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Mais Educação Program in Latin America: legacies for deprived children and youth

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ABSTRACT – Mais Educação Program in Latin America: legacies for deprived children and youth. This paper aims to situate the emergence of *Programa Mais Educação* (PME – More Education Program) in the political and educational context of Latin America and analyze the social significance of this experience for deprived children and youth in Brazil. This discussion is carried out in light of the State Reform of the 1990s and social studies on childhood and youth. It identifies in PME evidence of both the neoliberal trend experienced by Latin America, marked by rupture, continuity and setbacks, and the legacies of this policy regarding the expansion of the right to education through a concept of integral education centered on children and youth, their cultures and territories.

Keywords: Education Policy. Childhood. Youth. Integral Education. Extended School Day.

RESUMO – O Mais Educação na América Latina: legados a infâncias e juventudes pobres. O presente artigo tem como objetivo localizar o surgimento do Programa Mais Educação (PME) no contexto político-educacional latino-americano e analisar as consequências sociais desta experiência para crianças e jovens pobres no Brasil. Tais discussões são realizadas à luz da Reforma do Estado dos anos 1990, bem como dos estudos sociais da infância e juventude. Este trabalho tanto aponta no PME evidências da incursão neoliberal vivenciada pela América Latina, marcada por rupturas, permanências e retrocessos, quanto permite identificar legados desta política quanto à ampliação do direito à educação, ao inaugurar uma concepção de educação integral centrada nas crianças e jovens, suas culturas e territórios.

Palavras-chave: Política Educacional. Infância. Juventude. Educação Integral. Jornada Escolar Integral.

Introduction

Education was first declared a right of all Brazilian citizens in 1934, in the Federal Constitution, achieving greater effectiveness only about fifty years later with the Citizen Constitution of 1988, when conditions of access to schooling through the proposal of “. . . free public education in official establishments” (Brasil, 1988), among other factors, were minimally guaranteed. With the process of re-democratization, which included the drafting of the Federal Constitution, the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the expansion of social rights in Brazil. The 1988 Constitution was a turning point in the democratization of access to formal education. Proof of this are, for example, the historical statistical series of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)¹, which remind us that in 1992, 12.47% of children between the ages of 7 and 9 were not enrolled in school, a figure currently below 2%.

If, on the one hand, progress was made in guaranteeing the right of access to schooling for groups historically excluded from formal education in approximately the last three decades, on the other, the statistics indicate a long struggle ahead to oppose the development of an *expansion for less* (Algebaile, 2009). It is in response to this context, and therefore proposing to primarily address schools with low educational indicators and located in impoverished regions, that *Programa Mais Educação* (PM – More Education Program) is created in Brazil in 2007, aiming extend the school day and expand the educational dimensions offered by schools.

Considering the existence of interlocutions of this emergency with the State Reform framework of the 1990s in Latin America, this paper intends to situate the emergence of PME in the region’s political and educational context. A further goal is to analyze, within the scope of the expansion of the right to education, the social significance of this experience for deprived children and youth. To this end the text will be organized in two parts.

In the first, *Programa Mais Educação* will be characterized and situated in the context of Latin American education policy. This will investigate how the program relates to the region’s political and educational setting. Next, by presenting the results of research carried out by the authors (Brasil, 2009a; Brasil, 2013; Carvalho, 2013; Ramalho, 2014), the program’s social significance and its contributions to the expansion of the right to education will be analyzed, especially as it introduces a concept of integral education focused on children and youth, their cultures and their territories.

Recently, in 2016, PME underwent radical changes which are viewed in this paper as setbacks in the previously followed path of ensuring rights to education. Therefore, the final remarks feature a critical analysis of *Program Novo Mais Educação* (New More Education Program), aiming to clarify its ideological connections.

Education Policy in the Context of Education Reform in Latin America

Discussions on education reform in Latin America are directly related to the State Reform proposals of the early 1990s². According to the 1998 CLAD (*Centro Latino-Americano para o Desenvolvimento* – Latin American Center for Development) document *Uma Nova Gestão para a América Latina* (A New Management for Latin America), the proposal for State Managerial Reform was based on an attempt to improve and advance the concept of the Weberian State, whereby the state moves away from a historical process of power concentration towards a role of integrating the various social logics and subjects. Within the understanding of the state crisis, one observes in liberal guiding principles the idea that it must be reformed to increase its efficiency and regulating capacity through Managerial Public Administration, which is basically guided by control of results.

Education policy was strongly influenced by these processes of reform³. The World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien proposed that participating countries commit to improving education by endorsing the statement ensuring quality basic education for children, youth and adults.

