

## The new high school model and curricular flexibilization: The contours of the formative pathways in the state of São Paulo

*O novo ensino médio e a flexibilização curricular:  
os contornos dos itinerários formativos no estado de São Paulo*

*El nuevo modelo de educación media y la flexibilización curricular:  
Los contornos de los itinerarios formativos en el estado de São Paulo*

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**Abstract:** The present study analyzed the new high school system and curricular flexibility, particularly the contours taken by the Educational Tracks (Itinerários Formativos) in the state education network in São Paulo, considering the context of the reconfiguration of the Brazilian state under the imperatives of global capitalism. For this purpose, in addition to a literature review on the topic, a documentary analysis was carried out on the organization of high school education in the São Paulo state network. It is concluded that the new high school system and curricular flexibility adapted the São Paulo educational system to market demands, and the educational tracks, with the supposed freedom of choice for students, led to the hollowing out of the public education curriculum, favoring wealthier classes.

**Keywords:** New High School; Neoliberalism; School Education; Curriculum; Brazilian Education Reform.

**Resumo:** O presente estudo analisou o novo ensino médio e a flexibilização curricular, em especial, os contornos assumidos pelos Itinerários Formativos na rede estadual de ensino no estado de São Paulo, tendo em vista, um contexto de reconfiguração do Estado brasileiro sob os imperativos do capitalismo global. Para tal intento, além da revisão de literatura sobre a temática em questão, foi realizada uma análise documental sobre a organização do ensino médio na rede estadual paulista. Conclui-se que, o novo ensino médio e a flexibilização curricular, adaptaram a educação escolar paulista às demandas do mercado, e os itinerários formativos, com a suposta liberdade de escolha

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pelos estudantes, promoveu o esvaziamento do currículo da educação pública privilegiando as classes mais abastadas.

**Palavras-chave:** Novo Ensino Médio; Neoliberalismo; Educação Escolar; Currículo; Reforma da Educação Brasileira.

**Resumen:** El presente estudio analizó la nueva educación secundaria y la flexibilización curricular, en particular, los contornos asumidos por los Itinerarios Formativos en la red estatal de enseñanza en el estado de São Paulo, teniendo en cuenta el contexto de reconfiguración del Estado brasileño bajo los imperativos del capitalismo global. Para tal fin, además de la revisión de literatura sobre la temática en cuestión, se realizó un análisis documental sobre la organización de la educación secundaria en la red estatal paulista. Se concluye que la nueva educación secundaria y la flexibilización curricular adaptaron la educación escolar paulista a las demandas del mercado, y los itinerarios formativos, con la supuesta libertad de elección por parte de los estudiantes, promovieron el vaciamiento del currículo de la educación pública, favoreciendo a las clases más acomodadas.

**Palabras clave:** Nueva Educación Media; Neoliberalismo; Educación Escolar; Currículo; Reforma de la Educación Brasileña.

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**Recebido em:** 16 de dezembro de 2024

**Aceito em:** 09 de abril de 2025

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## Introduction

The reforms of the Brazilian education, since the 1990s, have had direct implications for teaching and the training processes of individuals in the schooling phase, resulting from the context of (re)configurations of the State. This movement was established in the 1970s, with the consolidation of the global crisis of capitalism, through the exhaustion of the Fordist model of production and the Welfare State. To overcome the crisis, the capital implemented, on one hand, the process of productive restructuring and, on the other, the reform of the State.

Since then, in order to justify such reforms in order to meet market demands, under the auspices of international organizations, since the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, the need for educational reforms focused on the so-called new skills of the world of work began to be proclaimed. That is, reforms aimed at training the workforce necessary for the consolidation of a globalized economy. In this context, the discourse on the requirement of basic education to face changes in the organization of the world of work resulting from productive restructuring was strengthened. The reduction of social inequality and poverty would depend on the learning promoted by schools, “education can be a driver of economic progress and the chance for people to transform and improve their lives” (Word Bank, 2010).

In Brazil, we are witnessing a new institutionalization of the Brazilian educational system, especially after the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN – Law No. 9,394/96) and the developments of its regulation that are implemented through complementary laws, provisional measures, decrees, opinions, ordinances and resolutions, as is the case of the Reform of Brazilian High School, which was already planned by former president Dilma Rousseff, since the 2014 election campaign. However, the reform proposal was not put into practice during her term and, in 2016, she refused to sign it because she did not agree with the changes made to the initial proposal. With the rise of Michel Temer to the presidency of the republic, through a parliamentary and media coup, the new text was quickly presented through the provisional measure – MP 746/2016 – and regulated during his government, by Law No. 13,415, February 16, 2017<sup>4</sup>, changing the workload of high school and promoting curricular changes.

