

## **EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN A NEOLIBERAL PERSPECTIVE: a critical analysis of the Future-se Program proposal**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In this paper, we analyze the proposals for the Future-se program and its possibilities of political changes in federal institutions of higher education in Brazil. Considering the immediacy in the construction of the proposals related to a longed-for program by the government, we conducted the study by means of consolidated theoretical frameworks and document analyses, in order to gain insights on the *concepts* that operate through these political proposals for higher education in Brazil. In this regard, we propose a brief and relevant academic discussion for analysis, by means of three dimensions: first, we present a brief relation between educational policies and neoliberalism, considering the relation between private and public in education, by means of the proposal of the studied program; secondly, we describe the proposal of implementation and design of the Future-se program in Brazil, through a comparative and diagnostic approach; and, finally, we present the Future-se barriers and possibilities, considering an analytical perspective of the presented concepts. As results, we verify that the Future-se proposal is related to a neoliberal policy that poses risks to the autonomy of federal institutions and submits them to the market logic. Therefore, we conclude that the concepts operate under an entrepreneurial logic, with a perspective of regulation of federal institutions' structures in all their areas; and that, in both proposals, produce meanings that modify the characteristics of universities as spaces of knowledge and democratic actions.

**Keywords:** Educational policies. Neoliberalism. Future-se program. Autonomy. Entrepreneurial logic.

### **POLÍTICAS EDUCACIONALES EN UNA PERSPECTIVA NEOLIBERAL: un análisis crítico de la propuesta para el Programa Future-se**

## RESUMEN

En este artículo, analizamos las propuestas para el programa Future-se y sus posibilidades de cambios políticos en instituciones federales de educación superior de Brasil. En vista del inmediatez en la construcción de las propuestas para un programa tan deseado por el gobierno actual, desarrollamos el estudio por medio de referencias teóricas consolidadas y de análisis documentales, objetivando presentar reflexiones relevantes acerca de *los conceptos* que operan a través de estas propuestas políticas para la educación superior en Brasil. En esta dirección, establecemos una sucinta y relevante construcción académica para el análisis, por medio de tres dimensiones: primeramente, presentamos una breve relación entre las políticas educativas y el neoliberalismo, en vista de la relación entre el público el privado en la educación, a través de la propuesta del programa estudiado; en segundo lugar, describimos la propuesta de efectuación y estructuración del programa Future-se en Brasil, por medio de un enfoque comparativo y diagnóstico; y, finalmente, presentamos los impedimentos y las posibilidades del Future-se, en vista de una visión analítica de los conceptos presentados. Como resultados, verificamos que la propuesta del Future-se está relacionada a una política neoliberal que ataca la autonomía de las instituciones federales y las somete a la lógica del mercado. De esta forma, concluimos que los conceptos funcionan bajo una lógica empresarial, con una perspectiva de regulación de las estructuras de las instituciones federales en todos sus segmentos, produciendo sentidos que modifican las características de las universidades como espacios de conocimiento y de acciones democráticas.

**Palabras clave:** Políticas educacionales. Neoliberalismo. Programa Future-se. Autonomía. Lógica empresarial.

## POLÍTICAS EDUCACIONAIS NUMA PERSPECTIVA NEOLIBERAL: uma análise crítica da proposta para o Programa Future-se

### RESUMO

No presente artigo, analisamos as propostas para o programa Future-se e suas possibilidades de mudanças políticas nas instituições federais de ensino superior do Brasil. Considerando o imediatismo na construção das propostas para um programa tão desejado pelo atual governo, desenvolvemos o estudo por meio de referências teóricas consolidadas e análises de documentos, objetivando reflexões relevantes sobre os *conceitos* que operam por intermédio dessas propostas políticas para o Ensino Superior no Brasil. Nesse sentido, estabelecemos uma sucinta e relevante construção acadêmica para análise, mediante três dimensões: primeiramente, apresentamos uma breve relação entre as políticas educacionais e o neoliberalismo, considerando a relação entre público e privado na educação, por intermédio da proposta do programa estudado; no segundo momento, descrevemos a proposta de efetivação e estruturação do Future-se no Brasil, através de uma abordagem comparativa e

diagnóstica; e, por fim, apresentamos os entraves e as possibilidades do Future-se, considerando uma visão analítica dos conceitos apresentados. Como resultados, verificamos que a proposta do Future-se está relacionada a uma política neoliberal que agride a autonomia das IFES e as submete à lógica de mercado. Dessa forma, concluímos que os conceitos operam sob uma lógica empresarial, com perspectiva de regulação das estruturas das IFES em todos os seus segmentos, produzindo sentidos que alteram as características das universidades como espaços de conhecimento e de ações democráticas.