The policy for extending the school day within the perspective of integral education is inserted in this context of reflection on Latin America society, specifically in what Domingues (2013) has termed the *third phase of modernity*, which proposes an analysis of the Latin American region regarding its refusal to reify the modernity that establishes the model of society to be achieved. Within this perspective, given that education policy in Latin America has stressed the relationship between education and poverty, “. . . where the poor are those who don't attend school, who attend it in unfavorable conditions and who receive an irrelevant or inefficient education” (Parada, 2001, p.78), this paper views *Programa Mais Educação* as a possible alternative for expanding the right to education, analyzing the social significance of this experience for destitute children and youth⁴.

In recent years, Latin America has extensively experienced the implementation of education policy based on neoliberal assumptions. Feldfeber (2003) states that one notes in the discourses of World Bank technicians and local foundations of neoliberal inclination the orchestrations to introduce themes such as institutional autonomy, new managerial models and redefining the teaching career as key points of education reform. As for autonomy and decentralization, such policies are materialized in the implementation of new managerial models in an attempt to realign governments and education system administrations with the new forms of state management.

Oliveira (2004) shows that education reform in Brazil and several Latin American countries has brought about changes in education policy. “These are reforms that operate not only at school level, but through-

out the entire system, engendering profound changes in the nature of educational work” (Oliveira 2004, p. 1128). The author draws attention to the specificities of reform in the Latin American context, which, unlike reform in Europe and North America, is up against a precarious reality in which the challenge to achieve social equality is much greater as most of the population lacks access to basic social services.

Regarding Brazil, the policy of rationalization, modernization and privatization of public companies carried out by the FHC⁵ administration entailed initiatives to deregulate public administration, establishing a new model of social policy management based on decentralization. This new model of social policy management had significant consequences for education.

These reforms resulted in a restructuring of education regarding school organization, assessment, management, redefinition of curricula and funding. In this process, a national evaluation system called SAEB (Elementary and Secondary Education Evaluation System) was developed, which, besides addressing the issue of employability, also reformulated professional education (Oliveira, 2000).

Education policy in Latin America has recently expanded elementary and secondary education as a main goal and challenge. While this movement aimed to democratize access to education, it also promoted its massification, with significant consequences for school systems and their subjects, such as professionals in early childhood and youth education. Administrative, financial and pedagogical decentralization marks the trend of Latin American education reform, granting school establishments greater autonomy.

Education reform in Latin America is marked by a paradoxical trend, since while it claims to be a universal social policy, it has also been guided by targeted policies⁶. In Brazil this trend has been observed since the FHC administration (1995-2002), persisting in the governments of presidents Lula (2003-2010) and Dilma (2011-2016).

In this sense, the reform of elementary and secondary education, focusing on elementary education; the creation of FUNDEF (Fund for the Development and Maintenance of Elementary Education and Appreciation of Teaching); the process of municipalization of elementary and secondary education; the enhanced relationship between public administration and other civil society organizations, trade unions, associations, foundations and NGOs; the enhanced cooperation system; and the creation of FUNDEB (Fund for the Development and Maintenance of Elementary and Secondary Education and Appreciation of Teaching) are examples that mark the trend of targeted policies for Brazilian education. Therefore, knowing the context in which policies to extend the school day were developed is key to understanding the various interactions in place nowadays and how they occur within the different combinations of policies for education.

Extended School Day Policy in the Context of Social Policy in Latin America

The policy to extend the school day falls within the context of current social policy⁷, specifically regarding federal governments' initiatives of social protection and fighting poverty in Latin America. Although social policy springs from the principle of universalization, in the last decades it has shifted towards a logic focused on the most deprived sectors of society. Such a shift was due to the structural changes that took place in the Capitalist State, which indicated a reduction in social expenditures (Salama; Valier, 1997).

In this perspective, Domingues (2013) observes the significant role played by neoliberalism in the transition to the current phase of modernity and that, since the 1990s, a kind of social liberalism has been essential to the processes of organizing forms of global domination, including those that shape contemporary subjectivities.

In this context, the World Bank is a key player in consolidating domination, drawing on the strategy of policies targeting the world's poor and populous countries. "Such a configuration responds to what can be defined as trends and dynamics of the third phase of modernity" (Domingues, 2013, p.185).

This trend was also observed by Salama and Valier (1997), indicating that in Latin America, reform carried out by the state in the last decades has guided social policy strongly marked by compensatory measures for socially vulnerable groups.

The neoliberal government models failed to solve social problems in Latin American, succeeding only in deepening inequality, developing heterogeneous and fragmented societies, widening social divides and intensifying poverty. In this context, it is important to emphasize that children and youth are the age groups most affected by poverty conditions and poor income distribution (Qvortrup, 2005).