Regarding the organization of the curriculum, flexibility became central, with a first part common to all students, and a second part, shaped by article 4, which changed article 36 of the LDBEN: “the high school curriculum will be composed of the National Common Curricular Base and Training Itineraries, divided into five major areas (I - languages and their technologies; II - mathematics and their technologies; III - natural sciences and their technologies; - applied human and social sciences; V - technical and professional training) (Brazil, 2017).

Since 2017, with the implementation of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) in the national territory, states and municipalities have begun the race to restructure their curricular proposals. The BNCC, which guides and is guided by the context of the High School Reform, represents a curricular restructuring aligned with the new demands of the capitalist market. However, its implementation reflects a political and economic polarization, highlighted by the curricular flexibility through the Educational Tracks.

The New High School, in particular the educational tracks are already a reality in Brazil and, above all, in the state education system of the state of São Paulo. Implementation began in 2019 with the Inova Educação Program and, throughout 2022, educational tracks have already become present in the lives of students and teachers in state schools in São Paulo.

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that on July 31, the President of the Republic, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, sanctioned Law No. 14,945/2024, which establishes the National High School Policy. The law, which will come into effect in 2025, amends Law No. 9,394/1996, on Guidelines and Bases for National Education, and partially repeals Law No. 13,415/2017, which provides for the reform of High School education. Therefore, the analyses carried out in this study refer to Law No. 13,415/2017.

In view of the above, this study<sup>5</sup> analyzed the new high school and curricular flexibilization, in particular, the contours assumed by Educational Tracks in the state education system in the state of São Paulo, in view of a context of reconfiguration of the Brazilian State under the imperatives of capital. To this end, in addition to the literature review on the subject in question, a documentary analysis was carried out on the organization of high school in the state of São Paulo, the results of which will be presented in the following sections.

### **Curricular flexibility and school adaptation to market demands**

The adaptation of Brazilian High School education to the technical and ideological needs of capital, in accordance with neoliberal precepts, points to a scenario of changes in the organization of the world of work, resulting from productive restructuring, creating and disseminating a new common sense (Gentili, 1996), according to which the new work processes require workers to have a more complex level of knowledge than in previous standards, hence the need to invest in the basis of their qualification both within the productive systems and within the school system.

The latter attracts more attention, since it is based on the premise that, given the current complexities caused by the advance of productive restructuring<sup>6</sup>, the content of the qualification requires long-term training of the subject, developing different cognitive skills such as the capacity for abstraction, logical reasoning, etc. In addition to various behavioral skills, such as self-control, resilience, self-discipline, leadership profile, and others. It is therefore believed that such skills or requirements are only formed in the long term through a broad training process, and that they are learned, above all, through the school institution. According to Kuenzer (2016, p.3),

<sup>5</sup> The proposed analysis corresponds to a part of the reflections of the work plan presented to the Postdoctoral Researcher Program (PPPD) of Unicamp, at the Faculty of Education, seeking professional improvement and in-depth studies and research in the line of State, Public Policies and Education, under the guidance and supervision of Prof. PhD. Debora Cristina Jeffrey, leader of the Study and Research Group on Educational Policy and Assessment - GEPALE.

<sup>6</sup> Productive restructuring consists of a complex process of changes in the configuration of productive systems, with repercussions on the functioning of labor markets, which has been occurring in recent decades in the context of the current crisis of capitalism (known as the crisis of Fordism) triggered in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Such changes aim to overcome the limitations and deficiencies presented in the recent period by the form of organization of production that was dominant until the 1960s/70s – the Taylorist/Fordist model (also known as the mass production system), based on the division and specialization of labor and the production of standardized products in large volumes – enabling the resumption of sustainable economic growth, which was interrupted by the crisis. Productive restructuring causes significant changes both in the occupational structure and in the requirements regarding labor qualifications, which determines the need for changes in the orientation of public and business policies for professional education and training of human resources (Ferreira, 2000, p.283-284).

