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Integrated education as a policy measure for social justice: the case of AET courses in Portugal and PROEJA in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Based on a socio-critical framework, we reflect on two educational policies aimed at youth and adult education in Portugal and in Brazil, which illustrate the possibility of the State assuming its role of guaranteeing the right to education. It is concluded that these courses focus on the formation of students, providing them with both the right of access to historically constructed knowledge and a professionalization that allows them to act in the world of work and in the production of their subsistence; and, on the other hand, in a movement that compromises their existence, these courses are affected by government decisions or policies based on assumptions contrary to their foundations. A macro-analysis also shows that the ideological position of State governance is what defines decisions related to education.

KEYWORDS

youth and adult education; AET courses, Portugal; PROEJA, Brazil.

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O ENSINO INTEGRADO COMO MEDIDA POLÍTICA EM PROL DA JUSTIÇA SOCIAL: O CASO DOS CURSOS EFA EM PORTUGAL E DO PROEJA NO BRASIL

RESUMO

Com base em referencial sociocrítico, reflete-se sobre duas políticas educacionais destinadas à educação de jovens e adultos em Portugal e no Brasil que ilustram a possibilidade de o Estado assumir seu papel de garantir o direito à educação. Conclui-se que esses cursos voltam-se para a formação do educando, propiciando-lhe tanto o direito de acesso ao conhecimento historicamente construído como a uma profissionalização que lhe permita atuar no mundo do trabalho e na produção de sua subsistência. No entanto, em um movimento que compromete sua existência, esses cursos são afetados por decisões ou políticas advindas do governo embasadas em pressupostos contrários àqueles que os fundamentam. Além disso, uma macroanálise mostra que a posição ideológica da governança estatal define as decisões relativas à educação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

educação de jovens e adultos; cursos EFA, Portugal; PROEJA, Brasil.

ENSEÑANZA INTEGRADA COMO ACCIÓN POLÍTICA EN FAVOR DE LA JUSTICIA SOCIAL: EL CASO DE LOS CURSOS EFA EN PORTUGAL Y EL PROEJA EN BRASIL

RESUMEN

Desde un marco sociocrítico, se reflexiona sobre dos políticas educativas dirigidas a educación de jóvenes y adultos, en Portugal y en Brasil, que ilustran la posibilidad de que el Estado asuma su función de garantizar el derecho a la educación. Se concluye que estos cursos, por un lado, se centran en la educación del estudiante, brindándole tanto el derecho de acceso al conocimiento construido históricamente como a una profesionalización que le permite operar en el mundo del trabajo y la producción de su subsistencia; y, por otro lado, en un movimiento que compromete su existencia, estos cursos se ven afectados por decisiones o políticas gubernamentales basadas en supuestos contrarios a sus fundamentos. Además, un macroanálisis muestra que la posición ideológica de la gobernanza estatal define las decisiones educativas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

educación de jóvenes y adultos; cursos EFA, Portugal; PROEJA, Brasil.

UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RIGHT OF YOUTH AND ADULTS TO EDUCATION

Initially, it is important to discuss the meaning and limits of the terms of this title in the context of the world hegemony of capitalism. This mode of production, nourished by inequality between social classes and subordinating the working class to the bourgeoisie, is, essentially incompatible with social justice in its full sense, that is, the right of all to produce, in an impartial way, the society and the existence itself through the social and collective control of the means of production. For the same reasons, citizenship and the right to education are also limited in capitalist society.

In this sense, the following discussion about citizenship and the right of young and adult people to education occurs within the framework of capitalist society, because this form of human sociability is hegemonic today and, to overcome it, it is essential to understand in depth its functioning, so that a new way for humanity to produce its existence may be devised. In this context, it is necessary to think of capitalism as a historical construction of humanity and that, therefore, may be historically and socially surpassed by another form of production of existence.

It was the complexification of capitalist society and the sharpening of social inequalities produced by it since the early twentieth century that brought up the social issue as a problem to be solved by the State. Thus,

[...] State intervention via social policies, regulating and/or providing conditions for the maintenance and reproduction of a portion of the population, is considered an intrinsic function of the modern State, configuring patterns of social rights specific to each nation. (Fleury, 1994, p. 11)

From that point on, the notion of citizenship was built as a set of rights and duties of individuals before the State, which are given to the population with greater or lesser extent depending on the correlation of the political forces vying for the direction of that State. But it should be noted that state intervention through social policies is one of the evidences of the contradictory character of capitalism, once that, by acting only in its destructive effects, such intervention contributes to the “potentiation and sharpening of the basic contradiction of this mode of production between the socialization of the productive forces and the private appropriation of social wealth” (Fleury, 1994, p 11).

Fleury (1994) deals with three major models by which Nation-States constitute the social protection networks, providing the population with access to social rights such as education, health, housing, transportation, security, and food: social assistance; social insurance; and social security.

Although none of the three models intends to break with the logic of capital, the third, although circumscribed to this logic, is the one that has the greatest possibilities of claiming some characteristics and fundamental principles of this system, such as, for example, the intrinsic and natural inequality between humans, proclaimed by the liberal thinking, which nourishes capitalism. This model, unlike the other two, is based on the guarantee of the universalization of a set of social

rights in the domain of income, goods and services to all citizens, through social policies resulting from the centralized and unified action of the State, which sponsors and administers the system. In the view of the author,

This model of social policy recognizes the predominance of the relationship of *Universal Citizenship*, as well as a pattern of government intervention that seeks to combine economic and social policies as inseparable parts of the same developmental strategy. (Fleury, 1994, p. 110)

The social security model, by assuming the defense of the centralized and universal care of citizens with regard to social rights, operates in the opposite direction to this foundation of capitalism and, therefore, its materialization can produce significant advances toward an effective social justice. This is exactly why this model cannot be fully implemented in the various regions of the planet, especially in the non-central zones of worldwide capitalism, such as Portugal and Brazil, although with distinct characteristics.