**Palavras-chave:** Políticas educacionais. Neoliberalismo. Future-se. Autonomia. Lógica empresarial.

### **Introduction**

In this article, we intend to analyze the proposals of the Future-se program and its possibilities of political changes in Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IFES) in Brazil, aiming at a relevant reflection on the concepts that operate in the three branches of the Future-se program (Research, Technological Development and Innovation; Entrepreneurship; and Internationalization), which relate to the structure of federal universities and institutes. Thus, we consider the importance of a discussion on the dimensions concerning such proposal, even though it is not possible to conduct a deepened analysis of the program, considering that it is not a project with solid dimensions yet (its implementation has not been legalized so far).

The Future-se program was launched in July 2019, by means of a proposal that aims to change the forms of financing of federal universities and institutes. Currently, there is a second version of this proposal with some alterations in the text, after the Public Prosecution went to court, demanding for the public consultations to be redone, due to the fact that the proposal does not have a proper legislation to regulate them. In this regard, considering the dimensions that make us think about such context, we understand that “nothing is by chance” in the Brazilian current political scenario.

It is important to highlight that, about two decades ago, research works in the area of Educational Policies have shown the strong influences arising from international agencies in the Brazilian educational scenario (BALL, 2010; 2013;

APPLE, 2006; GOERGEN, 2013; HYPOLITO, 2010; LAVAL, 2004), so that it is possible to see some regulation elements that reach the context of public educational institutions. This occurs from the policies implemented through programs and projects, thus resulting in control effects that aim to get economic results. In this context, individuals are blamed for not reaching their goals, since, in the spaces of public institutions, “autonomy, decentralization and democratic management” are established, operated by means of concepts such as **entrepreneurship** and **innovation**. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the relations between Law, State and Education in order to better understand some educational problems that affect this scenario. In this direction, the educational policies can be considered as actions that originate mainly from the public power; they have to play a significant role from their objectives, for the common good of all in society and from knowledge (LIBÂNEO, 2012).

In the educational context, it is necessary to ensure harmony in favor of the common good of all, from the implementation of programs that meet all social demands. The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, in its article 205, makes it abundantly clear that “education is a right of all and a duty of the State” (BRASIL, 1988). In the third article, item IV, with regard to educational policies and considering the State's commitment, the Magna Carta mentions that education must “promote the good of all, without prejudices of origin, race, sex, color, age and any other forms of discrimination” (BRASIL, 1988). In this context, it is pertinent to present some arguments related to the neoliberal ideology, making possible the understanding that neoliberalism, in general, “contests the interference of the State in the production of goods and services, whether they are related to health, transport or education. It is the intervention in itself of the State in the provision of education that is called into question in the most radical world” (LAVAL, 2004, p. 94).

On the first page of the second proposal of the Future-se bill (2019), it is instituted, on Art. 1, “the Enterprising and Innovative Universities and Institutes Program – Future-se” and its purposes, which are intrinsically related to the

funding and financing sources to be raised. In other words, there is visibility and enhancement of a relation between the public and the private spheres in higher education.

In this regard, it is important: to understand educational policies and neoliberalism, considering the relation between public and private in education; to get to know the proposal of implementation and structuring of the Future-se program in Brazil; and, finally, to identify the obstacles and possibilities of such bill. Thus, we propose to answer the following question: How concepts that operate in the Future-se program branches (Research, Technological Development and Innovation; Entrepreneurship; and Internationalization) create meanings toward the neoliberal policy in the educational context of Brazilian federal institutions?

Methodologically, we develop a critical analysis from a literature review, including the consolidated literature on the matter, which allows us to theoretically base this paper when approaching concepts that relate to this study. We also conduct a documentary analysis, considering the documents that regulate the first and second versions of the program's bill, as well as some official reports published by federal institutions as responses to the Future-se proposal. Therefore, the analyses of these documents enabled us to understand some important aspects, which then were contextualized and related to the question that guides this study, considering the current Brazilian scenario (LUDKE; ANDRÉ, 1986).

### **1. Educational Policies in a neoliberal perspective and the public-private partnership: a diagnostic relation**

The historical experience also shows us that the understanding between public and private interests does not happen in a natural way (GOERGEN, 2013, p. 723).

In this section, we approach educational public policies, considering the development of implemented policies, relating them to the Brazilian education in the current context. Thus, we take into account previous studies concerning the

subject, as well as important legal instruments of the Brazilian legislation, namely: Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988); Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (BRASIL, 1996); Decennial Plan for Education; and National Curricular Parameters (PCNs). Between 1930 and 1945, some decisions defined educational policies in Brazil. The State rethought educational training, considering that Brazil had a great amount of industries and needed qualified labor to meet this demand, that is, it required professional education to prepare young people for the job market. When comparing this period with the current days, it is possible to glimpse some similarities and to consider what Ball (2010) mentions when he says that education:

Is increasingly more subject to the processes of commodification and privatization. These are some of the main characteristics of the global educational policy in the 21st century and represent an increasing trend, under different forms, in countries with quite diverse cultural/political histories and economic positions. In fact, the increase of privatization in education is isomorphic in relation to the capital form that it represents – the transnational corporations. The fast and massive expansion of the participation of the private sector in public education certainly is stimulated by the two sides of the exchange relation: supply and demand. (BALL, 2010, p. 486).