However, in the early 2000s a perspective of transforming the political landscape began with the election of *democratic-popular*, *progressive* or *post-neoliberal* governments responsible for presenting alternative political proposals to neoliberal trends, increasing the resilience of governments in Latin America, strengthening the processes of regional integration and restoring the state's role as a guarantor of social rights for all. These governments did not break with the capitalist regime, but sought to implement policies that countered the social inequalities enhanced in neoliberal governments. Post-neoliberalism is the denial of capitalism in the neoliberal phase that commodifies all spheres of social life, but is not necessarily anti-capitalistic (Sader, 2008).

However, the political proposals of *democratic-popular* governments in Latin America did not compose a homogeneous front. While Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela developed alternative policies that enabled discussions and debates on a more popular political program, on the other hand, countries such as Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru continued reinforcing their neoliberal policies. In this context, between

both extremes, countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay developed policies combining rupture with and continuity of some aspects of neoliberal proposals (Feldfeber and Oliveira, 2016). In this sense, some Latin American governments implemented policies targeting their most deprived populations, such as the programs *Bolsa Família* (Brazil)⁸, *Más Familias en Acción* (Colombia)⁹, *Oportunidades* and *Progresa* (Mexico)¹⁰ and *Asignación Universal por Hijo* (Argentina)¹¹, which have marked the social reality of the Latin American region.

Education policy, like other policy, was also strained between rupture and continuity regarding the reform model of previous decades, marking a paradox in education policy but at the same time pointing to a trend of heterogeneity in political concepts implemented by several countries and suggesting a less exclusionary education model. Countries such as Argentina and Brazil expanded schooling years, increased investment in education and created schools and universities in the public sector; schools for the education of youngsters and adults were opened in Argentina and Venezuela; and digital policies were implemented in Uruguay. Such actions, among others, have contributed to include sectors historically excluded from the education system (Feldfeber and Oliveira, 2016). In this way, education policy is also marked by the logic of targeted policies. The *Bolsa Escola* program (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico), student quotas in public universities (Brazil), *Programa Mais Educação* (Brazil) and *Programa Escuelas de Tiempo Ampliado* (Argentina and Uruguay) were and still are actual practices in the field of education in Latin American (Fanfani, 2010).

Regarding extended school day policy in particular, several programs were implemented in Latin America as of the 1990s, including in countries such as Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Extended school time was introduced in Chile in 2006 with the *Jornada Escolar Completa* (Full School Day) program, whose main goal was to meet requirements outside schools. In El Salvador, the *Escuelas Inclusivas de Tiempo Pleno* (Inclusive Full Time Schools) program was implemented in 2011 and aimed to address student diversity in terms of styles, traits and learning rhythms. Also in 2011 Mexico launched the program *Reforma da Educação – Reforma Integral da Educação Básica* (Education Reform – Comprehensive Reform of Basic Education) and extended school time became part of the country's official education system framework. In the Dominican Republic, the *Jornada Extendida* (Extended Day) program also began in 2011, offering elementary and secondary education in schools located in urban and rural areas with high levels of social vulnerability among the population. Also in 2011, Uruguay started implementing the *Tempo Completo e Tempo Estendido* (Full Time and Extended Time) program aiming to foster equality and quality in the country's education. And the *Escola de Tempo Completo* (Full Time School) program, part of the *Escuelas Bolivarianas* (Bolivarian Schools) project, is state policy in Venezuela aiming to offer comprehensive and quality education (Silva, 2017).

One may affirm that the extended school day programs developed in Latin America have a common goal: “[...] to reduce the rate of children and youth who are victims of violence, provide adequate nutrition, develop health promotion and protection habits and broaden cultural and educational experiences” (Silva, 2017, p.101). There is also a trend to foster students’ intellectual performance in large-scale national and international evaluations and ensure the development of skilled workforce for the productive market. Nevertheless, policies to extend school time in Latin America have been characterized as targeted policies. This trend is related to the characteristics of social policy implemented in some Latin American countries: “[...] social policy directed towards the very poor; welfare, privatization and decentralized social policy” (Salama; Valier 1997, p. 120).

This is the background of extended school day policy and of this paper’s specific analysis of *Programa Mais Educação*, viewing it in the context of the continuity of and rupture with education policy implemented in the region and as a model of education policy that has created conditions to materialize the social right of children and youth to education.

Programa Mais Educação

Programa Mais Educação was established by Inter-Ministerial Ordinance No. 17/2007 (Brasil, 2007c) and Decree No. 7083/2010 (Brasil, 2010, Article 1), with the aim of “[...] contributing to the improvement of learning by extending the school time of children, adolescents and youth enrolled in public schools, offering full-time elementary and secondary education.” The program, presented by the federal government as a strategy to develop full-time education policy in Brazilian states and municipalities, is part of *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (PDE – Education Development Plan) and emerged alongside and in harmony with different legislation for national education, such as: *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (LDB – National Education Guidelines and Framework Law) – No. 9394/1996, which states that “. . . the school day in elementary education shall include at least four hours of effective work in the classroom, progressively extending the length of stay in school” (Brazil, 1996, Article 34); and *Plano Nacional de Educação* (National Education Plan) – Law 10172/2001 (Brasil, 2001), which provided for full-time schooling not only for elementary education, but also for early childhood education, giving priority of full-time education to *children of more deprived sectors*. *Programa Mais Educação* also accorded with Decree No. 6253/2007 (Brasil, 2007b) regulating FUNDEB (Fund for the Development and Maintenance of Elementary and Secondary Education and Appreciation of Teaching), which allocates resources for different levels and segments of elementary and secondary education, presenting a higher rate of allocation for full-time enrollments.

