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Grêmio estudantil e gestão escolar democrática nas sociedades de controle

Asociación de estudiantes y gestión escolar democrática en las sociedades de control

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Abstract

We present the results of a survey conducted with students who are members of a student council at a public school in Santa Catarina. We seek to answer the question: what subject is the school producing in contemporary democracy? Based on post-structuralism, we aim to problematize the democratic practices of a student council. We used Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault as our main theoretical framework. For data collection, we used a field diary composed of audios recorded at council meetings and transcriptions. Although the student council reflects on democratic management and establishes a space of multiple possibilities, it operates simultaneously as an extension of the curriculum by producing the docile, useful, and participative subject demanded by our time.

Keywords: Curriculum, Democratic management, Student council, Control societies

Resumo

Este texto apresenta resultados de uma pesquisa com estudantes membros de um grêmio estudantil de uma escola pública de Santa Catarina, buscando responder à questão: que sujeito a escola tem produzido na contemporaneidade democrática? Ancorados em base epistemológica pós-estruturalista, objetiva-se problematizar práticas democráticas de um grêmio estudantil. Os principais teóricos utilizados foram Deleuze, Guattari e Foucault. A ferramenta de produção dos dados foi o diário de campo, composto por áudios registrados em reuniões do grêmio. Apesar de o grêmio refletir a gestão democrática e se constituir em um espaço de múltiplas possibilidades, infere-se que ele opera, simultaneamente, como extensão do currículo, ao produzir os sujeitos demandados neste tempo. Sujeitos dóceis, úteis e participativos.

Palavras-chave: *Currículo, Gestão democrática, Grêmio estudantil, Sociedades de controle*

Resumen

Presentamos resultados de una encuesta con miembros de una asociación estudiantil de una escuela pública en Santa Catarina. Buscamos responder la pregunta: Qué sujeto produce la escuela en la época democrática contemporánea? Anclado sobre una base epistemológica postestructuralista, nuestro objetivo es problematizar prácticas democráticas de una asociación estudiantil. Los principales teóricos utilizados fueron Deleuze, Guattari y Foucault. La herramienta de producción de datos era el diario de campo compuesto de áudios registrado en las reuniones del la asociación. Aunque la asociación estudiantil refleja una gestión democrática y constituirse como un espacio de múltiples possibilidades, inferimos que opera, simultaneamente, como una extensión del currículo produciendo los sujetos demandados en este tempo. Sujetos dóciles, útiles y participativos.

Palabras clave: *Curriculo, Gestión democrática, Asociación estudiantil, sociedades de control*

Introduction

This article presents the results of a study conducted in a state public high school in Santa Catarina, Brazil. The research participants were student-council members in this school. Our guiding question was: what subject is the school producing in contemporary democracy?

We are epistemologically grounded on post-structuralism. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Michel Foucault are our main theoretical bases. From this perspective, anchored on Varela and Alvarez-Uria (1991), we understand school as an institution created by the Enlightening bourgeoisie to produce subjects that legitimized the mental and social order that industrial capitalism was establishing. Hence, schools and curricula should be reconfigured

when capitalism transforms itself and demands other subjects. School is an invention of the disciplinary societies described by Foucault (2007). Thus it invested (and invests) in the disciplining of bodies and the production of subjectivities. The curricula engender this subjective production, here understood in the post-critical perspective, aligned to post-structuralism. "The contemporary curriculum theorization is one field that has been decisively affected by post-structuralism or by the thought of difference" (Corazza & Silva, 2003, p. 36).

In this perspective, the curriculum is a selection of knowledge, morals, and ethical values strategically created to produce particular identities (Lopes & Macedo, 2011). The alchemy of the constitutive elements of a curriculum should not produce any type of identity but those required by capitalism in a given historical time. "Every curriculum, implicitly, carries some notion of subjectivation and the subject: *whom do we want them to become? What are they?"* [original highlight]" (Corazza & Silva, 2003, p. 38). In current societies, guided by the flows of global neoliberalism, even a democratic school organized on critical pedagogical bases with Marxist roots reproduces neoliberalism's general dynamics. It does so by investing in the massive production of democratic subjects, adequate to the current neoliberal aspects. Therefore, the "subject is nothing more than a fiction characterized not by its falsehood, but its usefulness" (p. 43). As it depends on specific subjects, neoliberalism produces them, and the school is one of the institutions responsible for this task. Therefore, we want to highly the continuity between neoliberalism, the reconfiguration it produces in the school and curricula, and how these curricula prolong themselves within a student council, capturing resistance, and becoming an extension of itself. Thus, the resistances that emerge in that space are quickly channeled and captured.