Given this reality, the State is supported by a decentralizing discourse and develops its regulating role by means of educational policies, becoming subject of the process. (HYPOLITO, 2010). In this regard, it is worth to mention the general objective of the Future-se program from what is written in the proposal (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 1): on Art. 1º, it is instituted that the Enterprising and Innovative Universities and Institutes Program – Future-se has the following purposes:

I - to provide sources of financing for federal universities and federal institutes; II - to stimulate the increment of proper resources by means of fundraising; III - to make possible the direct destination of resources to universities or federal institutes; IV - to promote and to stimulate scientific development, research, scientific and technological qualification and innovation; V - to stimulate the promotion of an enterprising perspective; and VI - to stimulate the internationalization of federal universities and institutes.

In this conceptual approach, the text mentions policies that benefit, mostly, business interests, meeting the neoliberal context and its demands. On this intervention, Hypolito (2010) presents a relevant argument, considering that it is a closed cycle inserted in a management model, in which policies that regulate teachers' work, curriculum and school management are developed. (HYPOLITO, 2010). In this perspective, education aims to outperform educational indexes (to achieve results), considering the evaluations structured by competences and abilities "that must be acquired" in the process of teaching and learning. This relation is visible in section I of Articles 6º to 9º of the program, when it approaches the performance commitment, reaffirming the goals, the indicators, and the implementation to be developed and constructed. Moreover, the procedures for monitoring and assessment of results are mentioned in the proposal, as well as the criteria, objectives, and parameters to be applied, by means of quality and productivity indicators.

On the origins of policies like this one, it is worth to mention that, in the decade of 1990, one could already perceive a scenario of favoring the neoliberal, neoconservative and globalized thinking, thus strengthening competitiveness generated by many policies developed in the social and educational context, over all due to the responsibilities given from the State to society, by means of the attribution of a false autonomy. That is, in scenarios as this one, human beings start to get blamed for their success or failure, having as parameter their own abilities.

In accord with such perspective, Thomas F. Gilbert<sup>1</sup> (1978 *apud* FREITAS, 2012), disciple of Skinner, approaches the concepts of "behavior" and "results of behavior", or "performance". The author claims that, to obtain "results with value", it is necessary to strengthen, that is, to reward performance, results, and not the behavior itself. (GILBERT<sup>2</sup>, 1978, p. 17 *apud* FREITAS, 2012, p. 382). Gilbert still

<sup>1</sup> GILBERT, Thomas F. Human competence: engineering worthy performance. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> GILBERT, Thomas F. Human competence: engineering worthy performance. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978.

places behavior in final position when it comes to comparison related to results; according to him, competent people are those that show worthy results.

As previously approached, in the current educational context, the actions related to corporate management of formal education are visible, and the narrow relation between this scenario and what is stipulated in curriculums is evident, hence there is a proposal of convergence between educational policies and “modernization”. In this regard, it is worth to mention the universal context that was established by the Declaration of Jomtien, which impacted on Brazil through the implementation of the Decennial Plan of 1993-2003 and the LDB 9.394/96, guiding public schools through the PCNs (intentionally elaborated, in accord with the Constitution of 1988), thus leading management and the process of teaching and learning in classroom. On this reality, we could mention what Saviani (2007) defines as a systematized “structural policy”. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures to promote the appreciation of human education and quality of education in many aspects.

Currently, public institutions of education and teachers are pressured into getting results that raise education indexes, due to actions related to neoliberal micro-policies that take off the responsibility of the State and place them on individuals, whom, many times, end up reproducing these micro-policies from actions taken in educational institutions. In this regard, it is visible that this participation aims at the flexibility of the educational process, from an organization built through the centralizer, bureaucratic manufactory model. This occurs by means of structural and administrative reorganizations established by entrepreneurs, who take the front of educational management and create mechanisms that are supposedly democratic and seen as solid bases for public systems of education. The market, thus, is developed, which directly reflects on the physical and human dimensions (BALL, 2013). On the advances of neoliberal (post-liberal) policies in the educational field, the author makes the following statement when relating the State with the private sector in the last fifteen years: “we are watching an enormous expansion of the participation of the private sector

in public education and this is part, in great measure, of what I call a post-neoliberal phase” (BALL, 2012, p. 460).