The program was directed towards lower-ranked schools in *Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica* (IDEB – Elementary and Sec-

ondary Education Development Index) constituting a targeted policy, operationalized through *Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* (PDDE – Direct Money in School Program)¹², funded by *Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (FNDE – National Development Fund for Education), mainly dedicated to extending the school day as a key element for educational quality. The proposal of *Programa Mais Educação* provides for extending the school day to at least seven hours, with optional activities developed outside students' main session (morning or afternoon), according to the core areas that address different educational fields and languages.

Within this perspective, the goal of implementing the program, based on the proposal of developing public policy for full-time integral education in Brazil, is in line with state efforts to offer redistributive policies to fight poverty, facing the situation of vulnerability and social risk, with schools fulfilling the dual role of *protecting and educating* children, adolescents and youngsters. “This dual role – education/protection – [...] expands the possibilities of assistance, charging the school with a scope of action which some believe disfigure it, while others claim it consolidates the school as a truly democratic space” (Brazil, 2009b, p. 17).

Programa Mais Educação is also based on the assumption that the national development of education is a *fundamental pillar of state action* that addresses the “[...] eradication of poverty and marginalization” (Brazil, 2007c, p.6) and aimed to:

[...] contribute to the integral education of children, adolescents and youngsters by coordinating federal government actions, projects and programs and their contributions to the proposals, views and practices of public education systems and schools, changing the school environment and expanding the offer of types of knowledge, methods, processes and educational content.

Regarding its theoretical framework, it is founded on the appreciation of differences, based on contemporary cultural studies by thinkers such as “[...] Nestor Cancline, Clifford Geertz, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, Boaventura de Souza Santos and Umberto Eco” (Brasil, 2009b, p. 20). In the educational field there are references to Brazilian pedagogical thought, such as: Paulo Freire, Anísio Teixeira, Darci Ribeiro, Moacir Gadotti, Jaqueline Moll, among others.

Within this context, and considering national research data on the impacts of *Programa Mais Educação* (Brasil, 2013), one notes that, in 2008-2013, the program advanced significantly among Brazilian municipalities. The analysis of data in Table 1 shows that in 2013, *Programa Mais Educação* was present in 86.9% of Brazilian municipalities and in the education systems of all states and of the federal district, thus being one of the most relevant initiatives at national level for the *induction* of policies for full-time comprehensive education in Brazilian history.

Table 1 – Programa Mais Educação in Municipalities in Brazil and by Region 2008-2013

Brazil and Regions	Year					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Brazil	54	131	398	1478	3380	4836
North	10	23	32	162	382	441
Northeast	14	38	105	563	1483	1739
Southeast	16	36	154	312	706	1324
South	10	17	80	239	519	907
Center-West	5	17	27	102	290	425

Source: Brasil (2013).

According to the 2014 Elementary and Secondary Education Census (INEP, 2014), PME reached 60,000 public schools in 90% of Brazilian municipalities, and in 2013-2014 alone the number of students doing at least seven hours a day of school activities increased 41.2%, from 3.1 million to 4.4 million. Moreover, PME was progressively included in the management planning of most municipal and state education departments that implemented it, also contributing to the creation and modernization of educational standards in municipalities and states (Brasil, 2013). In addition, the goal of introducing an intersectoral facet in education systems was a positive feature of the program (Brazil, 2013), mainly because it asserts the need for schools to coordinate with other public facilities and policies in the fields of health, social assistance, culture, etc.

Combined with elements and initiatives from other sectors, PME had a positive impact on the lives of more deprived children and youth. To enable the implementation of full-time education in the face of great inequalities in Brazilian schools in terms of vulnerability, social risk, poverty, dropout, as well as poor academic performance, age/grade distortions and high rates of failure and evasion, PME also induced demand for integral education and a greater number of programs and projects to provide it (Brazil, 2013), which besides focusing on improving the quality of education, have become important instruments of social protection by extending the school day especially for poor children and youth.

As for autonomy and decentralization, such policies are materialized in the implementation of new managerial models in an attempt to realign governments and educational system administrations with the new forms of state management (Feldfeber; Saforcada and Jaimovich, 2005) of areas of greater social vulnerability and of social promotion, aiming at the full development of these subjects through a broader concept of education.