In this sense, the European Union is one of the main poles of world capitalism, but the income, per person, of Portuguese families is significantly below that of countries with more advanced capitalism in the European Union. For example, assuming the income of Portuguese families was 100 in 2014, it was 171.6 in Switzerland in that same year; 163 in Germany; 145.6 in France; and 132.1 in the United Kingdom.¹ Only Greece and the countries with the most recent entry into the European Union had a lower indicator than Portugal.

On the other hand, Brazil is a central country in Latin America that is not among the main poles of world capitalism. For example, Brazil has the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to Gremaud (2017), in 2015, Brazilian GDP represented 33.6% of the total of this region, followed by Mexico (21.6%) and Argentina (12%). In terms of per capita GDP, Brazil (US\$11,164.40) is not among the highest; surpassed by the GDP of countries of smaller economies, such as the Bahamas (US\$20,683.90), and Trinidad and Tobago (US\$16,684.50).

The quick analysis developed allows us to situate Portugal and Brazil, in economic terms, respectively, on the periphery of the center and the center of the periphery of world capitalism. Given this relationship between center and periphery in both countries, we will briefly discuss how the access to education for young people and adults in these countries has been provided and/or denied.

In Portugal, a central country in world geopolitics for several centuries, the guarantee of education as a right of all, although legally established, has not been realized. In this context, in 1911, 70.3% of the population was illiterate; in 1950, this rate was 40.4%. PORDATA reports that in 1970, 25.7% of people were illiterate; in 1991, 11%; and in 2011, 5.2%. Data show, on the one hand, a great effort

1 Available from: <https://gz.diarioliberalidade.org/portugal/item/18850-centro-e-periferias-na-europa-portugal-um-caso-de-desastre-periferico.html>. Access at: April 5, 2018.

to guarantee the population's access to basic education, but, on the other hand, also highlight that the concrete reality prevented the universalization of this right.

When the focus of the analysis is shifted to high school, the situation is even worse, as in 2017, 52.2% of the population aged 25–64 years old had not completed this stage of education. Meanwhile, this rate was 22.6% in the European Union in the same year.

In Brazil, the secular logic of a slave-based society has produced exclusions in all spheres, including the educational one, and this is aggravated by the consolidation of capitalism as a hegemonic mode of production on a global scale. In this context, illiteracy rates in the country have always been very high among the poorest segments of society (Haddad and Del Piero, 2000).

At the beginning of the last century, 72% of the population over the age of 5 was illiterate, and by 1960, this rate was 46.7% (Haddad and Del Piero, 2000). More recent data (IBGE, 2016) showed that the Brazilian illiteracy rate was 7.2% (11.8 million people), being higher among men (7.4%) than among women (7.0%), and unequal between regions: higher in the Northeast (14.8%) and lower in the South (3.6%), revealing the maintenance of a true social *apartheid*.

If we shift the analysis of literacy to higher levels of schooling, the picture worsens. Also according to IBGE (2016), 73.5% of the population over 25 years of age did not complete secondary education, the last stage of basic education in Brazil and equivalent to secondary school in Portugal, legally compulsory for all and a prerequisite for access to higher education.

The analysis thus far allows us to conclude that the relationship of proximity/distance between the countries of the center/periphery is very closely related to the guarantee of the right to education for the general population and, in particular, for young and adult individuals. In the specific case of Portugal (periphery of the center) and Brazil (center of the periphery), the data show two worrying realities with some degree of approximation (which may be due to the fact that Brazil was once a Portuguese colony), although the periphery of the center presents a better reality than that of the center of the periphery.

THE COMPARED PERSPECTIVE IN RESEARCH ON YOUTH AND ADULT EDUCATION

Our model of analysis adopted in the comparison is based on a critical approach of the political agenda for youth and adult education, which articulated the perspective of the world system with the socio-historical perspective, in order to analyze aspects of the contemporary educational reality.

In this context, we understand that the comparison in youth and adult education helps to clarify various questions in the area of education as long as the historicity of the object studied remains clear (Rezende, Isobe and Moreira, 2013). That is, the goal is to interpret the uniqueness of phenomena without losing sight of their relations with the wider social conjuncture, which implies situating discourses and practices to better explain what is unique (Bray, Adamson and Mason, 2007).

Thus, this text sought to discuss two practices selected for contributing, albeit with tensions and contradictions, to increase, in the respective national contexts studied, social and educational justice for young and adult individuals with low schooling. It was our intention to problematize the political agendas implemented both in Portugal and Brazil, discussing some proximities and distances between these two realities, but allowing to emerge both contextualized similarities and historical particularities.