Capitalism mutations claim new government strategies, such as managerialism, which intends the participation of all. "The development of a managerialism in education reflects the unfoldings of global neoliberalism, which reshapes societies and demands other forms of management in education" (Laval, 2004, p. 239). This demands the school to produce a participative and democratic subject who is not only docile and useful but also participative (Cervi, 2013). The managerialist dynamic diffuses the business organizational model to all society and enters schools through democratic school management, which decentralizes power through collegiate bodies, such as the student council. With democratic management, what is at stake is the production of a useful subject for neoliberalism and "the curriculum is, *par excellence*,

a place of subjectivation and individuation" (Corazza & Silva, 2003, p. 53). Therefore, we aim to problematize the democratic practices of a student council.

As a methodology, we used cartography, developed by the writings of Deleuze and Guattari (2011). The tool to produce data was a field diary, composed of audio conversations between the student-council members during their meetings. The cartography of molar and molecular lines (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012) constitutes the curriculum at work within the student council. School curriculum prolongs itself to the council, transforming that possible space of democratic participation and possible resistances into its extension, thus stretching its subjective production beyond the classrooms.

As we know, Brazil is going through a highly complex and delicate political moment, a reflection of broader transformations boosted by global neoliberal demands. In this scenario, democracy, as a governmental model, is being attacked by authority governments frequently emerging worldwide. According to Chamayou (2020), this happens because the democratic regime has hampered the neoliberal wishes of limitless expansion of markets. Democracy represents, in this context, State interference because it guarantees citizens' rights. In many cases, rights prevent neoliberal interests, such as workers' rights.

In the Brazilian case, one of the social rights guaranteed by the Democratic State is the right to education (*Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil,* 1988). Hence the constant effort to decrease the participation of the State in education through reforms, countless proposals, and privatization attempts. There is a reason for this interest. The privatization of school education allows, at the same time, to decrease the size of the State, which would reflect in the lack of investments that the neoliberal call expenses, and abolish teachers' stability. If education stopped being a state responsibility, its workers would not be effective public servants. This stability guarantees teachers the freedom to teach freely, as established in the 1988 Federal Constitution. The aim is to produce the subject needed for neoliberalism, and, in the private logic, the teacher who does not follow the institutional agenda, which should produce this subject, is replaced. As seen at the beginning of school, the teacher is silenced and reduced to a domination tool of less privileged classes (Varela & Alvarez-Uria, 1991).

Because of this, as neoliberalism develops, we see the corrosion of western democracies, mainly through the hands of the extreme right (Brown, 2019). Thus, we think it is vital to highlight that the questions we raise about the school, democratic school management, and the

democratic subject produced by the school in these times do not target representative-participative democracy and public schools. We understand the task of problematization under Foucault's (2004) perspective, i.e., problematizing is converting something naturalized into a problem to be considered . In this case, participative democracy and its unfoldings in school education. "This elaboration of a data into questions…is what establishes a point of problematization and the specific work of thought" (p. 233). Problematizing an object is not defending its end or presenting a possibly better alternative. Problematizing an object is tensioning its limits and effects. Problematization believes that where there is power, there is resistance, as pointed out by Foucault (1988) because life makes and remakes itself amidst endless combats of molar and molecular forces (Deleuze, 1976) that draws social reality. We intend to problematize how democratic participation, enacted through students' participation in a council, can also be used as an efficient strategy to rule these students. Here we understand government in a sense given by Foucault (2008), i.e., to govern is to guide the conduct of a population.

We organized this work in the following way: in section two, we discuss the concepts of discipline, biopolitics, and control societies to point out the transition from disciplinary societies (Foucault, 2007) to control societies (Deleuze, 2013) after World War II. In section three, we problematize participative democracy as a strategy to guide population conduct, what Foucault (2008) calls government. In section four, we present the data analysis produced from recorded audios of meetings among the student council members, transcribed in the field and analyzed from the theoretical reference of the field of post-critical curriculum studies. In section five, we make some considerations reinforcing the argument that the school, inserted in democratic control societies (Deleuze, 2013), produces subjects demanded by neoliberal contemporaneity. Docile, useful, and participative subjects (Cervi, 2013).

Control societies

In control societies, the techniques of institutional confinement of bodies, strongly present in the disciplinary societies described by Foucault (2007), do not disappear but go into a crisis. They gradually lose space for a more microphysical power that operates through "continuous control and instant communication" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 220). In this model of society, the docile and useful subjects are no longer the subject of excellence to be produced by

the institutions. Their productive force is not in their docility but in their inventiveness, capacity for communication, performance, and participation (Tótora, 2006). The aim is to produce proactive subjects who are always trying to improve themselves and who are never sufficiently formed because "in the societies of control nothing is ever finished, the company, the formation, the service, the states are metastable and coexist in the same modulation, as a universal deformer" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 226). This makes people constantly look for ways to capacitate themselves, keeping them busy and controlled. "*The permanent formation* tends to substitute *school,* and the continuous control substitutes the exams" [original highlight] (Deleuze, 2013, p. 225).

