

WELFARE STATE AND EDUCATION: NEW RELATIONS BETWEEN STATE,  
SOCIETY AND MARKET IN EUROPE<sup>1</sup>

*ESTADO DE BEM-ESTAR SOCIAL E EDUCAÇÃO: NOVAS RELAÇÕES ENTRE  
ESTADO, SOCIEDADE E MERCADO NA EUROPA*

*ESTADO DE BIENESTAR SOCIAL Y EDUCACIÓN: NUEVAS RELACIONES ENTRE  
ESTADO, SOCIEDAD Y MERCADO EN EUROPA*



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**ABSTRACT:** This paper analyzes the relationship between the welfare state and educational policies in Europe. One of the ways to measure the development of the welfare state has been the analysis of social spending. Based on this indicator, it is possible to verify that there was no destruction of the Social State, but a change in its execution and in the relationship between state, society and market. These are changes arising from the resumption of free market theses and the new conformation of the capital and labor relationship. In this context, New Public Management was introduced and education came to be considered as another business opportunity for capital. Despite the fact that the welfare state maintained its foundations, with the educational reforms the market appropriated public resources, altering the provision of education services and its own conformation as a social right.

**KEYWORDS:** Welfare State. Europe. Educational Policy. Neoliberalism. Privatization of Education.

**RESUMO:** *Este artigo analisa a relação entre o Estado de Bem-Estar Social e as políticas educacionais na Europa. Uma das formas para se medir o desenvolvimento do Welfare State tem sido a análise dos gastos sociais. Com base nesse indicador, é possível verificar que não existiu uma destruição do Estado social, mas uma alteração em sua execução e na relação entre Estado, sociedade e mercado. São mudanças decorrentes da retomada das teses de livre mercado e da nova conformação da relação capital e trabalho. Nesse contexto, foi introduzida a Nova Gestão Pública e a educação passou a ser considerada mais uma oportunidade de negócios para o capital. Em que pese o Estado de Bem-Estar Social ter mantido suas bases, com as reformas educacionais o mercado se apropriou de recursos públicos, modificando a provisão dos serviços de educação e sua própria conformação como direito social.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Estado de Bem-Estar Social. Europa. Política educacional. Neoliberalismo. Privatização da educação.

**RESUMEN:** *Este artículo analiza la relación entre el Estado del Bienestar social y las políticas educacionales en Europa. Una de las formas de mensurar el desarrollo del Welfare States ha sido el análisis de gastos sociales. Con base en este indicador, es posible verificar que no ha existido una destrucción del Estado Social, pero una alteración en su ejecución y en la relación entre Estado, sociedad y mercado. Son cambios resultantes de la retomada de las tesis de libre mercado y de la nueva conformación de la relación capital y trabajo. En ese contexto, ha sido introducida la Nueva Gestión Pública y la educación pasó a ser considerada como una oportunidad más de negocios para el capital. A lo que pese al Estado de bienestar social haber mantenido sus bases, con las reformas educacionales, el mercado se ha apropiado de recursos públicos alternando la provisión de los servicios de educación y su propia conformación en la cualidad de derecho social.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Estado de Bienestar Social. Europa. Política educativa. Neoliberalismo. Privatización de la educación.

## Introduction

The establishment of a social security system in Europe dates back to the creation of assistance policies for the underprivileged that began in the 18th century, goes through the creation of social rights in the early 20th century and goes on to the institution of a robust State of Social Welfare after -1945, which consolidated a wide range of rights, which, according to Bresser-Pereira (2012), is part of the European lifestyle. Still according to the author, contrary to what certain discourse propagates about the end of the Social Welfare State, it was not destroyed and maintained through democracy, because “the workers and the middle classes simply did not accept the decrease of the great social and scientific services provided by the State” (BRESSER-PEREIRA, 2012). In the political field, the electoral bases were expanded mainly as a result of the expansion of this social state, which began to include not only the poor and occupational categories, but mainly the middle classes (KERSTENETZKY, 2011).

In a context of transformations, the social dimension of public policies is still strongly rooted in the old continent and seems to confirm the indication that the social issue is “a concern regarding the capacity to maintain the cohesion of a society” (CASTEL, 1998, p. 41, our translation).