We believe that this leads to clues to better confront the ideological tensions and conflicts that surround Portuguese and Brazilian youth and adult education policies in the context of increasing socio-political and educational panoptic control that is developing today as part of the complex processes of political erosion of national States in the context of neoliberal globalization. That is, we understand that, in this context of trans-nationalization, which provides new logics for educational regulation and governance (Barros, 2019), a resignification of the educational processes involving young and adult individuals is taking place, implying a challenge to scientific activity to engage in the search for new angles of analysis of the educational phenomenon. Therefore, it is a matter of looking for new conditions of comparability in the objects of study (Souza and Martinez, 2009) while seeking new bridges within the scope of international social research networks created by critical social scientists to institute new meanings and interpretative spaces in the production of knowledge about education, because neither science nor education can already be conceived within a strictly national framework (Wallerstein, Lemert and Rojas, 2013).

PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE CASE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES IN PORTUGAL

In the history of youth and adult education in Portugal, it is possible to identify the continuity of a structural invariant: the persistent absence of a policy for the sphere, which can be simultaneously characterized by being public, global, integrated, continuous, autonomous and democratically governed (Melo, 2005). Indeed, the constant hesitation on the part of State action to promote educational backing for an adult population with unacceptable levels of illiteracy in a democratic context is remarkable (Benavente *et al.*, 1995). In fact, such hesitation has led to the tapering public network of this sector² existing at the occasion of the commemoration of the European year of lifelong learning.³ To some extent, and motivated by this framework of European educational governance (Barros and Belando-Montoro, 2013), concerns arise at the national level about the poor situation of youth and

2 Since 1986, when the Basic Law of the Educational System emerged (Portugal, 1986), the public network of this sector was tapered because it was based only on the recurring teaching, that is, second chance. This is a reality that would only be changed from 2001.

3 For further information see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:c11024>. Access at: Mar. 20, 2020.

adult education as a public education subsystem, which in 1996 was relaunched with the new status of strategic choice for educational policy (Barros, 2013).

Thus, it was the Action Program S@ber+: Program for the Development and Expansion of Adult Education and Training, 1999–2006, which came to present and disseminate a new conception for the sector,

now understood as the set of interventions that, by reinforcing and complementing synergies with the institutions and ongoing initiatives in progress in the field of lifelong education and training, aims to raise the educational and skills levels of the adult population and to promote personal development, active citizenship and employability (Melo, Matos and Silva, 2001, p. 11)

This background frame included the new strategy of promoting “articulation between the domains of education, training and employment, through the recognition of non-formal learning processes, namely those related to work contexts” (Melo, Matos and Silva, 2001, p. 6), mainly because

the essence of the problem, particularly in the non-young population, is both professional qualification and school training. Therefore, it is necessary to find articulated answers between the work that is done in the field of lifelong education and what is done in the continuing professional training. (Pedroso *in* Melo, Matos and Silva, 2001, p. 9)

In other words, it was considered that “there must be integrated responses, and entities have to be articulated: what means professional advancement must also be an advancement in terms of education, or general training of the person” (Melo, Matos and Silva, 2001, p. 11).

With this background, which is close to the social security model (Fleury, 1994), the S@ber + Action Program presented a set of objectives⁴ that guided its three intervention axes: increasing the motivation of adult people to seek courses; creating an appropriate, flexible and diversified offer of education and training on the part of the training institutions; and promoting the training of agents. We highlight the second axis, which aimed to diversify the offer, focusing on the promotion of multiple articulations with already existing systems, such as the vocational training system, the school system, and the national certification system. This intervention axis would result in a new system of adult education and training, with a model structure centered on the recognition, validation, and certification of the results of self-training of the adult population. To this end, priority was given to the creation of the necessary structures to enable that the acquired experiences became the tar-

⁴ The general objectives of supporting actions capable of structuring and expanding supply are underlined; carrying out projects in a logic of public service or partnership; raising public awareness of the need for lifelong learning, of defining lists of key competences; ensuring the recognition and validation of acquired competences; and developing new models, methodologies and materials for pedagogical and socio-educational intervention. (Melo, Matos and Silva, 2001, p. 12-13).

get of “rigorous analysis and formal recognition, translated into official validation: crediting (granting of credits) with equivalence, partial (waiver of a certain part of the training path) or total (certification, immediate provision of official diploma)” (Melo, Matos and Silva, 2001, p. 33).

Thus, from 2001 onwards, practices were promoted in Portugal that would essentially be aimed at meeting the educational situation of the active population⁵ through the “creation of flexible solutions that articulate education and training through processes of recognition and validation of acquired sets of knowledge and modular training systems” (ANEFA, 2001a, p. 29). Therefore, in addition to the existing recurrent adult education (RAE), elementary and high school, and to the extra-school education (ESE), the structuring of the new offer of adult education and training includes, from this period onwards, the following modalities: offer of adult education and training courses (AET courses); offer of S@ber + actions; and offer of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC). As a result of these public policies implemented, a real widening of the national network regarding the sector would take place, and therefore an expansion of the diversification of offers, despite the excessive concentration of efforts in a portion of the adult population: the active population.

Thus, regarding the offer of AET courses created with the purpose of reducing the high levels of underqualification,⁶ what stood out as the most characteristic and innovative was its conception in a logic of double certification,⁷ school and professional, based on a model — which was intended to be integrated — based on a framework of key competences divided by areas,⁸ and based on the transversal principle of starting each AET course based on a recognition and validation of

5 In a universe of about 4,700,000 active people, according to 1998 data from the Ministry of Labor and Solidarity, “about 2,400,000 did not attend the 9th grade, and 30% of them are semi or unqualified, that is, their training is lower than level III of professional qualification” (ANEFA, 2001a, p. 29).