If, in disciplinary societies, the institutions confined the bodies to produce subjects such as the student, the sick, the crazy, the criminal, etc., in control societies the processes of subjectivation transcend the walls, the beds, the bars, the classrooms, the cells, and start to take place in open spaces, in any place and time. "Confinements are *molds*, different molds, but the controls are a modulation, as a self-deforming mold that continuously change, at all time, or as a sieve whose meshes changes from one point to another" [original highlight]" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 225). The disciplines do not disappear but operate more subtly. The exercise of power becomes more pulverized in the social mesh of control societies because vigilance and control increase, acting constantly and uninterruptedly. The panoptic updates itself through technologies that allow an even subtler and more efficient control. There is no longer the need to control the body. The behaviors are controlled and, in this sense, social networks have an important role nowadays, mainly regarding controlling what is said. Despite the easiness of expression., expressing oneself can lead to coercion and social sanctions, such as the cancel culture. Everyone becomes a potential warden. We watch ourselves to guarantee that we are answering the established standards, and we watch others to guarantee that they are following the same standards.

The modelling of the body is not limited to confinement and vigilance within the institutions. The processes of subjectivation cross the institutional walls and happen anywhere because vigilance is everywhere. "We find ourselves in a generalized crisis of all means of confinement, prison, hospital, factory, school, family. Family is an *interior* in crisis as any other interior, school, professional, etc." [original emphasis] (Deleuze, 2013, p. 224). When we think about school institutions inserted in disciplinary societies, "the classroom can be analyzed as a situation of government" (Dussel & Caruso, 2003, p. 37). However, in control societies, this

government situation transforms itself and extrapolates the enclosure of the bodies in rooms and their desks. The processes of subjectivities constitution surpass the spaces of confinement and give way to "forms of continuous control, continuous evaluation, and permanent actions of formation about the school, the corresponding abandonment of any research in the University, the introduction of the 'company' in all levels of schooling" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 229). The factory updates itself into companies, and the managerial logic transforms the administrator into a manager and the paid employee into a collaborator that, proud to be *part of the family, wears the company's jersey*. The company's interests are now his interest. This business model is reproduced in contemporary and democratic school management.

> Another grounding characteristic of this new map is the enthronement of the company as a model institution which impregnates all others when infecting them with its *business spirit*. Including school, of course, and the bodies and subjectivities circulate on it. This new mythology propagates a cult of *performance* or individual performance, which should be gradually more highlighted and more efficient [original highlight]. (Sibilia, 2012, p. 45)

This cult to performance takes place because having a high performance is a characteristic demanded by neoliberalism from school. This managerial logic "introduces all the time an inescapable rivalry as a saint emulation, an excellent motivation that contraposes individuals against each other and pervades each one, dividing oneself" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 225). This managerialism is not limited to companies; it invades all sectors of life, and all formation institutions, such as schools, families, the army, prisons, hospitals, etc. Human beings also update themselves and are no longer "a man of confinement, but one in debt" (p. 228). This debt is a potent form of control engendered by the marketing that produces needs, wishes, and dreams. People get into debt to reach these wishes and fulfill these dreams produced by publicity and marketing. This debt makes them continue in the game, following pre-established rules. Thus, these forces are subtracted and channelled in favor of the current neoliberal logic, but the capture is so efficient that it makes people believe that it was their choice to participate in this game.

In control societies, marketing is crucial because they build life patterns, consumption, bodies, and behaviors when producing wishes and needs. Together, these patterns are unreachable but are used to set individuals in motion, in an endless search to adequate themselves to them. Control societies are moved by communication, which is their most powerful weapon. "Marketing is now an instrument of social control and forms the imprudent

race of new lords" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 228). Control societies are consumerists, and marketing aims to produce a biotype that will create a consumption pattern. Thus, "the population of individuals fragments itself into consumers' segments that are produced according to market interests" (Tótora, 2006, p. 241). Desires are produced depending on the market's need for consumers. This occurs due to the change in capitalism, which has updated itself and is no longer guided to production but to services and the stock market (Deleuze, 2013), facilitated by digital technologies that proliferated, mainly in the late 20th century.

This evolution "is not a technological evolution without being, more deeply, a capitalist mutation" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 227) which starts to operate through other means, demanding and producing subjects more aligned to the characteristics and demands of control societies. Docile, useful, and participative subjects (Cervi, 2013). In control societies, power is modular (Deleuze, 2013), so, more than prohibit or repress, it guides. It is the *laissez-faire* principle, 'allowing to do', but this freedom is controlled, conducted, and done through participation. When people participate democratically, it is possible to guide their conduct (Tótora, 2006), guaranteeing certain predictability of flows. The school was invented to produce adequate subjects for the new social configuration established by industrial capitalism (Varela &Alvarez-Uria, 1991). Similarly, the school and school curricula should transform themselves when capitalism changes because the desired subject is not the same. Nowadays, the subject needed is not obedient but proactive, who actively participates in the processes in all social instances, including school. Not by chance, the school develops democratic management and stimulates (and demands) the active participation of all members of the school community. We do not seek to defend another management model or attack the current model of democratic school management. More modestly, we will focus on problematizing democratic practices mapped in a student council in a public school in Santa Catarina.