According to Castel (1998), social policies and the welfare state were a response to the need to establish a free labor contract, replacing the pre-capitalist production system of forced labor without a regulated contract, with a market model that brings in its bulge the condition of salary. However, in this new model, at the same time that the worker is freed, he discovers that “freedom without protection can lead to the worst servitude: necessity”, because, on the other hand, “the freedom that favored companies was too strong, too savage for those who could only bear it” (CASTEL, 1998, p. 44, our translation).

With the creation of social rights, the condition of dependence on the market is relativized, with a “loosening of the status of pure merchandise”, reducing the market's participation in the promotion of social standards of well-being (ESPING-ANDERSEN, 1991). This process of “decommodification” takes place “when the provision of a service is seen as a matter of law or when a person can support himself without depending on the market” (ESPING-ANDERSEN, 1991, p. 102, our translation).

It was the liberal ideals, with the industrial revolution, that shaped this condition of the market model in the early 19th century. However, the consolidation of social rights only occurs in the 20th century. Modern social rights are part of a set of rights that would represent the evolution of citizenship aimed at social equality, going through a historical process of

consolidation of a series of rights (MARSHALL, 1967). First, civil rights, then political rights, and finally social rights. The latter, especially in the 20th century, constitute the right to a minimum of economic well-being and security. A right to participate fully in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being in accordance with the standards that prevail in society. The institutions most closely linked to it are the educational system and social services (MARSHALL, 1967).

However, Marshall's conceptions (1967) about the establishment of social rights towards a world with social equality, it seems, were not confirmed, since the dynamics of functioning of the capitalist system as a creator and reproducer of high levels of inequalities, exploitation and income concentration. However, even with inequality being intrinsic to capitalism, there is a parenthesis, a specific moment in the process of capitalist accumulation, initiated at the end of the Second World War, when the world experienced a different result from the correlation of social forces and witnessed the consolidation of rights (health, social security, social assistance and education) in social protection systems – currently in force in Europe and in much of the world – that have improved the well-being of the population. It was the thirty golden years of capitalism that built the pillars of the Social Welfare State or Welfare State.

Faced with changes in educational policies in recent decades, at this particular moment of capitalism, when complex processes of privatization of education gain strength (ADRIÃO, 2018; BALL, 2004; BALL; YOUDELL, 2007), the discussion on the field of social policies and the Welfare State gains relevance for the analysis of the reconfiguration of public education in European countries, which they implemented over decades, in the definition of Kerstenetzky (2011, our translation),

[...] an articulated set of policies and institutions that express the recognition of public responsibility for social well-being (understood as the well-being of individuals and groups within society), based on the understanding that this cannot be guaranteed by the institutions of a market economy in their normal functioning.

From this definition of the Welfare State, from the contribution of authors who discuss the conformation of the European Welfare State (CASTEL, 1998; ESPING-ANDERSEN, 1991; HOBBSAWM, 1995; PIKETTY, 2013) and from studies that present its contemporaneity and the impacts suffered by capitalist transformations (FIORI, 1997; KERSTENETZKY, 2011, 2012; MORENO, 2017), the objective of this work is to present a reflection on the relationship

between the Welfare State, considering social expenses and education in Europe based on in a bibliographical review on the subject.

The article is organized into five sections, including this introduction. The second section discusses historical and theoretical aspects of the creation and consolidation of the Welfare State in Europe. In the second part, issues related to the crisis of the capitalist system in the 1970s are explored, the repercussions on social spending and the direction taken by the State in this period. The third part traces the relationship between the configuration of social policies, the New Public Management and the impacts that the educational reforms of the 1990s have on the relationship between the State, society and the market. In the last section, some conclusions are presented.

### **Social welfare in Europe**

In the political, social and state organization scope, post-World War II European societies, for the most part, can be qualified as social-democratic regimes and are expressed by a set of fiscal and social policies that structure them within capitalism. Some are not officially called social democrats, but retain the same characteristics described by Piketty (2020, p. 431, our translation), as “a set of political practices and institutions aimed at providing a social adjustment to the private property system and capitalism”.

In the post-war period, when history had already witnessed the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the transformation of the Soviet Union into a great power, Europe sees the growth of left-wing social forces and workers' organizations. This situation “forced the elites to radically review their positions on issues of resource redistribution and tax justice, especially in Europe” (PIKETTY, 2020, p. 415, our translation).

