive view of new organization possibilities for secondary education and focused liability on the Federal Government;

d) there is a prevailing perception that the best financial management mechanism is a decentralized one, to be executed directly by schools;

e) there is a prevailing perception that the schools' strengths are the interaction between management and community and the proactive attitude of the teaching staff. On the other hand, there is a perception of resources low availability. The issues of infrastructure and autonomy in relation to the network were in the intermediate field;

f) environmental issues and issues related to ethics positioned as a central tendency, even with techniques that tried to avoid this. It is inferred that these issues are not usually forgotten but are rarely prioritized;

g) we can see a great proximity in the answers of schools participating and not participating in the PEMTI;

h) curricular issues showed that, while PEMTI participants are more inclined to be protagonists, non-participants tend to be more dependent on participation in competitions (mathematics' olympics, school games…). PEMTI participants indicate they are achieving other themes (labor market readiness, higher education, culture, and protagonism) at a slightly higher level than non-participants.

These general data serve to feed a broad view of the process and inform about possible points outside the curve identified in the school. On the one hand, they allow us to perceive the general movement of the policy, which is also a generic and superficial movement, and it is necessary to understand its nuances in practical contexts.

Analysis of the Selected School

To carry out the immersion in a school participating in the Policy, we sought to identify a school in which we had evidence of protagonism and work with ecosystemic issues. This survey was performed by networking and is related to this research objectives in the sense that we seek possibilities for a complex understanding of the policy, and to understand cases in which the school assumes itself as an actor of public education policy, creating better conditions for a complex approach. In this sense, we do not have statistical ambitions that one or a few schools could be representative of the number of participating schools, but rather that a school as an institution is a protagonist and the only one with total legitimacy to report about its own environment. Thus, we elected a medium-sized school (approximately 400 enrollments), located in a central region of Brasília, which receives students from several regions

of the Federal District, and has a medium standard infrastructure for the region.

The document analysis occurred throughout 2018. Visits to the school occurred during May and June 2019. The fieldwork was carried out with three focuses: management and teachers, through interviews; students, through focus group; and infrastructure and school dynamics, through observations of daily school life and open activities including its community. To portray the analysis in an optimized way, the approach here was performed by merging all actors and considering documents and observations. Management is identified as GA, GB, GC, and GD. Teachers are identified as P1 to P5; and student opinions are identified in a generic way as E, since we only considered positions that proved representative of a general view. In the case of contradictory views, we brought both perspectives, exploring counterpoint.

Institutional Policy and Resources

PEMTI membership was inherited by the school from its previous management, without much prior discussion. There was a kind of community validation regarding the current management: "I talked to the parents about all the advantages of adopting full-time. We had a majority of parents and a near majority on the part of students, because those students who were in elementary school did not want to leave it (GA)".

Resources were the motto for advocating participation in the policy. The school management projected to receive R$ 800,000.00 in the first year, and counted on being able to execute this resource directly, because it has had experience with federal actions linked to the *Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* (Money Directly to School Program, PDDE).

> If one has the resources, not taking it to school because you don't trust that it will be allocated correctly means not trusting the regulation and control mechanisms afterwards. Knowing that the school has autonomy and expertise to execute, one must deliver the money (GD).

Even in the case of a very attentive management, the fact that this definition is included in the rules was not effective enough, since "[…] in the school routine you overlook these measures held on high spheres" (GD). Thus, on how the issue of resources came about in practice, there is a categorical answer: "It didn't happen. As simple as that. The money did not arrive" (GB).

> With support from the community, from a church that offers its facilities to the school on weekends. The cafeteria out there we made with this church help, so that school students could have a place to lunch […] it is awkward to talk like this, because it seems that teachers […] always promptly react by complaining about financial issues. But the financial aspect is particularly important to full-time education. You have to offer minimum conditions for school students to spend the entire day inside the school (GA).

One might think that schools are having to meet these new demands with the same resources they had before, but the management perception is even a bit more problematic than that: "[…] we had to give up a program were money provision came timely and safely […] we have less money today than we would have without this process" (GD).

What we identified as substantial resources are the people, which in part are funded with PEMTI resources. In addition, we highlight some points:

a) teachers use their own working kits, because the school equipment is not available;

b) managers take on multiple roles and work substantially beyond regular hours;

c) students act as volunteers, what is used to compensate staff shortages;

d) every school seeks external resources, such as donations, sponsorships;

e) school usage by other institutions at times when it is be idle is a way to compensate community support.