Participative democracy: a control mechanism?

The Chapter III of the 1988 Federal Constitution states the determinations of education. Article 206, incise VI, establishes: "Education shall be provided on the basis of the following principles: VI - democratic administration of public education, in the manner prescribed by law;" (*Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil*, 1988). Aligned with the Federal Constitution, the *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional* (LDBEN- Law of Directives and Basis for

National Education), Law n.º 9394/1996, in its article 14, determines that public schools should develop a democratic management, following two principles: " I- participation of education professionals in the creation of the school's pedagogical project; II- participation of the school and local community in school councils or equivalent" (*Lei n.º 9394*, 1996). The *Plano Nacional de Educação* 2014-2024 (PNL- Education National Plan), Law n.º 13 005/2014, in article 9 determines that the states, federal district, and cities approve laws in their administrative spheres to discipline democratic management in their respective education system in the public sphere. First, we need to understand what democratic management is. According to Libâneo et al. (2012),[5] there are different conceptions of school management, among them the democratic-participative management. This management concept is characterized by decentralization and sharing with the school community members in direction activities. As everyone participates, everyone guides, implying that everyone is also guided. In democratic-participative management, everyone evaluates, so everyone is evaluated.

The researched school developed a conception of democratic-participative management, decentralizing the roles of direction through the participation of the school community in different collegiate bodies, such as Parent-Teacher Associations, deliberative Council, and Student Council, our research focus. It is interesting to see that "in companies, the participation in decisions is almost always a strategy aiming productivity increase" (Libâneo et al., 2012, p. 451) because the participation of all requires their responsibility and engagement in favor of the company's objectives. This managerial rationality took effect in school with the emergence of control societies (Cervi, 2013). If in control societies, the factory logic gives space to the business logic, the figure of the employee gives way to the collaborator, who "wears the company's jersey", that is, whose interests are mixed with the company ones, becoming himself an extension of the company. This managerial logic materializes itself in school through the democratic participation of the school community members in the decisions.

However, the rules through which this participation can happen and their limits are predetermined and aim, as in companies, to reach specific results, defined *a priori*. The democratic-participative management in school "accentuates the need to combine the emphasis on human relations and participation in decisions with the effective actions to reach the specific objectives of school successfully" (Libâneo et al., 2012, p. 448). In other words, participation

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[5] These are classical authors of research in education but we did not base our study on them.

in democratic-participative management aims to reach positive results, such as in companies. Participation is a means to an end.

Therefore, some issues emerge: what can participative democracy do in the current neoliberalism in which fascism, religious fundamentalism, and obscurantism thrive? What can democratic education do? What can the school do? School is a State institution, so the subject it produces should reflect the wishes of the State. The subject wished by the State, in the control societies guided by economic neoliberalism, is participative because participation inserts the subject in the current logic and makes them participate according to the rules pre-established by the State itself. These determinations converge to their own interests, currently connected to the interests of large international corporations.

The democratic-participative management, assumed by the researched school, takes as a model the representation democracy, in which certain bodies, with elected representatives, represent the interests of different segments of the school community. Representation democracy can also be thought of as a tactic to include people, making them participate according to socially endorsed rules that guarantee the maintenance of the State's power to control life.

> Representative democracy established itself as a model of politics to discipline the populations that reached urban spaces in the 19th century, transforming them into non-numbered minorities into an ensemble of numbered majorities, countable and disciplined through the universal vote. In turn, the party was the locus to discipline the competition of those aspiring to governmental positions. (Tótora, 2006, p. 242)

In the researched school, students create electoral slates to run for the position of student council managers. The president of the Parent and Teacher Association (PTA), the Deliberative Council, and the school manager are also chosen through electoral processes. The democratic management in the investigated school is based on representative democracy, in which a representative is democratically elected by the majority of voters. However, in control societies, representation is not enough. One needs to go beyond and include people, engaging them in the democratic processes to control them better. This engagement is done through participation. Participation is necessary to produce the engagement needed for control and to guide those involved in the democratic processes. So, more than letting them speak or encouraging participation, participation is demanded through a meritocratic system that rewards those who participate while coercing and constraining those who do not. "The modulating

principle of *salary by merit* tempts the national Education itself" [original highlight] (Deleuze, 2013, p. 225) as the business logic substitutes the factory and also invades the school modulating their forms of producing subjects. The more the subjects participate, the more their forces can be channeled. The more the "becomings" can be conducted and lose power. The escape lines are quickly reterritorialized in molar lines that "form an arborescent system, binary, circular, segmented" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 234), which capture the "becomings", confining them in facialities liable to be controlled and governed. When determining how democratic participation can happen, the State converts void spaces, of endless possibilities, into striated spaces of calculated and predictable possibilities. "The space is constantly striated under the constraints of forces exerted on it" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 228). Forces that, in participative democracy, encourage participation, but in the undertakings endorsed by state interests, aligned with those of large international corporations, answer to international financial capital. In this perspective, participation works as a capture strategy that re-guides practices, conduct, behaviors, and thoughts, channeling the flows of "becomings" through streaks that redirect the forcers for ends that do not confront the current mental and social order. This allows for a more efficient and almost imperceptible control because we believe we have chosen to participate when we are being led by the streaks of the striated space.