From this point of view, in Brazil, a country still in development, it is perceivable that, through public policies, the market logic in education is developed, due to interests of the government, which, when thinking about education of individuals in this perspective, ends up valuing human capital as an investment for the economic growth of the country. According to Klaus (2016), the theory of the human capital, “studied widely since the decade of 70, makes possible other ways of understanding capital, work and education, as well as expenses, so education comes to be seen as investment” (KLAUS, 2016, p. 45).

In this scenario, faced with new educational policies, the adjectives “democratic and independent” are used as a way of not contradicting the principles of equality and quality, so that the stipulated quantitative goals are reached. We refer to entrepreneurism, which, in this context, proposes an education built for the job market, thus forgetting the sense of cultural, human education – an education for social individuals. According to Ball (2010), when relating educational policies to the critical curricular theory, it is possible to see the results of neoliberal actions from the documents built in a market reality, considering the forms of dominant knowledge.

In this context, the public sector starts to be operated as a corporation, and the private sector becomes a role model for education. (BALL, 2010). This scenario directly determines what is really important for students and for society, considering that these political aspects built in an educational context design the kinds of educational practices that are related to teaching and learning process. Klaus (2016) presents, citing Veiga-Neto, a brief synthesis concerning these aspects:

What happens is an implementation of techniques and knowledge forms, competences, expertise, which are manipulable by "experts" and are useful for the expansion of more advanced forms of capitalism and for the State government. Such implementation implies the displacement and the underutilization of government techniques that aim to arrange for the State to follow the corporate logic, because it transforms the State in a big company that is much more

economic-fast, easy, productive, lucrative. (VEIGA-NETO<sup>3</sup>, 2000, p. 198 *apud* KLAUS, 2016).

Therefore, the relation between education and market modifies all the socioeconomical action, affecting the routes that the educational context can take. This phenomenon becomes, thus, the powerful education: it “seems to be able to do everything, although it does so little, that is, it will be very powerful, but it will have a limited power in terms of scope” (LIMA, 2012, p. 15). In this regard, strategies are designed to regulate education when it is “democratically” developed, taking into consideration the current reality and focusing on the logic of management and governance. In this context, priorities are not related to knowledge creation, but to the development of human resources, considering innovation and entrepreneurship in the politically designed agendas, in accord with economic interests.

## **2. The proposal of implementation and structuring of the Future-se program in Brazil: a diagnostic approach**

The Future-se was launched as a mere proposal, although it presented elements of significant impact that change the directions of management and intervene in the autonomy of federal educational institutions in Brazil. At no point, we found any evidences of the government's intentions regarding a dialogue between the Ministry of Education (MEC) and educational entities (ANDIFES, CONIF, SBPC, UNE, IFES, IES, CONFIES, ANDES, FASUBRA), which discuss higher education policies in Brazil. That is, the proposal was created by the “Federal Government” and launched without collectively discussing it with the ones that in fact know the reality of federal institutions and could contribute, in a legitimate way, for the decisions that should be taken by democratic and collective means, so that democracy would not be centered in those in power, developing processes of decentralization of management, in a collective

<sup>3</sup> VEIGA-NETO, Alfredo. Educação e governamentalidade neoliberal: novos dispositivos, novas subjetividades. *In*: PORTOCARRERO, Vera; CASTELO BRANCO, Guilherme (org.). **Retratos de Foucault**. Rio de Janeiro: NAU, 2000. p. 179-217.

direction, out of the sector of verticalized hierarchy. However, visibly, democratic articulations, which constitute a political condition built in social relations, did not happen in this case, because it does not make any sense when it seems “[...] that everything that is essential and substantive is previously determined” (DI GIORGI, 2004, p. 120).

In this approach, it is possible to mention what Foucault (2004) calls power relations in a sense of governmentality, when he considered the State as an object to be analyzed in contemporaneity and, significantly, established the results concerning the rationalization of political power, clarifying that:

Every time, government tactics allow to define what is of competence of the State and what remains outside of it, what is public and what is private, what is static and what is non-static. Thus [...], it is only possible to understand the survival and the limits of the State considering the general tactics of governmentality (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 112).

In this conceptual approach, the analytical of the power, according to Foucault, also includes the role of the State acting in other ways, aiming to reach objectives that are related not only to the market interests, but also to the different forms to ideologically govern – an aspect that impacts on issues related to social problems. Thus, there are possibilities of depreciation of power and reduction of the State's responsibility on education-related rights, considering that the economical sphere itself uses this argument for appropriation of the State by means of privatizations, giving way to the capitalist market through innovation and technology, and leaving aside citizenship, which must be common to all by means of education. Therefore, when considering innovation and technology in a perspective of results and economic goals, it is possible to mention that research in universities can, in this scenario, assume a corporate and managerial position – a dimension related to innovating and advancing technologically –, leaving aside studies that include social inequalities, as well as "cultural subjects, basic sciences, logical and epistemological problems of knowledge, socio-environmental issues and the voices of indigenous people” (LEHER, 2019, p. 4).