Although *Programa Mais Educação* presents a concept of expanded education with a view to developing citizenship among an especially vulnerable population in social terms, it is also characterized as a proposal for action to induce the implementation of public policy en-

compassing children and youth in school systems. The program shows potential to go beyond the individualist and fragmentary project of neoliberal society, proving to be the most relevant initiative at national level to strengthen public policy for full-time integral education.

Programa Mais Educação and Socially Vulnerable Children and Youth

The condition of deprived children and youth in Brazil is marked by a paradox. Brazil currently has in place a significant number of safety, protection, education and health systems directed towards those subjects¹³. Nevertheless, despite this complex legal framework, there is still evidence of persistent cases of poor children and youth deprived of their social rights.

Thus, while children have been granted a set of fundamental, inherent and inalienable rights, the 2016 report of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) on *The State of the World's Children* shows that the social condition of deprived children and youth still requires effective policy and that governments need to invest in expanding opportunities for each and every child and adolescent, redirecting political priorities through public programs and spending (Fundo... , 2016). Surrounded by injustice, the condition of poor children in Brazil is still alarming, since millions of them are not guaranteed the right to protection, provision and participation (Sarmiento, 2009), and are deprived of the right to a healthy start in life, with quality education and a safe and secure childhood – basic opportunities for the possibility of a productive and prosperous adult life. In the specific case of deprived youth, according to Waiselfisz (2014, p. 11), there is also a historical difficulty of these subjects in “[...] having access to basic social benefits such as education, health, work and income”.

Another element to be considered in policies for Brazilian children and youth is the plural character of this cycle of life, marked by diversity and inequality. Besides differences in opportunities, poor income distribution, unequal access to cultural goods, contrasts of gender, class and race and distinct living conditions of children and youth in urban or rural contexts in Brazil, one must consider the specificity of children belonging to traditional peoples and communities¹⁴. In other words, understanding the right to acknowledge them in this blending of realities requires public policy to acknowledge equality in difference (Santos, 2006).

It is in the wake of discussions about guaranteeing the right to education, which, however, is not restricted to the right to schooling, that PME is created, extending the time of educational activities offered to children and youth. Through the program, integral education becomes an agenda for the various sectors of public life management, fostering the understanding that education policy can contribute to solve the major contradictions and problems of our society such as the depriva-

tion of the rights of destitute children and youth, who require social protection policy.

The documents that regulate *Programa Mais Educação* strongly evidence this perspective. Thus, in the first of them, Inter-Ministerial Ordinance 17, dated April 24, 2007 (Brasil, 2007c), PME is established on the assumption that social vulnerability affects a large number of Brazilian children and youth and it is the state's responsibility to redress this situation. The centrality of guaranteeing the social rights of children and youth through integral education is also evidenced in Decree 7083 (Brasil, 2010), which addresses PME by proposing the *integration between education and social policies, in dialogue with school communities* and the convergence of “[...] policies and programs for health, culture, sport, human rights, environmental education, scientific dissemination, combating violence against children and adolescents, integration between school and community, for the development of the political-pedagogical project of integral education (Brasil, 2010, Article 3). From this perspective, the program provides that schools become part of the social protection network of children and youth and interact with other social actors and policies to coordinate their actions with others already in development in their area.

Intersectoriality is conceived by the program as joint action by different public policies at federal, state and municipal levels for the integral care of children and youth, involving the various ministries and civil society initiatives, building socio-educational networks capable of creating a different culture of *education-development* from the educational potentialities of the community and city (Moll, Leclerc, 2010). According to (Brazil, 2013), intersectoral actions were carried out to assist students in integral education in more than 80% of the education systems that adhered to the program. This complied with a 2011 PME decision to prioritize adherence to the program of schools in which most students came from families that received *Bolsa Família* benefits¹⁵. Thus, this partnership was established from the perspective of positive discrimination, as the schools are allocated differentiated funds and prioritized in the relationship with universities that contribute to teaching and management training (Moll; Leclerc, 2010 p. 106).

Children, Youth and the Right to Integral Education

When analyzing a public proposal aimed at extending the school day, it is important to consider that the reality of PME contributes to the understanding that the full-time school day is not necessarily related to a proposal for students' integral education.

Despite assuming different models and dynamics according to different realities, the program is based on the premise that the new educational arrangements, the new subjects performing in school and the new activities proposed in its scope can contribute to expand the dimensions of the education of children and youth towards the idea of integral education. This is revealed in the excerpt below:

The education this program aims to highlight is one that strives to go beyond the predominantly school-centered educational process. [...] Thus, integrating different kinds of knowledge, educational spaces, community members, understanding [...] means trying to build an education that presupposes a relationship between learning and life, meaningful and citizenship learning (Brasil, 2011, p. 5).