In France, even before the war, there were already social mobilizations with factory occupations. Since 1936, workers were recognized as a determining social force, as in a “beautiful summer that does not yet fear autumn” (CASTEL, 1998). With the electoral victory of the left, the French working class won the extension of its labor rights with paid vacations, a 40-hour work week, wage increases, in addition to acquiring “an awareness of its power that can make it dream of one day becoming the future of the world” (CASTEL, 1998, p. 437, our translation).

Sweden, also with great popular mobilization between 1890 and 1930, instituted the famous Political Compromise, from a broad alliance that transformed its society into an

ambitious State of Social Welfare and that established the highest level of taxation and social expenses between 1950 and 2000, being considered a country of social democracy par excellence, one of the most generous Social Welfare States in existence (PIKETTY, 2020; KERSTENETZKY, 2011).

The agreement established within capitalist frameworks generated a different form of organization in society. Faced with the elimination of two enemies: the fascist extreme right defeated by the War and the communist extreme left being neutralized by the Cold War, there was a tacit or explicit consensus between businessmen and workers' organizations. The electoral field was also important and, according to Hobsbawm (1995), the focus of the left was concentrated on thinking about its working-class electorate:

In fact, the left focused on improving the conditions of its working-class constituencies and on social reforms to that end. As they had no alternative solutions but to demand the abolition of capitalism, which no social democratic government knew how to do, nor had tried to do, they had to depend on a strong and wealth-creating capitalist economy to finance their goals (HOBSBAWM, 1995, p. 267, our translation).

In electoral disputes, socialist parties and labor movements adapted “in the new reformed capitalism, because for practical purposes they had no economic policy of their own, other than the communists, whose policy consisted of acquiring power and then following the model of the USSR” (HOBSBAWM, 1995, p. 267, our translation).

In this context, a situation of economic growth was essential to maintain the union bases and the electorate, which was experiencing a moment of full employment, with social protection and mass consumption that allowed the “working class to go to paradise”.

As an economic basis, the 30 golden years of the capitalist economy, or reformed capitalism (HOBSBAWM, 1995), or even social-democratic societies (PIKETTY, 2020), were based on the economic proposals of John Maynard Keynes, which combined arrangements based on by “economic growth in a capitalist economy based on the mass consumption of a fully employed workforce that is increasingly better paid and protected” (HOBSBAWM, 1995, p. 276, our translation).

The so-called Keynesianism was the economic basis of the pact that was in force for a time when everyone won, including the leftist movements, represented by the parties and major unions of the period:

The bosses, who were little bothered by high wages in a long boom of high profits, appreciated the predictability that made planning easier. Labor received regularly rising wages and extra benefits, and an ever more

comprehensive and generous welfare state. The government achieved political stability, weak communist parties (except in Italy) and predictable conditions for the macroeconomic management that all states practiced (HOBBSAWM, 1995, p. 277, our translation).

Each historical period and the way work is organized, in its most different dimensions, determined which social protection mechanisms were applied and their scope. The social policies of education, health, social security and social assistance, as a whole, represent one of the ways of measuring the Social Welfare State, considering the analysis of the social expenditure of each economy. In this period of welfare state mentioned by Hobsbawm (1995), countries like Australia, Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Netherlands spent more than 60% of their budgets on social security.

Corroborating the author's assertions, Kerstenetzky (2012) presents data that prove that, from 1960 to 1975, the growth rate of social spending as a percentage of GDP was the highest in the golden years, between 7% and 10% per year in terms of real, with emphasis on the growth in the areas of education, health and pensions. The creation of a Welfare State, according to Piketty (2013), also implied changes in the State's tax collection pattern. For the author, this change began in the 1920s and 1930s and stabilized in the 1970s and 1980s, a period in which there was a great growth in the share of taxes and public expenditures in the national income of all rich countries, which "from an equilibrium in which less than a tenth of the national income was devoted to taxes and common expenses to a new equilibrium in which, in the long run, between a third and a half of the national income was devoted" (PIKETTY, 2013, p. 595, our translation). In these countries, total tax receipts until World War I represented less than 10% of national income. This percentage increased between the years 1970-1980 to 30% in the United States; 40% in the UK; and from 45% to 55% in Germany, France and Sweden (PIKETTY, 2020).

This progressive tax system taxed the high-income fraction of the population to develop and maintain the Welfare State for many years, being one of its main pillars, which induced a vigorous process of income distribution and reduction of inequality. The growth in revenues made it possible to support the costs of the growth of a set of social policies with the financing of expenses with education, health and social expenses that are essential to face aging and stabilize the economy and society in the event of a recession, such as social security. unemployment (PIKETTY, 2020).