Deleuze (2013) writes that society, even permeated by innumerous molar lines, by segmentation, defines itself "less for their contradictions than by their escape lines, it escapes through all sides, and it is very interesting to try to follow when the escape lines delineate themselves" (p. 216). As society is the root of these multiplicities, this entanglement of molar and molecular lines, it is easy to understand the crises of the disciplinary society model. The disciplines tame and shame bodies and behaviors but do not contain the "becomings". They overflow, escape, and need to be channeled. This is done by producing specific wishes that will result in more predictable, governable subjects. One needs to direct the forces through striated spaces, "a space established by the State apparel" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 192) to control them. This control, which guides through the streaks opened by the State, has parallels with Foucault's (2008) notion of biopolitics. It is possible to contain the "becomings", so, controls aim to channel and conduct them. To do so, they operationalize dispositives, such as participative democracy that produces democratic subjects that, when participating, legitimize the current mental and social order as they participate, following the rules already determined by the State. There is a demand for a specific subject for this control to be possible. The

participative subject. It is up to the school machinery and the curriculum to produce this subject, hence the role of democratic school management.

With that said, we need to problematize the notion of participative democracy, considering that it operates, not exclusively, but also, with the guiding of population conduct in control societies. "Problematize participative democracy is to situate it as a new control dispositive to contain living flows that escape, or that the majority procedures of representation cannot contain" (Tótora, 2006, p. 243). Participative democracy acts through participation and democratic bodies. The controls are democratic. It allows and demands participation because the participation of the masses legitimates a democratic system that re-guides deviants, encloses becomings, and normalizes pure difference (Deleuze, 2018), which establishes a significant threat to the current worldview. Thus,

> Integrating minorities is a procedure of participative democracy. The councils are organized by segments or integrate the different segments within a council. Identify and include are the keywords of the statements that prevail in the protests and public appeals. In other words, capture (Tótora, 2006, p. 243)

The terms minority and majority, which the above author alludes to, do not refer to numerical values, i.e., quantitative data. "Which defines majority is a model in which one needs to comply. For example, the average male European living in the cities…While a minority has no model, it is a becoming, a process" (Deleuze, 2013, p. 218). Thus, in control societies, participation is crucial to channel and control 'becomings'.

Therefore, the need to include minorities into the majorities to normalize and depower them. Inclusion neutralizes the forces that the State cannot contain, so it controls them, channeling them into one of the multiple streaks they carve. The different forms of participation guide the forces, leading them to participate in the game because, while participating, the rules of the game cannot be questioned. In this sense, participation is a strategy to guide the population, a control dispositive. Hence, our objective is to problematize the democratic practices in a student council.

Student council: participation as a government strategy

During the cartographic immersion, the Student Council had 53 members from the three school shifts, all high school students. The members of the council management were chosen by a direct election held in 2016. They competed with only one slate and received 623 votes for, 124 against, and nine null[6]. After being elected, they assumed the council management in May 201 for a two-year mandate until May 2019. The group had a calendar of activities defined in the year's first meeting. On this occasion, they also determined the dates of the two monthly meetings. During the research period, they agreed that meetings would occur on the 6th and the 23rd of each month. The 15th of each month was reserved for extraordinary meetings when needed. The meetings took place in the morning, afternoon, and night to guarantee the participation of all members. The council president was present in almost all meetings. When he could not, the student vice-president coordinated the meetings.

The council had a statute at the moment of the research. The student who assumed the presidency at that time wrote the document. Based on models he found on the internet, he created a statute for the council during the vacation period between 2017-2018 and presented it to his colleagues at the beginning of the 2018 school year. The document predicted some positions and specificities, members' rights and duties, disciplinary sanctions, rules to organize and hold elections, and models of documents, such as the minutes for the election.

From the moment the council president presented the statute to his colleagues, a hierarchical structure of power, based on positions and very similar to corporate hierarchical models, started to gain shape and produce effects. According to him, he created a document because he perceived that some bodies had one and because there was a demand from the school management for them to organize themselves.

A business model inspired the students to organize the group. As a result, the internal organization of the council was hierarchical and materialized in the distribution of administrative positions attributed to students on the board. There were 14 positions: president, vice-president, general secretary, first secretary, financial coordinator, first financial coordinator, financial director, social director, press director, sports director, culture director, health and environment director, presidential representative, and event promoter.