On this aspect, we mention the economic crisis in Europe, according to Goergen (2013). In this regard, the use of public resources in a context of neoliberal capitalism, alongside its contingencies and requirements, placed higher education in a new logic of adaptation with market requirements, thus "It is at stake the relation between the State as an institution responsible for democracy and social justice, and education as a right of all and as an unavoidable condition of citizenship and democracy" (GOERGEN, 2013, p. 739).

From this point of view, on July 2019, the Future-se program was presented for the first time, from a proposal that already made clear the changes related to economic and financial sources, making possible the hiring of social agencies to execute activities in federal universities and institutions in Brazil. Three months later, the document was reformulated and presented, on October 16, with an "alteration" of the proposal; however, the new version included the same concepts that, although rewritten, enhanced the same expectations and objectives of the program. In this regard, we approach the dimensions of the proposal in the table below.

Dimensions	Initial version	Current version
<b>Axles of the Program</b>	Governance, Management and Entrepreneurism; Research and Innovation; Internationalization.	Research, Technological Development and Innovation; Entrepreneurship; Internationalization.
<b>Contracts and agreements</b>	Social organizations (OS); Possibilities to create: Societies with Specific Purposes (SSP); Startups.	Sponsoring foundations as an alternative to Social Organizations; Societies with Specific Purposes (SSP); Startups.
<b>Additional financing sources</b>	"Art. 22. With the objective of stimulating the increase of federal educational institutions' autonomy, regulating the financing of research, extension, development, entrepreneurship and innovation activities, by means of providing new financing sources, the resources related to the project will be converted in a financial Fund, to be selected through a simplified procedure, under the provisions of a regulation".	<b>Endowment Fund:</b> managed by a non-profit private institution, under the association form, which will be chosen by means of a simplified selection procedure, in the terms provided by the Regulation, dispensing bidding procedures established by Law n. 8.666, from 1993, observing the principles of publicity and impartiality" (§1º). <b>Sovereign Fund</b> of Knowledge: §1º "Law n. 8.666, from 1993".

Of the effective laws	17 laws would be modified by MEC.	A movement results in keeping four laws of the 17 ones and adding of two more, thus changing 15 laws for the current version.
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Table 1 - Structural and operational synthesis of the Future-se proposal: initial version and current version. Proper elaboration based on the versions of the Future-se proposal.

The table demonstrates some dimensions that direct the proposal of the program towards a scenario of significant impact in federal educational institutions, regarding their autonomy and other sectors related to education and research. It interests, in such proposal, the submission of these institutions to the financial market from regulation strategies that reduce the participation of the State with regard to the right to education, submitting them to the control of social organizations and foundations, as we mentioned earlier, as well as strengthening the perspective of education as a financial merchandise, aiming at profits and goals and considering knowledge as something substantial, and not as a main objective.

On this analysis, in the first draft, it is possible to mention the submission of federal educational institutions to other entities when adhering to the program, because they would have to be evaluated by a *managing committee* that would be responsible for guideline definitions, performance evaluation and definition of criteria related to rectors' offices. In the current version of the proposal, the "managing committee" is not mentioned anymore; however, this process is not clear yet, and remains the proposal that these contractual dimensions between federal educational institutions and the federal government are intermediated by MEC, as well as collectively defined and, after that, established by means of consultation to each institution. Moreover, the proposal mentions endowment resources, which are the "special benefits" granted to the institutions that adhere to the program, having a:

Legal instrument celebrated between universities or federal institutions and the federal government, through the Ministry of Education, characterized by consensuality, objectivity, responsibility, and transparency, with the purpose of establishing **result indicators** for the contractor, having as counterpart the concession of special benefits (BRASIL, 2019).

In this regard, it is possible to observe a conception related to the “human capital” theory. In the context of a false autonomy, a perspective expressed by positivism is developed, which defends a functionalist structure operating on the social problems, that is, based on the assumption that “education can solve all social ills”. In this sense, actions subsidized by meritocracy arise, managed by “enterprising and innovative” policies that aim at productivity and competitiveness between educational professionals, thus establishing productivist pedagogical conceptions. Therefore, its role is production, an aspect that strongly restricts the dimension of learning in educational process. According to Lima (2012), in this context, each person needs to produce and to stand out, because the goals of subjects or organizations serve as measure for productivity or performance of “qualities”, encouraging moments of promotion or inspection. Hence, such aspects transform, include, and represent the validity, the quality, or the value of an individual or organization in a certain context of judgment/evaluation. (BALL, 2002, p. 04). Moreover, it is important to clarify that, in this reality, when individuals do not reach a certain degree of productivity, they are considered useless. Lima (2012, p. 31) describes, through Bauman (2010), that “in wasted lives now we face the ghost of the uselessness”, as pointed by Sennet (2006). Under this perspective, the dimensions that are materialized by means of performance become dangerous, since, intentionally, in the Future-se proposal, the aim is to substitute goals (results) by financial resources by means of proposals managed by MEC. In view of this approach, when studying the epistemological principle of relational analysis and the examination of the State as a relation, according to Michael Apple (2006), concerning the research field of educational policies, we perceive the importance and the need to gain insight into this scenario presented here, defined by the author as a relational analysis, considering that:

[...] it involves to understand social activity – and education is a particular form of this activity – as something linked to the great group of institutions that distribute resources, so that certain groups and classes have been helped throughout history, whereas others have been treated in a less adequate way. [...] things have

relational meanings, through complex connections and ties, by means of which a society is organized and controlled (APPLE, 2006, p. 44).

Considering the presented context, it is important to develop an epistemological posture before the conducted analyses, so that the multiple conceptual dimensions that surround the program proposal mentioned here are considered. In this regard, it is worth to include its relations and categories, considering not only economical, but also political positions, related to cultural and social knowledge, thus concerning different groups that occupy the Brazilian and academic society – which, until the present moment, are silenced in the proposal presented by the government.

The proposal inserts elements related to certain concepts (Research, Technological Development and Innovation; Entrepreneurship; and Internationalization) operated through marketing senses, which diverge from the cultural and social objectives of educational public institutions, where ideas and values are approached during the educational process. In this perspective, the objective of education is not only professionalization, because it also considers the importance of otherness, through dialogue and appreciation of individuals in relation to others, as well as by respecting differences by means of gaining knowledge – that is, it seeks to construct a democratic education beyond learning (BIESTA, 2013).

### **3. Barriers and possibilities of the Future-se proposal: an analytical perspective**

We initiate this section discussing a current reality in the Brazilian education, mainly perceived in the universities, which concerns to the “attacks” towards public institutions. On this scenario, if we think that education provides to individuals a critical development in democratic spaces, such attacks make sense, due to the position of the current government. As Foucault summarizes<sup>4</sup> (1985 *apud* BIESTA, 2013, p. 8), “There are moments in life when the question

<sup>4</sup> FOUCAULT, Michel. **The use of pleasure**. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

whether we can think differently from what we think, and perceive differently from what we see, is absolutely necessary if we want to continue somehow perceiving and reflecting”. Considering this conceptual approach – and unlike what is currently said by people who do not know history and educational reality in Brazil, much less its nuances –, Theodor Adorno (1995) approaches educational perspectives and social emancipation by means of teaching knowledge, proposing a new perspective that surpasses instrumentalization, social and scientific fragmentation, considering the mechanisms of domination and social alienation. Hence, the attacks happening in this context strengthen the neoliberal scenario that tries to weaken public universities and schools, that is, the intention is “to demoralize” education and these institutions, providing the growth for the private initiative in Brazil – a context in which one could justify the Future-se proposal, giving meaning to its construction process. Neoliberalism, which we relate with the posture of the current Federal Government, has its rationality forged by the economical-financial capitalism, an aspect that can be related to the reflections of Castel<sup>5</sup> (2004 *apud* LOPES, 2018), clarifying that:

The economical-financial capitalism, which strongly constitutes the current neoliberal rationality, breaching physical and geographic barriers in search of more income-producing enterprises, does not benefit everyone. This means that it keeps producing exclusions, which are increasingly more acute, among other reasons, due to the possibility of access of all technologies and benefits that they can bring to the increasing number of people that are unaffiliated and excluded from the productive-economical world (CASTEL<sup>6</sup>, 2004 *apud* LOPES, 2018, p. 145).

The author approaches this concept concerning technologies, however in relation with higher education and the future of humanity in the 21st century (LOPES, 2018). Thus, we think that it makes sense to relate the Future-se program with concepts that have an impact beyond the document and the context

<sup>5</sup> CASTEL, Robert. As armadilhas da exclusão. In: WANDERLEY, Mariangela Belfiore; BOGUS, Lucia; YAZBEK, Maria Carmelita (org.). **Desigualdade e a questão social**. 2. ed. São Paulo: EDUC, 2004. p. 17-50.

<sup>6</sup> CASTEL, Robert. As armadilhas da exclusão. In: WANDERLEY, Mariangela Belfiore; BOGUS, Lucia; YAZBEK, Maria Carmelita (org.). **Desigualdade e a questão social**. 2. ed. São Paulo: EDUC, 2004. p. 17-50.

we approach here, due to the fact that the ideas of the current government are consolidated as liberal and conservative, affecting not only educational institutions, since “students are not the only ones affected by the market logic: mercantilism discredits all discourse related to disinterested values of culture, to virtues and human dignity, to equality of all before cultural inheritance” (LAVAL, 2004, p. 303). In this perspective, we describe important statements/notes of extreme relevance for the moment, since they approach knowledge originating from critical analyses of research professionals, who experience the reality of public universities and understand the real meaning of this type of policy that the government is trying to implement through the Future-se program.