In this process, there was a transformation in the State's way of acting, which from the 19th century until 1914 focused on defense activities and, later, began to invest in its social

mission centered on two main fronts of resource allocation. The first front was focused on services, with the allocation of means for expenses with education and health, which at the beginning of the 21st century represented between 10% and 15% of national income in all developed countries. The second front was characterized as disposable income formed by replacement and transfer income, the latter consisting of pensions, unemployment insurance and minimum income programs, among others, representing 10% to 15% (sometimes 20%) of national income. Pensions had a much larger share than the other items, with about two to three quarters of expenditures (PIKETTY, 2013).

Depending on the country's context, each Welfare State model assumed different configurations. One of the main authors who studied its classification was Esping -Andersen (1991). He highlights the need to consider them based on the analysis of how state activities of social provision are articulated in the triad State, Market and Family, which are the guarantors of welfare provision. Based on this premise, he lists three types of Welfare State: 1) Liberal Welfare State: with predominance of assistance to the demonstrably poor, reduced universal transfers or modest social security plans. Examples: United States, Canada and Australia; 2) Conservative/corporatist Welfare State: rights are related to status and class. Commitment to the preservation of the traditional family predominates, and the State acts more strongly when the family's capacity to serve its members is exhausted. Examples: Austria, France, Germany and Italy; 3) Social-democratic Welfare State: rights tend to be more universal, with strong decommodification. A fundamental factor for its existence is full employment, in the sense of meeting the need to maintain solidarity, universal and non-commodity costs. Scandinavian countries such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland fall into this regime.

Despite the existence of a certain idea of uniformity regarding social welfare systems in the golden years, each nation, given its different historical processes of economic and social development and the degree of strength and organization of the working class, configured its protection and social security systems, which were fundamental for the reduction of inequalities, or, in another way, to reduce their impetus, as in the case of Europe, where social-democratic societies were more protective against the tendency to generate social inequality of globalization (PIKETTY, 2020).

However, from the 1970s, there was a disorganization of the institutional bases that fostered this development and an exhaustion of the North American industrialization pattern, in addition to profound changes in the international financial system, from the breaking of the rules and controls of commercial relations and financial agreements agreed at Bretton Woods.



The international finance that commanded the process of world capital accumulation found itself totally free to circulate, favored by a process of banking deregulation that resulted in “the fictitious appreciation of wealth” (POCHMANN, 2002, p. 27, our translation). It is the return of the free market, the minimal state and the increased commodification of the workforce.

### **Capitalism and crisis: the resumption of profit rates**

Capitalism, as a system, maintains a pace of development with long waves of growth and downward curves throughout its economic history since the 18th century (HOBSBAWM, 1995). The Social State, which, among its foundations, contained economic growth, began to suffer strong shocks. The capitalism of the golden years, even having remained for 30 years and being considered by some as a definitive solution for improving living conditions within the system, cannot be detached from its structural conditions, which, when it goes through crises, needs a redirection to recover profitability rates, which are the true engine of capitalism.

Thus, the economic basis of the system, Keynesianism, can be considered conjunctural and is part of the stop-go logic (stops and goes) of capitalism, as portrayed by Mészáros (2003, p. 96, emphasis added, our translation):

Keynesianism, even the variety called "Left Keynesianism", is necessarily contained in and constrained by the "stop-go logic" of capital. Even in its heyday, Keynesianism represented nothing more than the “go” phase of an expansion cycle, which sooner or later comes to an end, replaced by the “stop” phase.

In this process of crisis and recovery of profit rates, capitalism also profoundly altered work processes. From a mainly industrial production, organized according to the logic of Fordism and Taylorism, a new pattern of accumulation emerged, resulting from a powerful productive restructuring, extremely flexible, which refers to different forms of flexible accumulation. According to Antunes (2003), the main characteristics of this new standard are downsizing (reduction of teams and processes), new forms of organizational management, technological advances, alternative models to the binomial Taylorism/Fordism, in which Toyotism stands out, or model Japanese (ANTUNES, 2003). These changes resulted in a new configuration of the world of work, with an increase in part-time, precarious, outsourced, subcontracted work, etc., leading to heterogenization, complexification and fragmentation of work, which affect the organization of workers and their ability to fight.