6 The strategic justification for these courses, presented in the Plan of Activities of the National Agency for Adult Education and Training (*Agência Nacional de Educação e Formação de Adultos* — ANEFA) for 2001, reads: “The diversification and flexibility of offers of adult education and training, especially those aimed at the population with the lowest levels of educational and vocational qualification, in 2001, an urgent need is maintained in the sense that ANEFA has to assume as one of the priorities of its intervention [...] before Portugal’s position in relation to other countries of the European Union as regards the schooling and qualification rates of its population, and also before the worsening of this position in recent years” (ANEFA, 2001b, p. 41).

7 The double certification is conceived according to Joint Order number 1083/of November 20th, 2000.

8 In the Framework of Key Competences of Elementary Education, the areas were, and still are, the following: Citizenship and Employability (CE), Language and Communication (LC), Mathematics for Life (ML), and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (ANEFA, 2002c).

competences previously acquired by each adult learner.⁹ In essence, it was a matter of trying to establish a new starting point¹⁰ for the pedagogical processes that involve adults, aiming to overcome “the double inheritance” (Canário *in* ANEFA, 2002a, p. 50) that has characterized recent history of youth and adult education in Portugal, namely the schooling aspect that persisted in the recurrent education of adults, and the vocational training aspect, that tends to reproduce a functionalist perspective of the relationship between training and work. According to Canário,

these two traditions are situated in the antipodes of a training process that aims to be based on the centrality of the subject who learns, from the recognition and validation of the experiences acquired and having as reference not a list of contents, but a broad set of skills to be built (Canário *in* ANEFA, 2002a, p. 50).

In this sense, its entire curricular conception, innovative in the sector,¹¹ involved a modular system created “from the perspective of individualization and differentiation of education and training paths, including integrated components of vocational training and basic training that allow obtaining certification” (ANEFA, 2002b, p. 7-8), in one of the three levels of certification¹² with which the AET courses pilot project would initially be implemented in the Portuguese context. The public debriefing, resulting from the analysis of the first 13 AET courses under observation, was presented, in 2002, as overall positive, encouraging “the progressive extension and consolidation of this new type of educational offer, aimed at non-educated adult audiences, or whose schooling does not cover mandatory elementary education” (Canário *in* ANEFA, 2002a, p. 49).

9 The specificity of the recipients would particularize this offer, designed for “low-skilled adults, often at risk of social exclusion, [courses] with a view to building new social, interactive and empowering relationships capable of providing these adults with the construction of their own personal and professional life projects” (ANEFA, 2002a, p. 12).

10 These AET courses were intended to respond to the need to achieve “a greater and better articulation between education and training, without the former ignoring the latter and without the latter colonizing the former, tapering into narrowband vocational training” (Santos Silva, 2002, p. 73).

11 This new methodological direction for the AET courses would be the result, it is argued, of “seeking a formative solution effectively capable of proposing a model more aligned with the nature of adults and escaping the school logic of the curriculum, [what made] ANEFA to conceive a curricular organization by competences that, in a broader and more comprehensive perspective, should be understood as ‘sets of knowledge in action and for action’” (ANEFA, 2002b, p. 6).

12 At the end of the training course thus implemented, it would be possible for the adult to obtain an AET certificate, which could be of three types: basic 1 (B1), equivalent to the 1st cycle of elementary education and level i of professional qualification; basic 2 (B2), equivalent to the 2nd cycle of elementary education and level i of professional qualification; or basic 3 (B3), equivalent to the 3rd cycle of elementary education and level ii of professional qualification.

Effectively, AET courses have been expanded and it became possible to obtain certification for high school¹³ (12 years of schooling) through this route since 2007. Since then, several adjustments have been implemented¹⁴ in its organization, with a diversification of the offer of flexible¹⁵ but articulated training schemes, being possible for adults over 18 years old to obtain a double certification (school and professional) or just one of them.¹⁶ However, AET courses follow the key competences framework¹⁷ and the training references associated with the respective qualifications contained in the National Qualifications Catalog and are grouped by education and training areas, according to the National Classification of Education and Training Areas.

In short, the fact that the AET courses offer a personalized and flexible path, based on the results of a diagnostic assessment or the recognition and validation of lifelong competences, and promote moments of training assessment that culminate in a final summative assessment, brings this offer closer to the kind of practices that can contribute to the creation of a better world, that is, fair and democratic, after all this is the first and ultimate goal of a broadly and critically oriented conception of adult education.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify the presence of a hybridism in the directions of the educational policy for the sector, from 2001 until the present moment, which also combines, as stated by Teodoro and Aníbal, for education in general, “constructivist discourses from a critical perspective with apologetic discourses of social efficiency that subject the usefulness of education to economic productivity” (Aníbal and Teodoro 2008, p. 105). It is a hybridity that generates tensions and contradictions also in the field of practices, which reflect the intermittence with which importance is attributed or not to the political agenda for youth and adult education. Oscillations in government actions have kept the macro structural feature of the political agenda for youth and adult education in Portugal intact since 1974: a bet of leftist governments (Socialist Party) interspersed by political abandonment of rightist governments (Social Democratic Party).

13 Order no. 11.203/2007, of June 8th.

14 Ordinance no. 230/2008, of March 7th; ordinance no. 711/2010, of August 17th; ordinance no. 283/2011, of October 24th; and ordinance no. 216-C/2012 of July 18th.