**Personal reading of rector João Carlos Salles on the reasons that led the UFBA University Council to reject the Future-se proposal**

The University Council of the Federal University of Bahia-CONSUNI, in an extraordinary meeting held in October 29, unanimously rejected the Enterprising and Innovative Universities and Institutes Program - Future-se. Public universities are not companies. In these institutions, therefore, enterprising actions cannot conduct their procedures through principles that are foreign to their public nature or to their institutional project. Therefore, there is a real semantic dispute on the notion of entrepreneurship, which the Program, due to an unfamiliarity with it, ignores or perhaps despises:

“[...] the most consistent understanding of entrepreneurship takes place in actions of social, cultural transformations. Entrepreneurship means to innovate, to create, to search for improvements when modifying society. The document reduces the term to a financial aspect. Capitals are also cultural and incorporeal and not only economical. Universities are not companies, entrepreneurship means also opening up for knowledge arising from undervalued communities, which, from a hegemonic perspective, had been excluded from the university context. [...] The concept of entrepreneurship, the most frequent term in the document, does not address education as a public and free good, categorizing it as a marketable merchandise” (Salles, 2019 p. 7).

Source: [https://ufba.br/ufba\\_em\\_pauta/por-que-o-conselho-universitario-rejeitou-o-future-se](https://ufba.br/ufba_em_pauta/por-que-o-conselho-universitario-rejeitou-o-future-se). Accessed: Nov 11, 2019. Documents produced by UFBA units and councils mentioned in this text are available at the university website ([www.ufba.br](http://www.ufba.br)).

Interview granted by *Graça Druck*, Professor at the UFBA Philosophy and Human Sciences Department and researcher at the Center of Studies and Research in Humanities to the Brasil de Fato news website.

“The Future-se program comes with a proposal to seek funds outside the State budget. How? Resigning to the autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution, since universities would have to be subordinated to private interests, externalizing their management by means of the creation of social organizations and foundations, and securitizing the commonwealth of these universities”. “The universities' autonomy is at risk with this government, beyond the Future-se proposal”. “There are other related measures, such as the extinguishing of some gratified functions in the universities, without any dialogue with the rectors; the determination that the choice of direction positions, as pro-rectors, for example, ceases to be prerogative of the rectors and starts to be made by the Ministry of Education and the Civil House; the disrespect to the elections of rectors of federal universities and institutions, chosen by the community and countersigned by superior councils, indicating the last name of the list or external intervenors (as it is the case of Federal University of Fronteira Sul, Federal University of Ceará, Federal University of Vales do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri, Federal University of Recôncavo da Bahia, Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro, Federal University of Grande Dourados and Cefet in Rio de Janeiro)” *Graça Druck*.

Source: <https://www.diariodocentrodomundo.com.br/dossie-detalha-propostas-do-future-se-e-preve-destruicao-do-ensino-superior-por-lu-sodre/>. Accessed: Nov. 23, 2019.

#### **Other constitutional principles affected**

In the draft of the bill, the estimates of hiring social organizations through a simplified process cause concern, as well as the hiring of financial and investment funds through the same procedure – in addition to cogitate the possibility of hiring, without a public selection procedure, professors who will perform federal institutions' end-activities.

The current systematics of public selection procedures to work in these institutions and of biddings for acquisition of products or services by public entities aims to assure constitutional principles of significant relevance, such as isonomy, morality, impersonality, and publicity (which encloses the transparency principle), foreseen in art. 37, *caput* of the Federal Constitution. In a system that simply gives up such mechanisms, there is no guaranteeing that the public goods will be managed and that the resources will be used in accordance with such principles. Possible favoritisms and personal persecutions become possible, which is incompatible with the parameters constitutionally adopted by the Public Administration. The concern with the disrespect to the displayed principles remains strengthened when one considers the aforementioned possibility of transferring property and public resources to private organizations. On the subject, it is worth to remember that, currently, Support Foundations that are acquainted with the academic environment and give support to the activities of research and extension have worked with federal institutions. However, apparently, they would be the ones substituted by private organizations through a selection criteria that is not clear, which strengthens the questionings concerning the observance of the impersonality principle – and even of the efficiency one – and impact on the public interest as a maximum guideline to conduct the performance of the Public Administration. (**Technical Note WAA/SM n. 10/2019** – Wagner Associate Lawyers). Source: <http://www.sedufsm.org.br/docs/noticia/2019/08/D06-336.pdf>. Accessed: Sept. 04, 2019.