Thus, the discourse of flexible accumulation on education points to the need to train flexible professionals, who can keep up with the technological changes resulting from the dynamism of contemporary scientific and technological production, instead of rigid professionals, who repeat memorized procedures or recreated through experience. For this flexible training to be possible, it is necessary to replace specialized training acquired in vocational courses focused on part-time jobs and generally of short duration, supplemented by on-the-job training, with general training acquired through extended schooling, covering at least basic education, to be made available to all workers. Based on this solid general training, professional training will be provided, of a more comprehensive rather than specialized nature, to be supplemented throughout work practices.

It is worth noting, therefore, that the requirement for basic education, proclaimed since the 1990s, is present in the proposals of different social segments, such as international, governmental, business and union organizations, as a guarantee of the development of these skills, also anchored in the perspective of schooling as a passport for developing countries to enter the global economy. In this sense, such sectors demonstrate, through their proposals, their concern with raising the level of education as a way of training the workforce for the changes in the globalized economy.

It is in this sense that we place the High School Reform as an educational policy, formulated and implemented, for the purpose of promoting curricular changes, to meet the new production models that are decisive in the process of training flexible professionals. According to Antunes and Pinto (2017, p. 100), “the education currently required by capital must be “agile”, “flexible” and “lean”, like the companies managed by the Toyotist system”. They also highlight that

This is the framework that the so-called “education reforms” bring embedded in their conception: a school (and a flexible “education”) to meet business demands and imperatives; a volatile, superficial and trained form to meet the needs of the “versatile”, “multifunctional” and flexible job market. It is not difficult to see that the instrumental “education” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, designed by capital in its most destructive phase, will not be able to develop a humanistic and critical sense, which should singularize the human sciences; on the contrary, it may conceive them as a copy of the exact sciences, as a residual extension that is perhaps unnecessary (Antunes; Pinto, 2017, p. 104).

And this so-called flexible education has its foundations coming from the Japanese production model, Toyotism, which signals a new form of organization of the production and work process in companies, which impacts and imposes a new school and educational model, implemented through educational reforms, not only in peripheral capitalist countries,

but also in central capitalist countries, as demonstrated by Ravieth (2011), when describing why the business model was not an appropriate way to improve the quality of education offered by schools in the North American school system.

According to Antunes (2009), some forms and types of flexibilization can be highlighted: work hours, salary, organizational, position, intensity of dedication, etc. Flexibilization can be understood as:

Freedom for the company to lay off workers; without penalties when production and sales decrease; freedom, always for the company, to reduce working hours or to resort to more working hours; possibility of paying real wages lower than what labor parity requires; possibility of subdividing the working day into days and weeks according to the convenience of the companies, changing the hours and characteristics of the work (by shift, by scale, part-time, flexible hours, etc.), among many other forms of precariousness of the workforce (Antunes, 2009, p. 50-51).

And within the concept of flexibilization of the world of work<sup>7</sup>, we can observe the adoption of flexible and versatile forms in the organization and production process, to quickly meet market demands, strongly characterized by an imposition that workers accept lower wages, worse working conditions, extended working hours, and the reduction and redefinition of labor rights.

We can observe that, both in the business world and in the educational world, flexibility has become a guiding perspective for business and educational reforms, as we can see in the reform of High School, through MP 746/2016 and, later, enacted through Law No. 13,415/2017, and the Labor Reform, Law No. 13,467/2017, which brought setbacks to the Brazilian population, revoking rights guaranteed by the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), profoundly altering labor relations. The two reforms were conceived in a turbulent political context, with the increasingly demarcated presence of neoliberal discourse and the weakening of Brazilian democracy.

In the context of Brazilian education systems, the established market logic is also reproduced under the premises of Toyotism and its flexible organization, which, as pointed out by Antunes and Pinto (2017, p.99-100), education is now guided by the logic of “multifunctional despecialization”. According to the same authors, educational institutions

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<sup>7</sup> Given the crisis scenario of developed capitalist societies, which emerged at the end of the 1970s and in the context of their restructuring, the notion of flexibility has gained prominence in the contemporary debate on the characteristics of the labor market in modern societies. This notion, associated with the greater or lesser capacity of the labor market to reach a position of equilibrium, defined by full employment following an exogenous shock, is related to the principle of the need to adapt employment, the use of the labor force and salary levels to the needs of the world of production in an increasingly competitive and globalized economy (Zauli, 2000, p. 339-340).



“[...] have sought to adapt their curricula to a context in which workers must be more flexible, “versatile”, when operating increasingly advanced equipment, with an emphasis on digital and information technologies”.