It can be seen, therefore, that the school adherence to the Policy is not exactly a result of the way this policy was designed, but of the school perception from their own environment regarding federal policies. Moreover, it highlights the role that the resource – or the expectation of receiving it – plays in decisions, even when focus is essentially curricular. Thus, financial resource is an important environmental variable, and should neither be placed above the others nor left out of the analysis.

Policy on People

As it happened with the school itself, many students entered the full-time program unwittingly: "[…] I was talking to a friend of mine and told her that I couldn't wait until 12:15, because these people here are kind of boring, right? Then she said: We are going to stay here until 5:20. My eyes were suddenly filled with tears" (E). The same student says that today, between part-time and full-time, she would choose full-time, because "[…] during the free time I wouldn't do anything… […] and I'm here doing something and creating bonds with other people" (E).

There are those who entered full-time by their own will but also to these people the experience does not seem to have been pleasant at first sight: "I was overly excited when I entered. Then in the first week I said: No, I want to leave; mom, please get me out of this school! […] Then I adapted myself, because in these workshops I learn more" (E)

There are reports that many school students left school for the same reason: "[…] school students that voluntarily worked or those who needed to work to help their families usually did not fit in and they all

ended up leaving" (GD). Interviewees were clear about the student profile that fit in the school, and about what profiles did not fit, especially after PEMTI: "Does your child want to do an internship? Does he or she want to work and study? If so, this is not a suitable school for you. The secretariat has other school options but not this one. Our option here is training; the student will have to immerse him- or herself here at school and stay here all day (GA)".

We noticed a lack of communication and poorly informed decisions on the school side in relation to the Secretariat of Education, as well as on the students' side in relation to the school. Although communication was established in the relationship between teachers and management, there was no construction of consent, so it became the most conflictive process of PEMTI at the school.

Considering the institution's active teachers, who composed a stable staff, only four remained in the school (about 20%). The governance based on invitations and discouragements was clear: "[...] here it's going to be like this now. If you don't like it, look for another school" (GD). The management realized that offering workshops allowed the engagement of teachers with specific skills; then the school defines the workshops' subjects and makes a call for teachers. These teachers apply for the vacant position and, if selected, start working at the school. If there are no permanent teachers interested in the position, a temporary contract teacher is hired.

This possibility is one which gained rare support recognitions in the relationship between management and the central instance of education in the Federal District: "[...] being able to select teachers who will work here has been particularly good. Before we had to work with just anyone" (GD).

From the above, one can see that the movement to join PEMTI is broad, not restricted to the secretariat of education that sticks to the federal policy, or the schools that will participate. It is a multi-layered adoption; management (which is not always the same) needs to join, among students there are those who adhere and those who don't, and among the teachers there is a similar movement. It is a movement that profoundly affects the lives of many. It was possible to perceive a high degree of satisfaction among those who stayed but, due to our scope, we could not go further to understand the effects in the lives of those who did not stay and, in particular, what options they found.

Despite the tortuous process at the beginning, the current teachers feel a deep support at the school: "[...] at the same time that the management makes itself present, they also grant a lot of freedom. [...] they trust us a lot and give us freedom to create" (P2). Thus, the projects are not impervious, nor do they assume a controlling character: "The project is so. It works this way, in such a fashion. But it is yours" (P4).

It is noticeable that the relationship between management and teachers is similar to what teachers seek in their relationship with students; namely to take them out of their comfort zone, while remaining

present, in order to provide safety. It is a contradictory path. On the one hand, "[…] students themselves are still in the era of banking education (P3). On the other hand, there is the teacher's report on the creation of a workshop in which students proposed and developed one-day workshops. And this showed that "[…] they no longer want traditional education, they want a more practical education" (P4). The report is that "[…] in all the workshops they proposed, they had a 20-minute speech, then it was about hands-on" (P4).

The policies of invitations and discouragements (Shultz, 2012) appear on multiple levels, and these attempts to bring people in or keep others out are configured as actions of power (Foucault, 2014), whether by management in relation to teachers, by parents or guardians in relation to students, and even in friendship relationships. Moreover, such actions do not have the deterministic ability; it is necessary to see them from the perspective of the ecology of action (Mariotti, 2010). What we noticed is that there was an important flux in relation to whom gained or assumed voice, that is, who understood him- or herself as an active agent. Evidence of this is the management statement that the project did not run amidst divisions solely because the group of teachers unsympathetic to the new model did not apply to coordinate it. Therefore, it is evident that depending on local, individual, and ecologized actions, the movements in that environment could be different since meaning is not determined from the outside.