Concomitantly with these changes, the political and ideological orientations of liberalism, in defense of the free market and contrary to State intervention in the economy, returned in a hegemonic way, the so-called neoliberalism, which can be considered a broad political project with the defense - in some cases, imposition – of a set of reforms that affected the central and peripheral capitalist countries with the “recommodification” of the workforce, the containment or dismantling of unions, the deregulation of labor markets and the privatization of many social services (FIORI, 1997).

On the one hand, with the hegemony of neoliberal thought and, on the other, with concrete changes in the work process, new social relations were configured after the 30 golden years. At the level of the State, neoliberal policies became overwhelming under the new governance called New Public Management, with a focus on “making government activity more entrepreneurial, through the transplantation of management techniques and culture and private sector business values” (HALL; GUNTER, 2015, p. 747, our translation).

However, it is necessary to consider that, even with the depletion of the Keynesian accumulation pattern, this reality did not have immediate repercussions on the depletion of the social protection system. The crisis of Keynesianism cannot automatically be called a crisis of the Welfare States. They are two different things that are often equated to decree the end of certain policies.

By observing the public spending of 22 countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) between the years 1980 and 2007, Kerstenetzky (2012) concluded that social spending increased over the period at a higher pace than the average growth of the Domestic Product Gross (GDP). Social spending as a percentage of GDP rose from 10.1% in 1960 to 22.7% in 1998. Social public spending on total public spending rose from 36.1% to 52.4% in the same period. The data presented corroborate his indication regarding the situation of the Social Welfare State, which would not necessarily be in crisis, but changing its conformation.

Thus, it is not possible to say that the Welfare State was destroyed, despite the perception and an international articulation around the need for changes that act in favor of capital, which customarily, in its trajectory to accumulate profits, metamorphoses itself seeking new gains, which, for Fiori (1997), materializes in more attenuated or less inclusive forms of coverage of the Welfare State.

For Kerstenetzky (2012), changes in the Welfare State were supported by a set of reforms in social policies (pension, education and health) that outlined its current configuration,

which presents a shift from a *welfare* of security to a *welfare* of services, in that public accountability decreased as direct provision and increased in regulation and funding:

One cannot exactly speak of a crisis, when one observes uninterrupted expansion everywhere, but of change, given the various reforms perpetrated in the 1980s and 1990s. The qualitative change indicates the relative decrease of the social security function and the relative increase of the social services (especially those related to reconciling family life with work), on the one hand, and on the other, the advancement of private social policies (KERSTENETZKY, 2012, p. 59-60, our translation).

If capitalism in its current phase has not managed to impose drastic reductions in spending and destroy the pillars of the Social Welfare State, on the other hand, it has been able to promote several changes in the relationship between the State, society and the market, which have reconfigured social relations in the beginning of the 21st century. And it is in this aspect that the great “quality leap” of capitalism lies: transferring the appropriation and allocation of public resources with social expenditures not only to the working class, but also to companies, increasing the articulation between the public and the private, in which capital “considers social services an expanding area in which considerable profits can be obtained” (BALL, 2004, p. 1.107, our translation).

An interesting characterization of this process is presented by Moreno (2017), who states that, after the 30 golden years of European capitalism, the silver years (1976-2007) followed and that, currently (post-2008), its bronze age is experienced. It is noteworthy that the repercussions on *welfare* configured in the current “bronze age” result from the adjustments made after the banking crisis of 2008, with the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers Bank, in which the world economies were strongly shaken.

Growth and unemployment data from the European Union confirm that the economy has deteriorated since 2008 and most countries have even recorded negative rates of economic growth. In addition to the countries of Eastern Europe, which revealed high unemployment rates in the post-crisis period, Spain and Greece were two nations that went through a deep economic crisis, reaching an unemployment rate of 26.1% and 27.5% in 2013. %, respectively (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020).

According to Moreno (2017), the consequences of this crisis may be temporary, but show impacts on policies to reduce social welfare, even if varied. Some countries before the crisis already had social welfare containment policies that can be summarized in a few measures, such as the tightening of access and eligibility criteria for social benefits and services, the reduction of around 10% of spending in the Nordic countries and the transfer of

responsibility from the state public sector to the profit-making private sector in sectors of the British Welfare State.