Still on flexibility, Kuenzer (2017) points out that the central idea of the curricular organization proposed by the High School reform is presented in the concept of flexible learning, based on the flexible accumulation regime that leads to the emptying of the pedagogical discourse and the reaffirmation of a new pedagogical proposal that defends the flexibility of educational processes.

In this sense, the concept of flexible learning provides the reasons that justify curricular flexibility in high school: criticism of the single model for students with different trajectories and interests, content-based learning, disciplinarization, teacher-centricity, and little or no protagonism of the student. The counterpoint would be a more flexible curricular organization, based on research and dialogue, based on the appreciation of the student as a critical subject, and not as a receiver of content, made possible by the collaborative and supportive construction of knowledge. Thus, flexible learning implies a curricular organization that, as proposed by Law No. 13,415/2017, respects the experiential dimension of each student in the process of knowledge construction, allowing choices (Kuenzer, 2017, p. 337).

In this scenario, the discourse of flexibility and the widespread “freedom of choice for students”, one of the key points in the Federal Government’s propaganda, have been presented as fallacies, since the choice is restricted to the educational paths available in schools, which cannot encompass the multiplicity of educational networks. For some, changing schools to follow the desired path is an alternative, but it is not viable for many, especially in municipalities that have only one public High School.

However, in some states the interest of capital is evident, since there was talk of reducing the number of subjects in the High School curriculum, but with the educational tracks, subjects were created under the supervision of civil society foundations and private institutions and, in many cases, there is no regulation or supervision of these public-private partnerships. At the same time, subjects that intersect scientific, cultural and artistic fields were removed from the curriculum, in a neoliberal and short-term logic of valuing technical knowledge for the training of a workforce that must meet market demands in a short space of time, thus reducing access to scientific and humanistic subjects for young people studying in different Brazilian public schools.

In this sense, Kuenzer (2000) refutes studies by the World Bank that recommend that underdeveloped countries reduce spending on training the masses at higher levels of education,

but that they provide them with basic education and, if appropriate, some training for work. This premise reminds us of what John Locke (1632-1704) cited by Garcia (2012, p. 369) wrote in the 17th century, when he was developing his educational proposal for the emerging bourgeoisie:

No one is obliged to know everything. The study of sciences in general is a matter for those who live well and have free time. Those who have private jobs must understand their functions and it is not unreasonable to require them to think and reason only about what concerns their daily occupation (author's translation, note 2, p. 376).

Therefore, the dominant thinking about education has taken on new guises, but in essence, it has remained the same. It is worth remembering that the High School Reform was conceived amid the approval of PEC 241, which limits public spending and generated opposing positions, since it had a direct impact on education and became the most controversial point of the debate, since its implementation required new investments, such as building schools, more teachers, more technological resources, laboratories, etc. However, with PEC 241, this reality was impossible, since there would be no way for schools to adapt to the measures imposed by the law, if another one already existed, which prevented public spending.

PEC 241 establishes a limit on expenses for up to 20 years: it will be the expenditure made in the previous year corrected for inflation, and may be revised after the first 10 years. In practice, in real terms - in comparison with what money can buy at a given moment - it is practically frozen. Therefore, the reform of secondary education cannot generate expenses, due to PEC 241; therefore, there is an incoherence, because if there is a change in the curriculum, this affects municipal, state and federal budgets, which in turn come up against the public spending ceiling, creating a cycle.

In addition, the Reform intends to implement full-time education, a situation that is also precarious, because PEC 241 does not open the possibility of investments or conditions for access and retention of students, removing students who need to work from full-time schools, in addition to impacting Youth and Adult Education, because, in many schools, night-time classes have been closed. Regarding full-time education, Ferreti says that

regarding the establishment of full-time schools, the proposal is cautious. It is based on the National Education Plan (PNE), making use of its recommendation, through goal 6, according to which, by 2024, *full-time education should be offered in at least 50% (fifty percent) of public schools, in order to serve at least 25% (twenty-five percent) of basic education students*. The PNE, in turn, indicates that full-time schools are not defined only by the length of the day, but also by the creation of objective conditions so that such



extension actually results in better education, with which we fully agree (Ferreti, 2018, p. 28, author's emphasis).

However, there are real problems with this issue, which refer to the (non)existent conditions in Brazilian public education systems, both in terms of working conditions and teaching careers, as well as school infrastructure, in addition to the provision of adequate school meals. Thus, although extending the school day is interesting, in accordance with the PNE recommendation, there are no means for this goal to be implemented with quality and still guarantee decent working conditions for teachers.

