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UNIVERSITY AND TEACHING WORK: CHALLENGES OF THE UNIVERSITY TRAINING FROM NEOLIBERAL POLICIES

¹Antonio Sousa Alves, ^{1,*}Francisco de Assis Carvalho de Almada, ²Francisco Dimitre Rodrigo Pereira Santos and ²Marciene de Sousa Cavalcante Costa

¹Universidade Estadual da Região Tocantina do Maranhão – UEMASUL, Brazil

²Unidade de Ensino Superior do Sul do Maranhão – IESMA/UNISULMA, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we reflect on the big capital of the World Bank's proposals for higher public education in the peripheral countries. Based on bibliographical studies, the research can contribute to the debate about the subject matter. It is concluded that the bank has been imposing policies to empty the role of the State in relation to higher education and also to break the indissociability between teaching research and extension within the universities.

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INTRODUCTION

This work was carried out through a bibliographical research, aims to reflect on the proposals on the great capital of the World Bank (WB) for higher public education in the peripheral countries. A closer view at our universities reveals a very large gap between teaching activities and student learning. This issue is quite emblematic because, at first glance, there is the impression of the fault of teachers, students, and even the family. Obviously, all of them have a share of responsibility, but the issue is eminently political and economic in nature. This is the manifestation of the metabolism of capital in its current phase of restructuring. "A broad, complex and contradictory phenomenon imposing working conditions, teacher training, and knowledge production that inflict innumerable limits on human development" (Serrão, 2014). Thus, it is a sophisticated ideological mechanism that invalidates theoretical conceptions and empirical evidences, manipulates sensations, values and desires (Chauí, 2001), making it very difficult to identify the logic that makes common sense - the every day - invading the

school, preventing teachers and students from appropriating culture in the form of science, art and philosophy, politics and ethics.

Neoliberal policies and higher public education: This finding led to seek the support for its proposal to contain poverty in education. Thus, from the 1990s, it adopted the recommendations of the International Conference on Education for Everybody - held from 5 to 9 March 1990 and held in Jomtien, Thailand, organized by UNESCO. It was one of the sponsors, published in 1995 a document that was the basis for their policies and educational guidelines for the following decades. This makes clear its conditions for "[...] educational policy for low education countries and reiterates the goal of eliminating illiteracy by the end of the 20th century" (Shiroma, Moraes, and Evangelista, 2000). This was to improve the efficiency of teaching and their performance. Here in Brazil, these proposals have had the support of a considerable number of intellectuals linked to education and a large number of politicians and practically all of the press. They argue that as long as Brazil does pare the state machine out, it will not be able to enter the competitive world of the big markets, sustaining the thesis that the market must unify and regulate global competitive society. The main measures

*Corresponding author: Francisco de Assis Carvalho de Almada, Universidade Estadual da Região Tocantina do Maranhão – UEMASUL, Brazil.

resulting from these policies were privatizations, partnerships with non-governmental institutions, resource flexibility, among others, establishing a new relationship between the State and society. The pressure of the WB for the education leaves the social field and works like the markets is very strong. This is nothing more than “[...] a set of forces and ideas coming from the central countries that have, as their main scope, the defense of their interests” (Bueno, 2004). In this context, the pressure for countries to adopt a particular management model is embedded in a comprehensive package of suggested reforms, including the educational reform. In this context, the proposals for higher education are centered on the idea that private initiative produces more efficient conditions and, therefore, the retraction of the State in the financing of research and extension is recommended (Shiroma, Moraes, and Evangelista, 2000). The first loss resulting from this proposal was the loss of the *university* concept, giving space to the concept of *higher education*. In this sense, higher education is all post-secondary levels of education with the return of short courses, centered only on the performance of the function for which the individual is being qualified. This apparently innocent terminology brings strong impediments to the classic functions of the university: teaching, research, and extension, imposing a purely articulated formation to the demands of the market. An extension was suggested as a service paid by the population. It is also highlighted as the flagship of the idea of self-sustainability, through a program to stimulate university-company integration, adopting a pragmatic and utilitarian vision of the university. Considering that the university has an obligation to look at its surroundings, to stop making extension is to fail to look at a significant part of society that, despite paying for the university to exist, is not within it (Luckesi, 2004). The workers are not usually inside the universities, but they are the ones who finance them with their work, through the multiple taxes charged by the government.