These positions determined how the council worked and represented the decentralization of the president's management power, common in democratic management.

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[6] This information was given by the student who presided over the council during the research.

However, despite having a narrative that all should participate, give opinions, and equally contribute, students' positions were strategically distributed. In this distribution, two criteria were considered: first, the person's interest in occupying the position. However, this would open up the possibility that any person could offer themselves for the position. Thus, a second criterion was invoked. To exercise one of the positions mentioned, the person should be participative and have acceptable grades. This led students to divide the group from the "*being participative*" criterion.

The idea was introduced by the president and quickly accepted by all council members, creating, at least at that moment, a consensus that only those who effectively participated in the group could occupy the *official positions*. By this, they were referring to students who had a good school performance and, at the same time, were available for the council's demands. As the president introduced the idea, other students started to say that those who did not participate had no reason to be in the council, and a consensus was established about this. From that moment on, responsible participation became an official criterion to divide students into *official members* (participative) and *associates* (non-participative), creating the duo *official member – associate*.

Before reaching this configuration, the president tried to limit the entry into the council of students who were seen as participative and good students. However, according to the students, his idea was not accepted by the school board. So, the solution he found, together with the vice-president, was to create the position of *associate*. A figurative position. Thus, they could include these people, but they would not hold positions considered crucial to the work of the student council. Inclusion is imperative in control societies (Tótora, 2006) because when including, one can conduct. Hence, regardless of individuals' characteristics, everyone should be included in the structure of hierarchical power displacing some positions of command.

Insomuch, positions sprout, verticalizing the relations within the council, similar to what happens in business management. The council reproduced an organizational model that refers to corporatism and business routine, a model also very present in democratic management, reflecting the upgrade of the factory into a company (Deleuze, 2013). The administration gives way to management; the administrator is substituted by the manager. "It is expected from a democratic manager a business behavior, of a competent entrepreneur…It is expected that they learn democratic techniques to reach consensus, to live in harmony, to be tolerant, to have and promote the sensation that *all* participate" [original highlight] (Cervi, 2013, p. 21). This is

precisely the posture we can infer in Paulo's discourse[7], who was the council president during the cartographic research.

> Paulo: *we have always worked in a team, I've never done things alone. Something else I always say, I always tell my group, my team, the student council, I don't rule anything. I'm the leader, but I don't rule anything. Our voices are more important, the student council is ours together, it's not just I, not just the president, not just the vice-president, it's all over us. It'1s not just what I say, I need the opinion of you all, I need everyone to participate in the council, it's not just what I say.*

From the student discourse, we can deduce the manager's reasoning that intends to make everyone participate (Cervi, 2013). The young man highlights the importance of developing teamwork, and counting on everyone's participation. He presents himself as a leader who is open to dialogue, not an authoritarian ruler. This management posture, in synch with the molds of contemporary democracies, inserted in the control societies, in which school continues to be " a big business to keep the capitalist system, when wishing to produce a useful man: the democratic citizen, the consumer, the entrepreneur of self, the manager" (Cervi, 2013, p. 46). It is important to include everyone, and inclusion is done through the democratic participation of students in the council. Tótora (2006) writes that democratic management, in control societies, also operates as an insidious strategy to include minorities in majorities. Minorities and majorities are taken here in Deleuze's (2013) terms, i.e., majorities are (governable) models, and minorities escape these (ungovernable) models. Therefore, participation is vital because it determines how this participation will take place, guaranteeing the perfect attunement to State interests and not allowing any dangerous deviations. We can infer the importance given to participation in the word of the council's president transcribed below:

> Paulo: *Our time in the council was nice. We started with 42 students, we ran with 42. During the year there was a problem. A very common problem, sure, people didn't participate. People didn't come to meetings. They didn't participate in events. So we saw this as a problem. We were asked by the principal's office because these were official positions. These are treasure treasurers, secretaries, directors, event promoters, and representatives, all very important positions in the council, and, as they didn't participate, we were asked about it.*

Paulo explained to new members how the group worked and said that they had problems related to the non-participation of some members, leading to some questioning by the school management. This demand takes place because "participative management, besides being a way a democratic exercise of management is a citizen right, implying duties and

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[7] All names used are pseudonyms to guarantee the anonymity of research participants. Transcriptions are literal.

responsibilities – therefore, the management of participation" (Libâneo et al., 2012, p. 448). Thus, participation is not free but guided from the beginning by outlined objects that should be reached for the expected results. We do not intend to highlight the school board's supposedly authoritarian demand toward the school council members. We intend to show the importance given to participation in the perspective of participative-democratic management, arguing that this is a characteristic of contemporary democracies that operate a subtle government strategy, that is, of capturing and conducting behaviors. "The exercise of power consists in *conducting behaviors* and ordering probability. Deep down, power is less in the order of confrontation between two adversaries, or the engagement of one another, than in the order of government" [original highlight] (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1995, p. 244). The concern with council management revolves around how to make all participants actively participate in the activities inherent to the council, answering a demand of the school management, which, in turn, answers the demands of a democratic society. For our argument, the solution to the non-participation problem found by the president of the school council, together with his vice-president, is quite interesting.