From this perspective, the activities promoted by PME are organized into core areas which differ according to the territory in which the institution is located: urban or rural. For *urban* schools, the following core areas are proposed: Pedagogical Counseling; Communication, Use of Media and Digital and Technological Culture; Culture, Arts and Heritage Education; Environmental Education, Sustainable Development and Solidary and Creative Economics/Economics Education; Sports and Leisure. In the case of schools located in rural contexts, the core areas are: Pedagogical Counseling; Agroecology; Sports and Leisure; Education in Human Rights; Scientific Initiation; Culture, Arts and Heritage Education; Memory and History of Traditional Communities.

Analyzing the core areas proposed by the program, one aspect worth mentioning is the fact that they significantly expand the fields of knowledge to which children and youth in lower classes usually have access. Going beyond the logic of so-called *extra tutoring*¹⁶, PME activities evidence an option for investing in educational dimensions that receive less attention in the so-called *main school session*, such as the option for activities linked to the language of art and popular culture.

Artistic language, for example, which is rarely taught in the *main school session*, constitutes a privileged experience. Through artistic expressions (visual, body, musical, digital, plastic), students experience important learning situations for their aesthetic, sensorial, relational and cognitive development and their insertion in the universe of communication and expressiveness (Carvalho, 2015).

The option to offer more school time for sports and leisure activities is also in line with the need for expression and integral education of children and youth. Such practices can offer a group of collective experiences linked not only to sociability among them, but also to the construction of ethical points of reference, self-understanding and understanding of others and exercise of democratic coexistence.

Insofar as it proposes greater interlocution between school and city by acknowledging the educational function of spaces outside the school premises, encouraging visits to museums, theaters, squares, monuments and cultural centers, among others, PME encourages students of lower classes to take ownership of the city (Ramalho, 2014; Carvalho, 2013). Due to the unequal organization of society, these are subjects whose experience of circulating in the city is often very restricted.

From another analytical viewpoint, one may affirm that by promoting this set of experiences in Brazilian public elementary schools, *Programa Mais Educação* favors the expansion of the Cultural Capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1975) of children and youth inserted in the

program (Bourdieu and Passeron 1975). In this sense, it also expands the possibilities of academic success of these subjects from lower classes – an important perspective, which, however, does not annul the significance of each individual experience.

Miguel Arroyo (2015, p. 21) denounces the perverse impoverishment of education directed at historically marginalized communities, as is the case of lower-class children and youth.

The historically negative and depreciating view of these social and racial groups and their children has marked and still marks the delayed guarantee of their right to education. These social groups have been more than mere recipients of educational action. They are the benchmark, the measure of what education, what school, what school system they deserve among the standards of power-knowledge and what place they should occupy in this power estate.

Fanfani (2007) and Silva (2011) agree that school educational practices have been reduced due to the prevalence of a depreciating view of people from lower classes. Countering this concept, *Programa Mais Educação* provides the development of educational actions that propose the right to expand the school day of children and youth in public schools, as well as to an integral education in line with a citizenship development project. This movement undoubtedly challenges the school and its traditional culture.

By expanding students' school day to at least seven hours, *Programa Mais Educação* rekindles the debate regarding the school's role in the educational process of children and youth (Brandão, 2009; Cavaliere, 2009). That is because, insofar as it extends the time these subjects spend in school, PME takes responsibility for childhood and youth activities and moments traditionally occurring outside the school, such as the spontaneous, autonomous and intergenerational play to which children are used (Carvalho, 2015), or the construction of peer relationships so typical of young subjects (Ramalho, 2014).

Regarding specifically the childhood that is now developed full-time in school, one must consider that in the process of social construction of modern childhood, the world of children and the world of adults are separated, with their education serving as the interface between both. In contemporary childhood, the boundaries between those two worlds, adulthood and childhood, are blurred by both the precarious conditions of life and exploitation of labor and a conception in which childhood is viewed exclusively as a preparation for the adult world in the future.

To a certain extent, by proposing educational experiences that dialogue with students' social and cultural contexts, PME brings the school closer to childhood cultures (Carvalho, 2015), which may contribute to question the uniformity of a *school model*, recognize the specificities and languages of children and also welcome differences, promoting equality. The program aims to address the challenges of dealing

sensitively with the childhood experience by broadening the repertoire of cultural practices and interactions produced at school, taking into account the interests and needs of children in line with a project for early childhood education (Carvalho, 2015). In addition, regarding the expanded school day for young students, PME seeks in turn not to neglect perceiving them as sociocultural subjects, going beyond the homogenizing and stereotyped view of students to acknowledge their differences, historicity, worldviews, values, feelings, emotions, wishes and projects (Dayrell, 2003).