However, even with certain restrictive policies, adjustments and impositions, social spending in European countries still represents an important slice of GDP. At the end of 2016, regarding spending on welfare policies, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) managed to maintain high percentages, around 30% of GDP. Continental countries (Germany, Austria, Belgium, France and Luxembourg) kept them around 27%. The Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece, Italy and Portugal) continued with 25% of GDP percentage, and the Eastern countries, in addition to Ireland and the United Kingdom, remained with around 20% of their GDP (MORENO, 2017).

Faced with a situation of economic growth that would no longer allow the presence of the social commitment of Keynesianism, agreed between the interests of the market and the demands of work, Castel (1998), even before the crisis, suggested the need to decide between living in a society entirely subject to the demands of the economy or building a figure of the Welfare State to face the challenges of the new times. For the author, it is necessary, in the 21st century, to elaborate a “solidarity pact, work pact, citizenship pact: think about the conditions of inclusion of all so that they can trade together, as they said in the Enlightenment era, that is is, 'making society'” (CASTEL, 1998, p. 35, emphasis added). Apparently, it seems that the option of the European countries was for an intermediary route, without total submission to the market or reduction of financial investment, but bringing its premises in state economic relations and social policies. This perspective can be proven when analyzing educational policies.

### **The educational issue: between state provision and private participation**

In the context of the capitalist crisis, despite the growth and/or maintenance of social spending, one of the areas most affected by the economic stagnation between 1990-2015 was education, which stopped growing in all Western European countries. In the 20th century, investments in relation to national income increased from 1% to 2%, between 1870/1910, to something around 5.5% to 6%, between 1980/1990. Even though there was no concrete decrease in spending, between 1990-2015, investment in education was stagnant at the same levels as in the previous decade, between 5.5% and 6% (PIKETTY, 2020).

Education, while it can be considered in the 21st century as a consensus regarding its civilizing potential, is also the target of numerous controversies, constituting one of the most debated and problematized social rights by pedagogues, economists and sociologists, among others. Returning to Marshall's thoughts (1967), what is most relevant for this work is to bring out the importance that education has assumed in the set of social rights, associating it with civil and political rights, and, mainly, because its execution is defined as State responsibility. This premise was fundamental to change the conformation of citizenship rights, since the “development of public primary education during the 19th century was the first decisive step towards the reestablishment of the social rights of citizenship in the 20th century” (MARSHALL, 1967, p. 74, our translation).

Thus, education was consolidated as a right and became synonymous with citizenship incorporated into national legislation and multilateral documents. As stated by Cury (2002, p. 246), “school education is a fundamental dimension of citizenship, and this principle is essential for policies that aim at the participation of all in social and political spaces and even for reintegration into the professional world”.

Access to education is also a condition for equality and development, and it can form part of the social commitments that are enabled by growth. According to Piketty (2020), education can be a differential factor for social and economic growth. The author develops his argument when commenting on the advance of the United States in the 20th century as a power that grew faster than Europe, because they had “more than half a century of advance in relation to Europe in terms of universal primary and later secondary schooling” (PIKETTY, 2020, p. 482, our translation). During the golden years, in rich countries, the growth of investments in education was exceptional. However, currently, they face major obstacles to continue their expansion, especially in relation to higher education, with the context of budget constraints determining investments.

Societies around the world are experiencing permanent tension between the enforcement of the law, the availability of resources and the sectors that develop activities in the area. The allocation of resources at European level can, in times of crisis, result in a decrease in resources or in changes in management that imply a reduction in investments. In this context, in recent decades, some changes can be observed in the profile of public responsibility in education management, combined with the entry of capital into the sector to realize new forms of profit, with the introduction of different market mechanisms, which affect the reconfiguration of the role of the State and that act mainly in the fields of management and financing.

With the new framework of capitalist organization and new ways of offering education, different proposals and models are created, producing a series of institutional and market arrangements that do not always aim primarily at the social role of education, but at profit. Thus, education, a non-negotiable social right within the scope of public action, becomes part of the world of capital as yet another lucrative business opportunity, as Ball (2004) points out.

In this context, being one of the pillars of neoliberal proposals, privatization in education takes place from propositions that are different from the more traditional and already known processes, in which the ownership of assets is transferred from the public sector to the private sector in a subordinated way to the model of capital business. In neoliberal reforms, it assumes new forms, based on the principles of the Minimal State and the free market.