15 For basic education, training courses B3 (1,940 hours) and B2 + B3 (2,390 hours) are available. For secondary education, training courses S3 type A (2,045 hours), B (1,680 hours) or C (1,575 hours) are available; or the training paths S, types A (1,150 hours), B (625 hours), or C (315 hours).

16 As this is a dual certification AET course, a certificate of completion is awarded in the 3rd cycle of basic education (9th grade) and level II of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), or certificate of secondary education (12th grade) and the NQF level IV. To know more consult: <http://www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/>. Access at: Mar. 20, 2020.

17 In the key competences framework of the Secondary level, the areas are: Citizenship and Professionality (CP), Culture, Language and Communication (CLC) and Society, Technology and Science (STC) (DGFV, 2006).

PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE CASE OF PROEJA IN BRAZIL¹⁸

The history of youth and adult education in Brazil can be studied from the premise that there is regularity in discontinuity. This is evidenced by Haddad and Di Pierro (2000), when showing that, historically, actions for this modality are developed through fragmented programs, campaigns and projects, focal and disjointed actions that have not guaranteed the rights of young people and adults to education in the perspective of its universalization. Added to this is the fact that professional training in Brazil is marked by its separation from elementary education and by actions that subject training to the immediate interests of the labor market.

The National Program for the Integration of Basic Education with Professional Education in the modality of Youth and Adult Education (*Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Básica com a Educação Profissional na modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos* — PROEJA), by integrating professional education with basic education in the YAE modality, is part of the historical discontinuity of the actions of Brazilian governments for this purpose and, together, in the historical duality that marks professional training. Not surprisingly, this program has received gradually less government incentives and has suffered setbacks, with the creation of the National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (*Programa Nacional de Acesso ao Ensino Técnico e Emprego* — PRONATEC) with the promulgation of law no. 13.415/2017, which reformulated the Brazilian High School; and with the institution of MédioTec,¹⁹ which transfers part of the responsibility of the government educational actions in professional training to private initiatives, with federal funding, and encourages concomitance at the expense of integrated secondary education.

PROEJA was created with a dual purpose: to face the discontinuities and voluntarism that marked youth and adult education in Brazil and to integrate the elementary education with a form of professional training that contributed to the quality socioeconomic integration of young people and adults in society, contributing to the improvement of the conditions for social, political, cultural, and labor participation of young people and adults, with increased education (Moura and Henrique, 2012).

To this end, PROEJA established the following ground

[...] in the conception of unitary education (teaching for integral, general and technical training, with a view to overcoming the duality between propaedeutic education and professional training) and polytechnic or technological education, necessary for the theoretical and practical understanding of the scientific foundations of the multiple techniques used in the production process. (Regatieri and Castro, 2010, p. 36)

18 Part of the discussions proposed here were developed from Henrique (2018).

19 MédioTec is an action of the Federal Government, through the Secretariat of Professional Education (*Secretaria de Educação Profissional* — SETEC) that encourages the offer of technical high school courses in the concomitant mode for students enrolled in regular education, in state and district networks, with transfer of Training Scholarship to the offering institutions. Available at: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/mediotec>.

Thus, professional training must be integrated with basic education, forming a totality, in order to complement it. In other words, it should be organized in the integrated form, preferably, although the concomitant form is also legally supported.

From these bases, between 2007 and 2011, slowly, the public enrollment of PROEJA (federal and state; PROEJA Integrated Secondary Education — PROEJA ISE; PROEJA Initial and Continuing Training — PROEJA ICT Fundamental) grew, but this changed from 2012 onwards as a result of the creation, in 2011, of PRONATEC, created by law no. 12.513/2011, as presented in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Evolution of enrollments in PROEJA Integrated Secondary Education (2007–2016) and PRONATEC (2011–2016).²⁰

Year	PROEJA Integrated Secondary Education					PRONATEC – concurrent technical courses (Scholarship Training)
	Brazil	Federal	State	Municipal	Private	
2007	9,747	4,772	1,229	131	3,615	There were no enrollments (program created in 2011)
2008	14,939	8,014	3,958	28	2,939	
2009	19,533	10,883	4,327	66	4,257	
2010	38,152	14,078	19,919	40	4,115	
2011	41,971	14,530	23,033	84	4,324	
2012	35,993	14,147	17,171	634	4,081	109,537
2013	40,117	12,801	21,909	369	5,038	299,016
2014	42,875	11,595	19,276	429	11,575	537,159
2015	38,212	9,301	21,593	840	6,478	103,409
2016	32,710	8,282	22,120	806	1,502	158

Source: 2007 to 2016 Basic Education Census and Table “PRONATEC: total de matrículas por iniciativa e tipo de curso”. Available at: <https://portal.ifrn.edu.br/ensino/ppgep/matricula-bolsa-formacao-pronatec>. Access in: Mar. 19, 2020.²¹ Prepared by the authors.

If, on the one hand, PROEJA approaches the social security model (Fleury, 1994), on the other, PRONATEC is distant from this model. This program operates

²⁰ Official government data include enrollment in PRONATEC as a result of the expansion of the federal network of professional education, the free agreement with the S System and E-Tec Brasil. However, these initiatives already existed prior to the Program, so it was decided to include only enrollments from the offer established in law no. 12.513/2011: the courses offered through the Training Grant (concurrent technical courses and ICT courses).