One can therefore affirm that PME introduces an understanding of integral education centered on children and youth, going beyond a traditional format of extended school day: *the simple reproduction of one school session in the other*, which merely widens the gaps observed between youth and school, which are ultimately expressed in high dropout and disapproval rates, but reflected daily in the strained relationship established between subjects and school (Leão, 2006; Spósito, 1992).

In this perspective, the right to integral education may be constituted in a space conducive to the establishment of exchange and bonding among youngsters and their peers, and between them and the actual school and its educators. To this end those subjects must feel themselves therein represented, together with their learning rhythms, cultures, interests, kinds of knowledge and languages. The perception of children and youth as subjects with specificities, going beyond the fixed category of *student* (Sacristán, 2005), seems to guide *Programa Mais Educação*, whether regarding the types of knowledge it considers and/or the organization of its time frames, dynamics and spaces of development and learning.

It is true that during almost a decade of implementation, much still had to be done to materialize this educational project, especially concerning the overflow of its concept to the so-called main school session (Brasil, 2013). However, one cannot ignore the program's emerging impacts on Brazilian municipal and state education systems, for example, by causing a reorganization of school schedules and evaluation methods (Brazil, 2013).

In this perspective, the as yet incomplete stages of PME must not (or should not) overshadow the advances it has brought about in the expansion of the right to education of lower class children and youth in Brazil. It would also be a great mistake to ignore its potential to transform the school, its culture and, above all, the way it views its students (Brasil, 2013).

Final Remarks

As observed herein, *Programa Mais Educação* emerges in Brazil in the wake of a group of initiatives dating back to late 1980s, with the 1988 Constitution, and involving LDB (National Education Guidelines and Framework Law) and other specific legislation such as *Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente* (Child and Adolescent Statute), which aimed,

among other aspects, to ensure the right of children and youth to education. Nevertheless, like that group of laws, the program is situated in the Latin American context of a diminishing state.

Evidence of this ideological connection, among other aspects, is the design of Mais Educação as a targeted policy. However, despite its focus in addressing schools located in destitute areas, its reach deserves to be highlighted, since the program was present in 80% of Brazilian municipalities in 2013 and 49,000 public elementary schools in 2015 (Brazil, 2013).

In addition, by repositioning education policy, suggesting it develop in partnership with other bodies in an intersectoral perspective, PME introduces an important strategy to expand the rights of children and youth, education included.

Moreover, despite the program's goal of improved performance in the Elementary and Secondary Education Development Index (IDEB) (Brazil, 2010), it privileges in its daily organization types of knowledge traditionally absent from the curriculum which exceed that goal, providing also the expansion of the educational dimensions to which subjects of lower classes historically had access. In this sense, by extending the time children and youth spend under the school's care, PME invites the school institution to rethink itself in order to cater for those subjects, so that their cultures, rhythms and languages are also therein represented. The program is therefore situated on a kind of borderline regarding competing educational projects in Latin America and specifically in Brazil, and it is from this *in between-place* that one is able to understand its recent trajectory.

As early as 2014, a year of tense presidential elections culminating two years later in the ousting of President Dilma Rousseff, signs of the program's waning importance in the Brazilian political agenda were already identifiable. The delays in the transfer of federal funds to execute the program in schools at the time are evidence of such reordering. Moreover, at the beginning of President Dilma's second term, in 2015, guided by the neoliberal logic of effectiveness, and thus disregarding the social gains achieved by PME in expanding rights, the Ministry of Education announced its intention to redesign the program to privilege the development of actions directed at areas of traditional school knowledge.

However, this project only took shape in 2016, when the coup to democracy had already taken place in Brazil. MEC Ordinance No. 1144 establishes *Programa Novo Mais Educação* (PNME – New More Education Program) with the goal of *improving learning in Portuguese and Mathematics in Elementary Education* (Brasil, 2016). To this end, it provides that more than half of the hours of students' additional session (morning or afternoon) be devoted to those subjects.

It should be noted that “[...] the teaching of basic literacy and elementary arithmetic to destitute children and youth is probably the oldest educational project in Brazil,” as (Veiga, 2007, p. 37) mentions when

referring to Jesuit education. This banner is reclaimed every time a conservative wave befalls us and bears the false hope of a development that, for structural reasons, is actually only for a few (Oliveira, 2000).

Also, the recent version of the program is exclusively run by the Ministry of Education, a complete reversal of the previous proposal to expand the debate through the co-responsibility of diverse actors regarding the development of integral education. This trend is a regression to the early 1980s, since the Federal Constitution of 1988 already entrusts the education of children and youth not only to the school, but also the family and society.

Contrary to what the name suggests, there is nothing new in the education project introduced by *Programa Novo Mais Educação*, since it reclaims a dominant way of thinking which for some time remained not muted, but less audible.