People in Relation to Politics

After the strong imbalance that the policy brought into people's lives, those who remained felt other effects and began to assume attitudes and protagonism. An initial aspect is that the school adopted full-time classes shift every day of the week, exceeding the 1,400 hours foreseen in the PEMTI.

The reaction immediately perceived was "[…] they [the students] were often disgusted with having to be here full time" (GB). Students who were at the school in the first year of PEMTI implementation unanimously described the experience as horrible. The comfort aspect was highlighted: the lack of a space to rest was seen as the school main structural problem. Indignation was focused, therefore, on the time they spent there: "[…] we were studying beyond the time we were supposed to study" and "we worked hard to fix it" (E). Management supported the plea: "[…] even the regional director was against us; saying that we couldn't do that, because our reputation was at stake […] but we stood our ground […] the kids were dissatisfied" (GB).

After much effort there was a reduction from five days a week to three days a week, which made it possible for the students to rest and for the teachers to plan and collaborate, since with student work every day there was not enough time for teachers to meet. An interesting contradiction was that fewer full-time days generated more integrated dimensions. And more than changing schedules itself, this fact is a vortex

in the students' perception that they can act in politics, negotiate with management, and promote improvements for their own problems. Lack of resources, of space to rest, and discomfort were aspects that drove the protagonism. And not only the absence of conditions but its combination with expectation and confidence that better conditions were possible.

It is in this sense that the way the school deals with protagonism, based on the search for solutions to real problems, not forged in the classroom, is becoming a model of experiencing school. Another example of this process is the creation of the student group of volunteers.

In the pedagogical coordination practice of disseminating information on development opportunities to students, the USA Embassy Youth Ambassadors Program was advertised, and this aroused the interest of some students for a possible exchange program in the United States. Solutions were constructed from problems brought by students, such as: "[…] it is necessary to establish a year of volunteer service. And we can't have this in a full-time school. So, let's create a program here" (GD).

This is how the Volunteer Students project emerged, first focusing on creating the school social networks and progressively expanding to other fronts in an organic way: "[…] the group has been growing and feeding itself" (GC)

> I joined it because of the young ambassadors, but when I saw that we could really make a difference, that it was not just a diploma and the volunteering… man, then I dedicated myself a lot and really gained a great affection for volunteering (E).

The group of volunteer students called our attention for its model, breaking the linear process that usually establishes itself according to the way Management » Teacher » Student, in a one-way street relationship. The volunteers bring students and management closer together, in a two-way street sense, since both the management becomes more useful in meeting students' demands and students contribute to management in things the latter is not able to accomplish alone. This group currently includes about 40 students, from a total of 440 school enrollments. In any case, what can be noticed is that the perspective of protagonism is not restricted to this: "[…] a lot of students don't even manifest this protagonism in the classroom. But they create things outside the classroom. So many students bring partnerships, bring contacts…" (GD).

We understand that this is the product from the students' assumption that they have a deeper understanding of the school problems than the management itself:

> If it wasn't for this, we would be disorganized, just like were in 2017 […] if it wasn't for students themselves proposing improvements, I think we wouldn't be as fit as we are today […] there are things like this that the school management is not aware of, but we know that we must change them (E).

This way of perceiving and acting is also fed by the teacher's dominant attitude: "[…] I try to establish a bond of trust, of exchange, without hierarchizing […], I sit at an equal basis with them […], inverting the classroom structure" (P1); they try to perform an "[…] intense exercise of listening among students, so that they decide as a group" (P5). In this sense, it is noticeable that protagonism is not what we usually understand, as one actor standing out among many, but rather with everyone having their space:

> Look, I perceive the protagonism of all the actors involved as much greater, you know? Much greater than in any other school I've been to, where the organization is much more hierarchical and authoritarian, kinda we-say-so and that's it. While in this case […], it's a much more structured relationship. Sometimes I see students doing things that I didn't even know they could manage; you know, I think that's really cool (P1).

It is relevant to point out that when students perceive possibilities of active participation, they rarely assume fatalistic attitudes toward politics. On the part of managers and teachers, there is also a remarkable proactive vision, but disappointments accumulated throughout life do not disappear: "[…] it bothers me a lot when we have a public education policy that is thought from top to bottom by people who, in some cases, have never trodden a classroom" (P1).