²¹ The original link (painel.mec.gov.br/) accessed on January 15, 2019 for the preparation of this article no longer makes available the tables referring to registration at PRONATEC, that is, the tables were removed from the MEC website. Thus, we use a secondary source so that we can access the original data.

in the opposite direction to educational policies in the field of professional training and youth and adult education, including PROEJA, instituted by Lula Governments. Its creation took place amid the proliferation of discourses about the urgent need for the training of millions of workers in a short time and the sudden turn to the rightist political coalition supporting the Brazilian government at that time.

PRONATEC offers two types of courses. Students in state public schools that are in the secondary education have the possibility, at the same time, to take a technical course, usually in a school of the S System²² or in a private school. Thus, the federal government transfers resources to the private sector, more specifically, to the entities representing the interests of big national capital²³ so that they, with this public resource, decide the training that is of interest to provide to the working class. It is evident that this type of training is not in line with the conception of human education assumed within the scope of PROEJA.

Another PRONATEC action is the Initial and Continuing Training (ICT) courses, with a minimum duration of 160 hours, aimed mainly at workers with low education, the majority of whom did not complete elementary school, thus potential public of youth and adult education. In this case, the fact that no increase in education levels is seen is alarming. Therefore, these ICT courses, linked to employability by means of advertising, co-opt the working class and fulfill the ideological function of legitimizing the capitalist state, as the numerous certifications create the illusion of qualification for the market and of improved employability, and ultimately convince the working class that these short courses are important for them. However, their main function is to conform workers to the interests of capital while maintaining social harmony (Melo and Moura, 2016, p. 14).

Ideologically, PRONATEC is subordinated to the discourse of economic growth and to the direct (and illusory) relationship between professional qualification and employability. In addition, this program encouraged (and encourages) the expansion of professional training through public and private partnership, transferring resources to the S System and other private education organizations, and reaffirms the structural duality of Brazilian education through the provision of technical courses of medium level in the concomitant mode, and in the form of short ICT courses (Silva, 2015).

In this context, Chart 2 shows that enrollment in PROEJA began to significantly drop on the public sphere from 2012 onwards, when there was an extraordinary growth in the offer of ICT and technical courses under PRONATEC through the Training Grant. Between 2011 and 2014, there were a total of 3,336,674 enrollments in ICT courses and 945,712 enrollments in technical courses, which highlights the relationship between the rapid and intense growth of enrollment in

22 The S System is composed of corporate institutions related to the productive sector, such as industry, commerce, agriculture, transportation that aim at professional training, leisure, consulting, and workers' health. Although not public, it receives subsidies from the government.

23 National Confederations of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Transport, maintainers of the S System.

the scope of PRONATEC,²⁴ especially in ICT courses, and reduced effort in public institutions in the PROEJA's offer. As a result, it can be stated that the creation of PRONATEC and its prioritization as a public policy have been producing atrophy in the offer of PROEJA courses.

Chart 2 – Evolution of enrollments in PROEJA Initial and Continuing Training (2007–2016) and PRONATEC (2011–2016).

PROEJA Initial and Continuing Training Fundamental						PRONATEC – Initial and Continuing Training courses (Scholarship training)
Year	Brazil	Federal	State	Municipal	Private	
2007	– ²⁵	–	–	–	–	There were no enrollments (program created in 2011)
2008	3,957	–	–	–	–	
2009	3,628	55	1,559	1,766	248	
2010	14,126	258	5,975	7,634	517	
2011	23,995	647	14,213	8,534	601	23,180
2012	18,622	785	11,186	6,237	414	568,293
2013	20,194	329	13,354	6,188	323	1,361,245
2014	9,153	297	4,625	4,005	226	1,383,956
2015	–	–	–	–	–	193,873
2016	–	–	–	–	–	2,025

Source: 2007 to 2016 Basic Education Census and Table “PRONATEC: total de matrículas por iniciativa e tipo de curso”. Available at: <https://portal.ifrn.edu.br/ensino/ppgep/matrícula-bolsa-formacao-pronatec>. Access in: Marc. 19, 2019. Prepared by the authors.

Another government measure that brought setbacks to PROEJA was law no. 13.415/2017, which reformulates secondary education in Brazil. It should be noted that this law does not make direct reference to the YAE modality, once again marginalizing young people, adults, workers, rural population, women, blacks, and poor people, who have had their right of access or completion of basic education in the so-called proper or regular age group denied. However, as

24 The decrease in enrollments under this Program presented in Chart 1 from 2015 is justified, among other things, by the intense political and economic crisis imposed on the country since then.

25 Blank cells (–) correspond to data not disclosed by National Institute for Educational Studies and Research “Anísio Teixeira” (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira — INEP) in the respective Census. In 2015 and 2016, the respective censuses published the offer of ICT courses totaling the ICT Fundamental and ICT High School courses, so that it was not possible to identify the exclusive enrollment in ICT Fundamental courses.

YAE is a secondary education modality, it is also subject to the general principles emanating from this law.

For Araujo (2018, p. 220),

Due to their comprehensiveness and scope, these changes in a set of laws constitute a profound reform of national basic education, particularly in secondary education, with repercussions on the purposes of national education, on the curricular organization of this stage of education, as well as on the pedagogical work, the financing of basic education, the teaching work and the professional future of the graduates of this teaching stage.