One should recall that the education project represented by *Programa Mais Educação* is called into question in Brazil with the weakening of a post-neoliberal government (Sader, 2008). This trend corresponds to other narratives recently written in Latin America, such as the processes experienced by Mexico and Argentina of expanding mechanisms to evaluate students and teachers and giving secondary education a terminal and vocational nature.

While one acknowledges that *Programa Mais Educação* still had a long way to go, for example, in ensuring better working and remuneration conditions for educators and assuming its role as national policy, rather than mere inducing action, for the expansion of the school day and educational dimensions, its redesign as described herein represents an imminent regression: it is a retraction of rights and a (re)impoverishment of school education directed at lower class children and youth¹⁷.

Translated from Portuguese by Anthony Cleaver

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Notes

- 1 Information available at: <<http://seriesestatisticas.ibge.gov.br>>. Accessed on: May 27, 2017.
- 2 In Brazil, State Reform was introduced in 1995 by Fernando Henrique Cardoso through the official document of the Master Plan for State Apparatus Reform, drafted by MARE (Ministry of Administration and State Reform), under the responsibility of the then Minister Bresser Pereira.
- 3 Education policy can be defined as government action programs based on values and ideas that address school subjects and are implemented by the administration and education professionals (Van Zanten, 2011, p. 640).
- 4 A comprehensive approach is needed to address childhood poverty, capable of influencing the nature of dialogue policies to reduce it, since such policies must incorporate a broader definition including poverty experiences in child-

- hood and adolescence (Equidad para la infancia na America Latina) Available at: <<http://equidadparalainfancia.org/2017/05/pobreza-infantil-conceptos-medicion-y-recomendaciones-de-politicas-publicas>>. Accessed on: December 6, 2018.
- 5 Government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso through the Ministry of Administration and State Reform. Brasil (1995).
- 6 Targeted policies have the following characteristics: a) they aim at efficiency and are subject to a flexible accumulation scheme; b) they are subject to an economically concentrating and socially excluding system; c) they provide *compensation* at micro social level, assistance focused on critical poverty in a context characterized by bottom-up transfer of income (Barco, 2010).
- 7 The term refers to the group of distributive political interventions whose goals are to ensure the exercise of social rights of citizenship and promote security and cohesion in society through access to and use of social benefits and services considered necessary to promote social justice and the well-being of community members (Fleury, 2010).
- 8 A program of direct income transfer for families living in poverty and extreme poverty throughout Brazil to help them overcome the situation of vulnerability and poverty. It aims to ensure the rights of these families to food, education and health.
- 9 A social program that assists families in situations of social vulnerability through monthly income transfers, provided their children attend school.
- 10 The pioneering income transfer program in Latin America is *Programa de Educación, Salud y Alimentación – PROGRESA*, created in Mexico in 1997. In 2002 it underwent changes to include new elements and was renamed *Programa de Desarrollo Humano Oportunidades – PO*, expanding its scope to benefit around 27 million people and approximately 5.8 million families.
- 11 A universal family allowance program for vulnerable families with no social benefits, covering up to five children under the age of 18 per household, primarily for disabled children.
- 12 Created in 1995, *Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* (PDDE) aims to provide supplementary financial aid to state, municipal and federal district elementary and secondary schools and to private special education schools run by non-profit organizations registered with the National Council of Social Assistance (CNAS) as beneficiaries of social welfare, or similar ones providing free and direct public care. The program comprises several initiatives and aims to improve the physical and educational facilities of schools and strengthen self-management at financial, administrative and educational level, contributing to raise performance indices in elementary and secondary education. Available at: <<http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/dinheiro-direto-escola/dinheiro-direto-escola-apresentacao>>. Accessed on: December 6, 2018.
- 13 In Brazil, specific children's rights were only set out in the Constitution of 1988. In 1990, the Brazilian government ratified Law 8069 providing for the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA), and, through Legislative Decree 28, dated September 14, 1990, approved the text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989.
- 14 Decree No. 6040, dated February 7, 2007 (Brasil, 2007a) acknowledges as traditional peoples groups that are culturally differentiated and recognize themselves as such, who have singular forms of social organization, who occupy and

use territories and natural resources as a condition for their cultural, social, religious, ancestral and economic reproduction, using knowledge, innovations and practices generated and transmitted by tradition.

15 Research carried out by (Ximenes; Agatte, 2011) shows that these schools were also the ones with the worst structural and material conditions.

16 Extra tutoring traditionally offered during students' additional school session and which aims to address their so-called learning difficulties is mostly linked to standard subjects such as Portuguese and Mathematics. For more on extra tutoring in integral education, see Mota (2011).

17 The authors cannot help expressing their concern regarding the worrying scenario for 2019. The new federal administration defends the obtuse slogan of *Escola Sem Partido* (Non-Partisan School) that criminalizes content and educators and further distances the school from its challenge of providing integral education to children and youth.

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