Even with reservations, what became evident is that the active environment stimulates more constructive attitudes. Although extensive, the contribution below from one of the teachers who had been at the school before PEMTI demonstrates the environmental ability to influence:

> […] when I arrived at the school […] I was a traditional, distant guy, […] I realized that students did not trust me as much as they did toward some other colleagues of mine, who had […] a bit more open relationship with them, listening a little more, exchanging a little more […]. So, why not try? And then I started to exchange a little more with students. I would say that what triggered it to me was seeing some of my colleagues who had a more open relationship with students having better results than mine (P4).

For all the above, we ratify the education policy, in this case the PEMTI, as extremely complex, promoter of flows and imbalances, mirroring in praxis Saravia's (2006) concept. However, while we saw incredibly positive actions in the analyzed school, we noticed the movement of "discouraging" teachers, students, and teaching modalities, revealing a highly exclusionary feature of this policy. We also reaffirm fluidity, in the example that a USA Embassy program influenced the way the school was organized, not because of resources or norms, but because it aroused desire among students. When information flows and people are aware of their real conditions, they are given the right to choose, which does not mean an option in a list, but interaction with reality itself and experiencing possibilities that can be built and reformulated; realizing oneself as capable of power actions, as described by Foucault (2014).

On the other hand, it is evident that there are still rigid political structures and substantial limits and boundaries to action. In other words, power is still too centralized through barriers that limit the flow of decisions which, in turn, are linked to a still very vertical model of thinking the policy. In this sense, we repeat Morin's (2014) warning that in order to think a reform it is necessary to reform thinking. Our immersion in the school showed that building a new way of thinking is possible but requires substantial disruption in the environment. In addition, from what we analyzed outside the school, even though this is not a recurrence, it is about an emerging process (Moraes, 2004).

Conclusions: a matter of choice?

When one develops research seeking to understand flows and imbalances, conceiving reality as complex and immersed in the fluidity of current times, there are more chances to understand reality than if one seeks immutable truths or facts. The recurring public-school portrait of too much and disconnected content was also present in our fieldwork. We could have focused on them, but we sticked to our goals, which were to seek organic possibilities within a policy imposed from above, lacking dialogues. And these possibilities also became clear.

We saw that the school did not receive the proper flows of information and resources. But it developed them through the people and the temporal space created. The dissent of PEMTI in relation to the approval of the BNCC proved to be an opportunity, as it generated an open space and tension for it to be filled. We noticed that this openness revealed choice as a great increment.

Making choices presumes ability to choose and conditions to do so. This leads us to the thesis of self-eco-organization prevalence. The central policy challenge is to recognize its limitations and accept that its fertilization happens within the institutions that are in daily contact with the lives to which it is dedicated. Agreeing on that, it must consider that if it does not interact with living institutions, it will be nothing more than a zombie institution (Bauman, 2001). After all, it only makes sense to presume "[…] self-eco-organization when conceiving of a system as a living organization" (Moraes, 2004, p. 74). By forging barriers to resources and not dedicating themselves to the information fluidity, central and intermediary instances block the institutions vital flow.

We understand that PEMTI, BNCC, and DCEM make multiple arrangements possible, which allows each school to deal with its context and build its response; the formula should not be a pre-defined form, but an encouragement to self-definition, to self-eco-organization. Just as the school has done with its students, injecting information and energy so that they develop their capacity for self-organization; this support is also needed in relation to the schools.

In our research journey, it became clear that it is not a reform in its normative aspects or central decisions that will have an effect on the

schools' life. These actions can, depending on how they are undertaken, generate the expected policy imbalances, without determining paths. What can be done is to open doors to dialogue and resources, to make viable choices. After that, it is up to the mechanisms of public policy to conduct a process of investigation, with the purpose of offering support and guarantees. In short, it is necessary to get energy flowing in schools, to signal that they can, yes, reinvent themselves, and then see how they react.

Management, teachers, and students are immersed in the social context that disseminates the discourse that education and public schools are collapsing. There is no organization able to resist this, whether public or private, in education or business. As an institution, school has suffered from this evil and has admirably resisted countless attacks. What we realize, however, is that an accredited institution can reinvent itself by the incursion of energy coming from people who still see a fruitful environment there and inspire each other.

Therefore, we conclude that PEMTI will succeed if it provides minimum conditions in terms of resources, promoting contact rather than building political boundaries. NEM, in turn, has greater challenges, as it cannot generate imbalances expressed here solely among PEMTI participants: it is necessary to create opportunities for choice in all schools, so that all High School students are reached out, and those who throughout their personal histories were invited to abandon study at this stage of education, often through the imposition of a list of options deprived of possibilities.

Note

1 This number refers to a failure to fill out the census, but it is the official number.

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