Furthermore, this law brings a restricted conception of human education by subjecting it to market determinations. On this issue, Saviani (2016) highlights the narrow conception of education that underlies law no. 13.415/2017. The author shows that, by shifting the determination of the curriculum of socially constructed knowledge and placing the educational objectives as the core of this definition, the objectives will determine the contents that will compose the curriculum.

In the view of Marsiglia *et al.* (2017, p. 119),

By emphasizing skills, competences, procedures, and creation of attitudes, and by not emphasizing school content, educational work, and teaching, the law provides a perspective that aims to adapt students to the labor market or, more specifically, to the entrepreneurship.

In this line of reasoning, the starting point to define competences and skills or “learning rights and objectives” is what the labor market allegedly needs in terms of labor force, as expressed in law no. 13.415/2017 (Brasil, 2017a) and in the National Common Curriculum Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* — BNCC), to decide, then, which contents should be the object of the pedagogical work in the school and what should be the time of this education.

As a consequence, it is clear that the proposed change will lead to:

the deepening of processes of exclusion of the most vulnerable young people, the deepening of social inequalities, the greater disqualification of basic education, especially for the poorest people, and the devaluation of education professionals. (Araujo, 2018, p. 220)

Another measure that goes in the same direction is the proposal of the MédioTec in the face-to-face and distance education modality, another action in the PRONATEC scope, which separates the secondary education from the professional training. This program,

[...] its proposal is the strengthening of professional training policies through the convergence of actions of promotion and implementation, pedagogical production and technical assistance, *for the offer of technical professional educa-*

tion of secondary level articulated concomitantly with the education networks and the productive sector. (Brasil, 2017b, emphasis added)

It is explicit in the document that the demands of technical training were mapped in each of the five regions of the country to provide more synergy between the demand and the courses offered, with data on the “real” insertion opportunities, by municipality, and the skills training needed to meet them. It is the labor market that determines educational decisions, which contributes to the naturalization of the idea that education is responsible only for the acquisition of skills for employability.

If we consider that the subjects of youth and adult education and PROEJA, with their trajectories of interruptions and return to school, have already had the historically constructed, systematized, and accumulated knowledge of humanity denied, the State, once again, denies them the right to socially referenced education. Therefore, the proposal to materialize, in PROEJA, the reparative, equalizing, and qualifying functions, through which the State has the duty to ensure the right of all to education and thus reduce the inequality between those who had access to school and those whose access was impeded, tends to take a few steps back.

In short, contradictorily, on the one hand, there is the institution of PROEJA, in 2005, grounded on the need to ensure comprehensive human education to the collectivities to which this training was denied and, on the other hand, there are measures of social restraint such as PRONATEC, created in 2011, the reform of secondary education and MédioTec, both in 2017, which undermine the right of these collectivities to such comprehensive education by promoting short courses without raising the level of education; reaffirming the structural duality of Brazilian education; and linking professional training exclusively to the needs of the labor market.

AET AND PROEJA COURSES: POINTS AND COUNTERPOINTS

Before discussing specifically the AET and PROEJA courses, in order to better situate the reader, some considerations about conceptual differences related to the critical field literature in Portugal and Brazil are necessary, namely two considerations: the conception of curriculum integration and the analytical treatment given to the pedagogy of competences.

As for curricular integration, in the Brazilian critical academic production, specifically in the case of secondary education (or elementary school) integrated to professional education, central object of the present discussion, it is considered that integrated education is the integration between the so-called general education (sciences, literature, and arts) and professional training, developed in a single curriculum in the same educational institution, having comprehensive education of subjects as conceptual reference. The Portuguese literature, as previously discussed, considers integration to be the articulation between the institutions that provide basic general education and those that are responsible for professional training in the sense that subjects move between each other in order to integrate general and professional knowledge to achieve comprehensive training.

Concerning the pedagogy of competences, in Portugal, there is a dominant view that defends this pedagogical current,²⁶ being small the critical field that deconstructs it as a conservative and functionalist political-ideological-pedagogical current (Barros, 2011; Lima, 1994, 2018). Consequently, Portuguese literature tends to (uncritically) incorporate the concept of competence as central to the processes of human education, nevertheless, promulgating it from a perspective of its comprehensiveness. Brazilian critical literature, on the other hand, considers the pedagogy of competences contrary to the conception of comprehensive human education, considering that it is based on the interests of the labor market to the detriment of the subjects and society as a whole. In this sense, for critical Brazilian authors, the concept of competence shifts the centrality of human education from the relationship between subjects and the processes of production and acquisition of knowledge and their social, political and economic participation, in a perspective of autonomy and emancipation, for a curriculum aimed at the acquisition of skills subordinated to employability (Ramos, 2001).²⁷ Once these considerations are made, AET courses and PROEJA can be discussed.

The two educational activities previously characterized and synthesized, i.e. AET courses in Portugal and PROEJA in Brazil, were chosen because they are close to the social security model (Fleury, 1994), in the sense that the State seeks to ensure the materialization of the right to education allied to professional training, so as to allow the professional insertion of a contingent of poorly educated adults. These are actions that see adult education in a broader and critically oriented manner, and education as an equal right for all (Barros and Biasin, 2019).

It is clear that these policies have in common their inscription in a history of advances and setbacks in the educational agenda planned for youth and adult education. On the one hand, advances in center-left governments interspersed with setbacks for abandonment or omission in rightist governments. Therefore, being on the periphery of the center (the case of Portugal) or being on the center of the periphery (the case of Brazil) of world capitalism does not prevent decisions regarding education from biasing the economy and market needs in line with state governance. This finding shows the intrinsic relationship between educational actions and the political-ideological project of governments.