> Paulo: *this year I decided, talking with the vice-president, to have one more position. A position that didn't need participation. The position of associate. This position is for them to be with the council in events and they can participate.*

Initially, Paulo had tried with the school management to stop students he considered non-participative to join the council. Faced with the denial of the school direction, which alleged that the council is a democratic body of student representation, the student and the vice-president found a way to include these students they considered non-participative. To do so, they created a position that does not demand participation. They called the position *associate*.

> Paulo: *those who don't participate, we send them to the category of associate, so they aren't removed from the council. So, they won't say: ow, you removed me from the council. Pedro[8] wants to participate in the council. I said no and he went to the principal. He complained to the principal. He said I didn't let him take part. Then the principal said: you have to put her on the council. I said: are you crazy? Am I going to let him in the council? He'll ruin the council just so he can leave the classroom. He told Roberta, you know Roberta, right? He told Roberta: I just want to be part of the council, so I can easily ditch classes. He said that. He was very clear about it. Then what happens? He'll keep leaving the classes and soon the teacher would say: oh…there is a member there that keeps leaving my class, he tells me you keep calling him. And I won't know about anything, because I called nobody. So who will people think is lying, him or me: I don't want him, but the principal told me that I have to put him here, so we'll make him an associate.*

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[8] A student who was considered problematic by students because he was not considered participative.

By creating the position of *associate*, the students are managing the participation of all group members, qualifying them to reach the expected results. Therefore, participating is not enough. Participation needs to be controlled, managed, and guided toward specific targets, guaranteeing that they are mobilized in favor of the council's interests, which reflect the interests of the school which, in the end, reflect the interests of the State and large corporations. The students call *'responsible participation'* this engaged participation and democratic management is precisely the collective activity that requires participation and common objectives. The role of the curricula is to produce in the subjects these individual capacities and responsibilities. The problem of members' non-participation emerged exactly because democratic participation should be enacted within the allowed and advocated limits established by the council. In this research, these limits were established by the school board and determined how members had to participate.

> The direct participation of citizens is incorporated as an Article in several Constitutions, including the Brazilian one from 1988. The councils of public policy management multiply, and society members diversify, aiming to express the institutional modality of participative democracy. (Tótora, 2006, p. 242)

As we know, the Constitution echoes in all official documents that normalize, regulate, determine and/or guide the interests of the Brazilian educational system, inserting the imperative of democratic participation in school, resetting curricula, and, consequently, altering the subjects produced. In this case, no longer docile and useful subjects but also democratic and participative ones (Cervi, 2013).

The aim was not our objective to make moral judgments on the managerial position of the researched school. Similarly, we do not want to defend or condemn students' freedom (or not) to use participation in the council to skip classes. We want to point out how democratic participation can work, though not exclusively, to capture, conduct, and establish subjectivities aligned with the demands of control society (Deleuze, 2013). Participative subjectivities that do not only participate but demand the participation of others, as we have seen in the previously transcribed dialogues between students.

We wish to argue that this participation interests the democratic State and excludes those that do not adequate themselves, that is, who do not participate according to the rules. "Who cannot see that the democracies are the despots but more hypocritical and cold, more

calculating, because now they have to count and codify the counts instead of overcoding them?" (Deleuze; Guattari, 2004, p. 228). In the case of the student council mapped, the exclusion materializes itself in the inclusion of students, considered non-participative, as *associates,* a position that labels them as *non-participative* with a heavy insignia that distinguishes and separates the other members of the council. Despite their differences, they need to be equally included because, from inclusion, a *participative rule* will be produced, as well as deviations. The students who integrate the council as *associates,* as they are considered non-participative, do not have guaranteed their privileges as *official members*, such as leaving the school for planned visits and previously arranged with school management. The *associates* suffered sanctions that played a double role: punishment for non-participation and a stimulus for participation. This reveals a neoliberal meritocratic logic strongly present in students' discourse, as inferred in the following dialogue.

> Paulo: *If we promote a visit, they can't go, only the official members.*
> Sônia: *they are the hodmen, we are the masons [laugther]...*
> Heitor: *we are the bosses, they are the workers [laugther]...*
> Sônia: *right? We're the masons and they are the hodmen, they carry the bricks.*
> Paulo: *they need to feel it, you know: They are there because they don't participate.*
> Heitor: *so they'll want to make an effort to participate.*

We can see that participation is determinant for some privileges in the scope of the student council. This was how the students managing the council found to stimulate participation and solve the problem of non-participation, about which the school principal was asking them. Participants are awarded and non-participants are punished, highlighting the importance given to participation. The imperative of participation in participative democracies is imperative because this is how behaviors are guided and the government rules people's lives. "The managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects, it also implies the management of population in its depths and its details" (Foucault, 2006, p. 302). Thus the need to act in subjective production, forming the democratic and participative subject. Therefore, from the mapped curriculum in the council, we can argue that this production has been enacted in that space, as seen in the dialogue transcribed below:

Carlos: what if someone wants to join the council but not as an associate?