***There are more questions than answers about the Future-se educational program***

When adhering to Future-se, federal institutions would have to fulfill a set of requirements, among them, to adopt a program of internal control and external auditing. But federal universities and institutions already have mechanisms of internal control and are submitted to external auditing conducted by federal agencies. Why would they have to be controlled and audited by one more agency, which would be, in theory, also a federal one? Federal institutions already undertake projects and form partnerships related to their activities through the Support Foundations. The relation between the Ministry of Education (MEC) and federal institutions is direct. Why create and contract intermediate entities? Which are the Social Organizations with a consolidated management history in Brazil, in the academic, scientific and educational areas? How would these Social Organizations be formed, and which would be the criteria for their approval by the Ministry of Education?

- The "Future" program proposes transferring budgetary resources for the Social Organizations, as well as allows the use of public goods by them. Why don't they increase the autonomy of federal institutions?

On the "Federal Institutions' Financial Autonomy". Why don't they authorize federal institutions to create funds with these revenues, managed by their Support Foundations, for example?

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Source: [https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/08/12/politica/1565582768\\_087228.html](https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/08/12/politica/1565582768_087228.html).

Accessed: Aug. 23, 2019.

Table 2 - Some critical and analytical aspects concerning the Future-se proposal.  
Own elaboration.

Table 2 brings some critical and analytical points concerning the Future-se proposal that must be considered, due to the fact that, given the above, there are unconstitutionality in the proposal, such as the one that violates universities' autonomy, which is explicit in the Federal Constitution of 1988, article 206 and 207: "The universities have didactic-scientific, administrative, financial, and patrimonial autonomy, and will obey the principle of inseparability between education, research and extension"; § 1º: "It is authorized to universities to hire foreign professors, technicians and scientists, in the form of the law"; and § 2º: "This article applies to institutions of scientific and technological research". Thus, the Future-se proposal also presents concepts that deserve attention, for including elements that confront federal universities and institutes, as well as threaten the freedom of public education.

In this regard, well-based discussions become indispensable, and they have been prompted collectively by institutions involved in this matter, which

assert democracy by means of critical analyses inside and outside universities. Such democratic actions were not developed throughout the elaboration of the Future-se proposal, in which some key concepts (Research, Technological Development and Innovation; Entrepreneurship; and Internationalization) guide the program actions and, thus, intervene in the autonomy of federal institutions, by means of management decentralization; focus on financial resources; and fragmentation of human and professional education, from the regulation of freedom in the education process.

### **Final remarks**

In this article, we aimed to prompt a relevant discussion on **concepts** that operate in the proposal of the Future-se program for higher education in Brazil, through a brief and relevant academic construction that allowed us to analyze three dimensions: the relation between educational policies and neoliberalism, considering the connection between private and public in education; the proposal of implementation and structuring of the Future-se program in Brazil, through a comparative approach; and the impediments and possibilities of this program, based on an analytical vision of the presented concepts.

In general terms, we consider that public policies must be constructed in a democratic perspective, considering the participation of everyone involved in the decisions to be taken, as well as the meanings concerning the concepts that operate on these proposals. In this regard, the Future-se proposal is tied with a neoliberal policy that violates the autonomy of federal institutions and submits them to the market logic, from a conservative perspective, in which the relation between private and public prevails, thus strengthening the entrepreneurism of education in Brazil and drawing back the State from its performance related to ensuring the right to public education. In this context, the logic of the human capital and of the accountability for goals and results of everyone involved is prevalent.

In addition, we conclude that, despite the Future-se program, even without a reasoned, clear, and coherent proposal, it brings in its axles remarkably similar concepts. In the first version, the axles are: Governance, Management and Entrepreneurism; Research and Innovation; and Internationalization. In the second version, the following ones are listed: Research, Technological Development and Innovation; Entrepreneurship; and Internationalization. In this regard, the concepts operate under an economical market logic, with a perspective of regulation of the structures of federal institutions in all segments. In other words, in both proposals, the meanings are the same.

Moreover, the proposal modifies the characteristics of universities as spaces of knowledge and development of democratic actions, managed with responsibility and commitment with society, through research in different areas of knowledge, valuing theory and practice in the educational process. On the other hand, the Future-se program defends the valuation of a performance that generates the process of management and education, so that such institutions function as specific companies, with actions that aim only at goals and profits. This position generates consequences for the institutions – for the ones that adhere to the program and for the ones that do not adhere to the proposal –, therefore the unconstitutionality Future-se attacks the educational autonomy and freedom of all federal institutions. Such proposal demands, thus, monitoring, debates, and deliberations by everyone involved in the process and by the society as a whole, in order to discuss the kind of policy that one finds in the center of initiatives such as this one.

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