On the one hand, when the economic dimension is central, the role of education is restricted to educate to meet the interests of the labor market. Particularly, in relation to professional training and youth and adult education, it is about

26 Contrary to this stance, from a critical perspective, the Portuguese researcher Silva (2006) discusses the meaning and concept of competence by discussing its polysemy, its appropriation by various disciplinary fields and the focus on the action underlying its meaning. He also discusses the link between the very concept of competence and its close relationship with the ideals of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Available at: <http://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/8600>. Access at: Mar. 20, 2020.

27 For further study of this theme, it is suggested to see Ramos (2001); Hidalgo (2002); Ferretti (2004); Frigotto, Ciavatta and Ramos (2005); Moura, Lima Filho and Silva (2015).

“training people with the greatest technical competence possible to make this labor market work in the most ‘acceptable’ way with a view to maintaining centrality in the economic dimension” (Moura, 2014, p. 32).

On the other hand, when the dimension of the human being is central, the educational perspective, although not denying the technical dimension, is not reduced to it. Technical competence is not neglected, but the understanding of the society in which these technically competent subjects are inserted is attached to it, as well as the power relations to which they are subjected. Allied to this, these subjects “know what is the role of science, and who is interested in a certain type of knowledge, science and technology production, who are the ones interested in power relations and what domination exists in society” (Moura, 2014, p. 32).

Saviani (2016) presented an outline of the content of the basic education curriculum aiming to overcome the limits of the BNCC, and argued that, if qualifying for the job, promoting the full development of people and preparing them for the exercise of citizenship is the goal, it is not enough only

to warn against the dangers of technical rationality by advocating a training centered on a humanistic grassroots culture focused on philosophy, literature, arts, and humanities to the detriment of the development of so-called “hard sciences”. It is necessary to turn education toward a science-based culture that articulates, in a unified way, in a comprehensive complex, the human-natural sciences that are profoundly modifying life forms through the sieve of philosophical reflection and artistic and literary expressions. (Saviani, 2016, p. 84)

Another aspect shared between these two actions, AET courses and PROEJA, is the concern with the general education of students integrated to professional training and the verticalization in the studies, granting certification. In AET courses, certifications can be of three types: basic 1 (B1), equivalent to the 1st cycle of elementary education and level I of professional qualification; basic 2 (B2), equivalent to the 2nd cycle of elementary education and level I of professional qualification; or basic 3 (B3), equivalent to the 3rd cycle of elementary education and level II of professional qualification. In the case of PROEJA, the contents of elementary education (primary or secondary education) are integrated into one of the technical courses defined in the National Catalog of Technical Courses (*Catálogo Nacional de Cursos Técnicos* — CNCT). Therefore, there is concern with the training of students, providing them with both the right of access (which has been denied to them) to the historically constructed knowledge as a technical training that allows them to act in the world of work, in the production of their existence.

In addition, analyzing these two actions, it can be seen that both, during their execution, suffered tensions arising from government decisions ideologically contrary to the assumptions underlying them. In the correlation of forces, in the dispute between distinct societal projects, other governmental actions or policies weakened both the AET and PROEJA courses by hybridity in the

orientations of educational policy for the sector. Specifically, in the case of PROEJA, we mention the creation of PRONATEC, MédioTec, the enactment of law no. 13.415/2017 and the silencing of the YAE modality. On the one hand, educational actions based on a critical-social perspective; on the other hand, actions that subject education to economic productivity and whose function is to legitimize the capitalist State.

CONCLUSION

The reflections presented here show that, despite the hegemonic project of society that allegedly aligns education with employability, that is, with market needs and economic productivity, it is possible to think and implement educational actions that go against this project. However, these actions undergo interventions of governmental decisions that modify them, in a conflicting process of existence and resistance. Recurring approximations and distancing of YAE to a socio-critical educational paradigm show that “history never closes itself on its own and never closes itself forever. Men, in groups and confronting each other as conflicting classes, are the ones who ‘close’ or ‘open’ the circuits of history” (Fernandes, 1977, p. 5).

Thus, these courses, on the one hand, are geared at the education of students, providing them with both the right of access to the historically constructed knowledge and the professionalization that allow them to act in the world of work and in the production of their existence, thus constituting contributions to social justice in the full sense; and, on the other hand, they are geared at a movement that compromises their existence, affected by decisions or policies from the government based on assumptions contrary to their foundations and which aggravate the inequality between social classes. However, it is only by one of these ways that the right to education of the population in general and, in particular, of young and adult subjects, is enhanced, according to the parameters identified by Fleury (1994) in the social security model.

It was noticed from the analysis undertaken that, although starting from different levels, both in Portugal, located in the periphery of the center and in Brazil, located in the center of the periphery of world capitalism, decisions related to education go through the bias of the economy and market needs in line with the ideological position of present State governance.

From this perspective, the history of the AET courses and PROEJA illustrates the very history of AET, marked in both countries, with some degree of approximation, by ideological tensions that open and close the circuits of its own history, sometimes denying the right of subjects to a socially referenced education now approaching the conceptual framework of YAE elaborated in the Nairobi Document (UNESCO, 1976), in which an integrated view in education and training as an inalienable mandate of comprehensive human development and participation in social development is explained, in a balanced and interdependent way.

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