### **Educational Tracks in the State of São Paulo and Curricular Flexibility**

The implementation of the High School Reform in the State of São Paulo began in 2019<sup>8</sup> with the Inova Educação Program (INOVA)<sup>9</sup>, with the implementation of three curricular components: Life Project, Electives and Innovation Technology. In 2022, the educational tracks were already present in the lives of students and teachers in São Paulo state schools. According to the Ministry of Education (MEC) portal, the educational tracks are the set of subjects, projects, workshops, study centers, among other work situations, that students can choose in secondary education.

The educational tracks can deepen the knowledge of an area of knowledge (Mathematics and its Technologies, Languages and its Technologies, Natural Sciences and its Technologies and Applied Human and Social Sciences) and technical and professional training (FTP) or even the knowledge of two or more areas and FTP. The education networks will have autonomy to define which educational tracks they will offer, considering a process that involves the participation of the entire school community<sup>10</sup>.

In the definition provided by the MEC itself, during the implementation phase of the reform, the principle of flexibility in the way Brazilian states should define and choose the educational tracks to be established in their education networks and public high schools is

<sup>8</sup> The predominant governments during the period of implementation of the High School Reform in the State of São Paulo were the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), namely: Geraldo Alckmin (PSDB) from 2011 to 2018; Márcio França (PSB) from 2018 to 2019; João Dória (PSDB) from 2019 to 2022; Rodrigo Garcia (PSDB) from 2022 to 2023; and currently, Tarcísio Freitas (Republicanos).

<sup>9</sup> In 2021, when Consed, CNE, state secretariats and corporate educational foundations/institutes were still considering how to 'put the life project at the center' of the reform in the states, the Inova Educação Program was already fully operational in the state network of São Paulo. The pilot project was carried out in 2019, the result of a cooperation agreement between the São Paulo State Department of Education – Seduc-SP and the Ayrton Senna Institute, with the participation of the Volkswagen Foundation (Cássio; Goulart, 2022, p. 514).

<sup>10</sup> Novo Ensino Médio – perguntas e respostas – Ministério da Educação, 2024. Available at: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/publicacoes-para-professores/30000-uncategorised/40361-novo-ensino-medio-duvidas>.

observed. However, the official discourse was based on the principle of autonomy, so that the curricular flexibility proposed since the formulation of the reform would be accepted as an element of strengthening and freedom of choice for the networks and students.

According to the São Paulo State Department of Education (SEDUC-SP), the changes proposed by INOVA aim to achieve the goals established based on the Education Development Index (IDEB), since the São Paulo state network has not reached the necessary goal since 2013. In addition, the changes aim to bring more meaning to school and engage students, promoting learning for all through comprehensive education that works on skills for the 21st century (São Paulo, 2020).

The state education network of the state of São Paulo, at the forefront of implementing the New High School<sup>11</sup>, faithfully followed the ideological and normative guidelines of the reform, which, when defining its curricular components through INOVA, chose the Life Project as the guiding thread of the curricular matrix. According to the support material made available to teachers on the Inova Educação portal, the pedagogical proposal of the Life Project curricular component

is based on important references for the conception of Comprehensive Education, such as: the Four Pillars of Education (UNESCO, 1996), socio-emotional development, the pedagogy of presence and protagonism. It is important to emphasize that the component is based on principles that guide the School Project and, consequently, understand pedagogical practice from the perspective of a training that will allow, throughout Basic Education, students to develop a vision of the future, being able to transform it into reality to act in the three dimensions of human life: personal, social and productive (São Paulo, 2024).

The Life Project curricular component reaffirms the centrality of the four pillars of education - “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be” (Delors, 1998), presented by Jacques Delors, a French politician and economist who chaired the International Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The four pillars of education became a guiding premise for the formulation of educational policies in Brazil in the 1990s, conditioned by international organizations to facilitate financial loans.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the technical note from the Public School and University Network, “if we consider the constitutional principle of democratic management in education and good practices in public administration, this light-hearted implementation of the Reform should not be worthy of pride. After all, it was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, a period in which schools were closed, with no in-person activities, and in parallel with the unsuccessful implementation of an emergency remote teaching policy, characterized by improvisation, with the creation of the São Paulo Education Media Center (CMSP) (REPU, p. 05, 2022).

To this end, the Life Project has been materialized within the premises of the four pillars of education, strengthening the operational logic of the school and curricular flexibility, through undefined themes and without scientific objectives, thus reinforcing what Libâneo (2016) pointed out as the disfigurement of the school and school knowledge, driving public schools to perform functions that other public sectors do not perform.