The indissociability between teaching, research and extension was undermined by the combination of political and economic factors such as the restructuring of Higher Education Institutions, but mainly due to the expansion of vacancies without the consequent increase in the number of teachers and the necessary physical infrastructure and equipment. This caused many teachers to be dedicated exclusively to teaching, especially in the universities of the interior of the North and Northeast. Also, the media linked to privatise ideas systematically disclosed that the university model structured in teaching, research and extension was bankrupt. Completing the ideological appeal, several business concepts such as performance, skills, product, management, market, customer, competitiveness, restructuring, efficiency and excellence have invaded academia. In the incorporation of these terms, the students become clients, teachers in workers and teaching in merchandise (Santomé, 2003). With the appeal of the media, this conception has become so strong, and accepted, that any contrary manifestation is seen as traditional and archaic. Many teachers, without careful reflection, understand that the student can and has the right to do what they want, including the right not to perform the tasks proposed by teachers. This view is in line with the view that the role of the market is to complement the formation of the server according to its needs. Few fail to realize that in a formation of this nature, it is not the professional that chooses the market, but the market that chooses the professional. In the early 2000s, the higher education reform was guided by the adoption of a series of

legal measures that, in general, highlighted to the continuity of the policies in progress in the country, although a much more significant amount of resources was perceived for the sector. The most significant elements of this reform were: the restructuring of the System of Evaluation of the Higher Education (SINAES), launched in 2004, with new indicators and forms of evaluation; the creation of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFS); the University for All Program (PROUNI); the Restructuring and Expansion Program of Federal Universities (REUNI); the Program of Access to Technical Education and Employment (PRONATEC) and Sciences without Borders Program. On the one hand, these measures have succeeded in increasing the number of students in higher education. On the other hand, it continued to narrow public/private relationships by opting for the solvency of private institutions through PROUNI and the approval of the Technological Innovation Law (Brasil, 2004), which reinforces the naturalization of the knowledge-market approach. This university package has set the achievement of efficiency, quality and equity thought from the perspective of economic development as a goal. In short, as several scholars (Shiroma, Moraes, and Evangelista, 2000; Silva, 2003; Bueno, 2004 and Dourado, 2006) acknowledge, the WB has been demanding more attention to results, the creation of appraisal systems for learning, and the investment in attention to cost-benefit ratio. It proposes greater efficiency in social spending and greater articulation with the private sector in the offer of education.

Conclusion

In this paper, we try to reflect how the confrontation between the neoliberal project proposed by the WB for Brazilian education and the educational needs of the population has been taking place. In this reflection, we do not disagree with the position of the Hungarian philosopher István Mészáros in the work “*Education beyond the Capital*”. In this work, he affirms that school education, especially in the last 150 years, was the purpose of not only providing the knowledge and the necessary personnel to the expanding productive machine of the capital system, but also to generate and transmit a reference of values that legitimizes the dominant interests, implying that there is no alternative to the management of society, either internalized or through structural domination, but hierarchical and relentlessly imposed by the capital (Mészáros, 2005). Capitalism as an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and class antagonism, we can deduce that its interests misrepresent and trample all attempts at favoring the working class. That is, everything that points to an achievement of this class is felt by the defenders of capital who, immediately, put their ideological apparatus in action in the sense of destroying it. The educational proposals oriented by the WB reach the interior of Brazilian public universities through programs, projects and plans elaborated by its technicians and counselors in an attempt to separate thinking and doing. They are based on a rationalizing economic model that advocates the reduction of public spending with social policies, especially in the areas of health, transportation, and education. Thus, issues such as salary, teacher training, and qualification are not investment priorities. Their arguments deny the impact of teacher education on the quality of education and student achievement. Distance education is one of the most appropriate, fast and effective ways of improving the professional capacity of teachers, attracting them by easy access, guaranteed by incentive schemes, combined with professional advisory

services and obtaining certification. In this process, it is common for one institution to provide training and another to issue the title, in a clear adherence or reinforcement of the public/private relationship. The result is that daily life invading the scientific sphere in the field of school education is increasing and the results are, in addition to the low level of performance - official evaluations can prove it - the depoliticization of the student, plus the decrease of belief of public action in solving problems, increasing individualism and social instability. Once again, I support Mészáros's (2005) analysis by stating that in the current logic of capital, subjects are excluded in the name of inclusion. It is included in the statistics of the professional qualification but excludes when leaving them to the mercy of the market to choose the one that fits in its principles. We return to the law of natural selection: the strongest survives.

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