Paulo: we see his or her availability. Look, could you come every 15 and 27 to the council meetings? Do you participate? Do you have good grades so that, in the case of an emergency, if there is an event, we can take you from the classes to make some activities? Are you committed to the subjects?

We can infer that to be an *official member*, one needed to have the characteristics expected of the union. Not by chance, these characteristics are the same wished by the school curriculum that answers the demands of subjective production of current neoliberalism. Thus, we can perceive a connection between neoliberalism and its influence on education through managerialism, which established a democratic-participative model. This model allows and encourages the existence of student councils because participation is vital for managerial logic.

In this scenario, students should act over themselves to have a position of an 'entrepreneur of self'. This reflects the contemporaneity of neoliberal control societies in which "the movements of modulations of each person as entrepreneurs of themselves: the modern subject becomes its own entrepreneur, needs to manage his life, to be responsible" (Cervi, 2013, p. 97). Responsibility: this is precisely what is expected from students who want to become *official members* of the council. The expectation is for them to act on themselves, regulate their *selfs* (Popkewitz, 2001), and normalize themselves to guarantee the perfect alignment to the expected school curriculum. Hence, we can argue that, through democratic participation, one can capture the deviations of *participative norms* and control living flows that, as written by Tótora (2006), cannot contain the majority representation procedures. As it cannot contain the living flows, the State, currently aligned with great corporations' interests, aims to channel them through democratic participation, to manage, subjectivize, control, conduct, and rule.

Final remarks

In control societies, the exercise of power became more subtle. It transcended institutional walls and now produces subjectivities everywhere and anytime through continuous control and instant communication. These processes are maximized by technologies that impose a great change in capitalism (Deleuze, 2013). If capitalism changes, the subject it needs also changes. Then the question is: what subject is school producing contemporary democracy?

From the data analysis, we argue that participative democracy can be thought, not exclusively, but, also, as a government strategy (Foucault, 2008). It determines the rules through which participation takes place. The population must only play the game whose rules are already determined. Not by chance, these rules merge with the interests of the State. Thus, the role of school machinery (Varela & Alvarez-Uria, 1991) is aligned with the interests of the State and great corporations in current control societies, marked by democratic regimes that demand participation. Hence, the need to produce subjects adapted to the demands of this historical time, democratic and participative subjects, and this production is enacted in the curriculum that will produce these subjects.

The cartography allowed us to infer an ongoing curriculum within the student council, in synch with the premises of control society, which operates the discursive production of democratic and participative subjects and the production of deviations. Such production results in the hierarchical binarism *norm-deviation* materialized in the roles of *official member – associate*. A meritocratic system, a strong characteristic of neoliberalism, awarded students that positively answered the processes of subjectivation, while imposing sanctions on those considered deviants for not participating, according to the rules in force. This points out that, more than a right, participation was demanded from students, to the point that non-participation was a criterion for the classification as an *associate*, a position created to include those who did not participate. The centrality of participation reflects its importance and is justifiable because it is an efficient way to guide and produce them as docile, useful, and participative subjects. Subjects demanded by contemporary neoliberalism.

This participation demand permeates institutions such as companies, whose managerial model is reproduced in schools. School assumes this managerial model and broadens it to collegiate bodies that compose the democratic-participative management, as took place in the investigated council. In control societies, schools no longer have to produce only docile and useful bodies. This subject does not meet the neoliberal demands. They need subjects that are entrepreneurs of the self and participative because participation leads them to follow pre-established rules, minimizing the possibilities of deviating from the goal. Democratic participation can channel the deviant flows of school curriculum interests, which can result in the creation of subjects different from those wanted. Faced with what we have seen, it is clear that the democratic participation in the student council also operated as a strategy of capture, favoring processes of subjectivation and normalization that results in the desired subjects by the

curriculum of this time. Docile, useful, and participative subjects, according to Cervi (2013). Under the auspices of the democratic school, neoliberalism produces the subjects needed to legitimize and perpetuate its mental and social order.

To finish, once more, we highlight that we defend democratic participation, as well as the democratic regime that is currently under direct attack due to global neoliberal attacks. Our objective is to problematize the type of participation we have observed in the researched student council. From the data produced in our cartographic immersion, we argue that democratic participation, depending on how it is enacted, can also work as an efficient strategy to govern students' conduct. Instead, we should pay attention to the importance of critically thinking the democratic participation in school and its effects.

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