Another aspect of curricular flexibility concerns the reduction in the workload of Basic General Education (FGB) with the inclusion of the Educational Tracks. When analyzing the normative and guiding documents of the guidelines for the curricular organization of High School in the state network of São Paulo, which defined the curricular matrices for the years 2020, 2023 and 2024, we observe a reduction in the workload of components that make up the FGB and, even, a reallocation of components of the FGB, to the Educational Tracks<sup>12</sup>.

In the following table, based on the analysis of the normative documents for the curricular organization of High School - Ministry of Education, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c, São Paulo, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c and São Paulo, 2023a - based on the choice of two mandatory components, Portuguese Language and Mathematics, a comparison is presented regarding the gradual reduction in the workload of these components.

**Table 01:** comparative workload of mandatory components of the Basic General Training of the São Paulo Curriculum

Subject	Curricular Matrix 2020			Curricular Matrix 2023			Curricular Matrix 2024		
	Number of classes			Number of classes			Number of classes		
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade
Portuguese Language	5	5	5	5	3	2	4	3	3
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	3	2	5	3	3

**Sources:** Ministério da Educação, 2018a; 2018b; 2018c, São Paulo, 2022a; 2022b; 2022c e São Paulo, 2023a.

In other words, the FGB workload has been reduced, giving way to curricular units and/or curricular components of the Educational Tracks, making the education of young

<sup>12</sup> The Educational Tracks comprise a part common to High School students according to the shift and type of teaching, called the “Global Training Itinerary”, and another that depends on the students’ choice, called the “In-depth Training Itinerary” (São Paulo, 2023).

people in the state of São Paulo even more fragmented than the “old high school” version and difficult for students and their families to understand.

And finally, it is important to emphasize that the much-touted freedom of choice of Educational Tracks by students, reinforced by the official discourse of the federal government to convince Brazilian society, was considered a flexible form of curriculum composition, so that young people can be the protagonists of their school trajectory. A detailed study on the freedom of choice of educational tracks reveals that

the combined analysis of data on students’ ‘choice’ and the provision of educational tracks in São Paulo state high schools reveals what the government’s propaganda for high school reform has always tried to conceal: the ‘free choice’ promised to students is strictly limited by the material conditions of the education system and, above all, of the schools. And since these conditions are not being substantially changed with the reform, freedom of choice will continue to be a privilege of those who have always enjoyed it: students from private schools coming from the elite, the middle classes and, as the data analyzed in the research show, more privileged students from the state system (Cássio; Goulart, 2022, p. 530).

Therefore, as the study above demonstrates, the much-touted freedom of choice for students is nothing more than a strategy for curricular flexibility, which ends up increasing social discrepancies and enabling freedom of choice for students in private schools that have not given up on offering all paths, since schools in the private education system prepare their students for the entrance exam in all areas of knowledge. And in the state of São Paulo, since the beginning of the implementation of the Education Reform, this has been the reality experienced by young students in the public education system, without freedom of choice, emptying of curricular content, difficulty in understanding the flexible curriculum and the lack of material and human conditions for the effective materialization of the proposed reform.

## Final considerations

The results of this study demonstrated that, since the 1990s, Brazilian education has been undergoing reforms with a view to meeting the technical and ideological demands of capital, since the crisis that began in the 1970s with the exhaustion of the Fordist model of production and the Welfare State, whose strategies for overcoming the crisis were the restructuring of the production system based on the Toyotist model of production, as well as the reform of the State, according to neoliberal precepts. In this sense, under the auspices of international organizations at the service of capital, a new common sense was created with the aim of seeking social consensus on the need to reform education to meet the demands of

the global market, since the Fordist worker no longer corresponded to the “new” demands and there was a need to train a worker adapted to the “new skills and abilities” required by the new production system.

It was also possible to observe that over the course of 34 years, Brazilian education has undergone numerous reforms; however, in essence, the assumptions have always been the same: the need to train workers capable of adapting to the demands of the job market. Among these reforms, there was the High School Reform, already planned by former president Dilma Rousseff in 2014, but which was only approved and implemented in 2018, with the approval of the BNCC. Thus, the final stage of Brazilian basic education has been guided by the theoretical-philosophical assumptions of neoliberalism, giving centrality to the formation of a youth capable of meeting the technical and ideological needs of the job market, to the detriment of an education rich in scientific, cultural and socially referenced knowledge.

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