For Ball and Youdell (2007), the privatization of education in these new times is “covert”, as it is not made explicit, or is not known, or is not understood as such in the public debate. For the authors, it can occur in two main ways: (i) privatization in public education, or endogenous privatization, in which ideas, methods and practices from the private sector are imported in order to make the public sector act, increasingly more, as a trading company; and (ii) the privatization of public education, or exogenous privatization, characterized by the opening of public education services to the participation of the private sector, through modalities based on economic benefits, as well as the use of the private sector as conception, management and provision of different aspects of public education.

In this process are located the quasi-markets, based on the introduction into the state educational system of new ways of choosing educational institutions, through various measures: per capita funding, transfer of management responsibilities and budgets to schools, delivery of school vouchers to use in public or private schools and decrease in regulation, reducing bureaucratic controls regarding enrollment (BALL; YOUDELL, 2007).

This process is presented in a complex way, with an international tendency of acceleration. Adrião (2018), based on his research on national and international scientific production on the subject, lists three dimensions of education in which privatization materializes: 1) in management; 2) in the educational offer; and 3) in the curriculum, which can be used to think about our region.

1) Management divided into two focuses:

a) the privatization of educational management: when the decision-making processes on the educational policy of a network or a public education system are delegated or become subordinated to profitable private institutions and associated with them;

b) privatization of school management related to processes of delegation or subordination of school management to these same actors. In this process, there is a transfer in the provision of the service that is not configured as “parental choice policies, but only measures that change the education provider, from the public entity to a private provider, funded by the first” (ADRIÃO, 2018, p. 20, our translation). This change can happen through the transfer of school management to profit or non-profit organizations; for workers' and parents' cooperatives;

2) Educational offer: growth in attendance at lucrative private schools and scholarship programs in private establishments, which can take effect through: subsidizing the offer through agreements/contracts/terms of partnerships between governments and private organizations; subsidy to demand through tax incentives; private for-profit schools; tutorials; private classes and private schools with agreements or under contract funded with public funds (Charter School), scholarships (Vouchers); home education.

3) Curriculum: represented by the purchase or adoption by the public power of the private sector of curricular proposals, educational technologies and private teaching systems with “the transfer to the private sector of the definition of what to teach, how to teach and when to teach, in addition to the learning verification processes, that is, the definition of curriculum designs” (ADRIÃO, 2018, p. 20, our translation).

In the case of European Union countries, Cardoso (2009) explains how the functions of the State and the role of governments have changed, on the one hand, with an articulation between the provision, management and government of education with the participation of private entities and, on the other side, with governments creating, with direct actions, market regulation conditions, playing a strategic role in encouraging private participation in management, with the financing, provision, evaluation and inspection of education in the European Union.

The author also highlights a process of endogenous privatization and exogenous privatization, which can happen in two ways. The first, with the transfer of state responsibilities to private entities; and the second, with actions and processes of a private nature implemented by the public administration through governmental action or through the local adoption of state institutions. Another highlighted aspect is the participation of private entities in the formulation of policies, which changes its format, because, “by integrating its rules, practices and mechanisms in public decision, its logic changes the cycle and the public decision itself, which, in many cases, is now subject to the restrictions introduced by commercial secrecy” (CARDOSO, 2009, p. 822, our translation).

However, it is not just private entities that propagate needs for change in the path of education to “improve the performance of students and schools”. The European Union has played a central role in formulating policies for the bloc, with its own Parliament and with decisions that are implemented by member states with changes in the conformation of public education provision and its relationship with the market.

With Directive 2006/123/CE, the intensification of commercial activities in the European internal market was approved. In this Directive, two points can be highlighted: the formation of competition and commercial cooperation groups, such as the foundations that act in the formulation of educational policies, and the establishment of national subsidiaries of global companies, which apply to national States the knowledge commercialized with consulting, auditing, inspection, evaluation and diagnosis activities. Although it does not directly cover education, health and social services as systems, the Directive incorporates the commercialization of knowledge, practices or management systems and the execution of activities by private entities (CARDOSO, 2009).

For the commercialization of educational “commodities”, state funds can also be used, to which the private system has access. The author mentions the case of the European Social Fund, where funds can be used by schools, institutions and local and central governments, by non-commercial entities or even by global companies specializing in consultancy. In addition, the European Union rule encourages the creation of medium and small companies that can use the funds (CARDOSO, 2009).

With regard to barriers and prohibition of restrictions on commercial activities in general, also a premise of neoliberal reforms, the Directive creates the expectation of intensifying existing trade with the “participation of private entities in the provision of resources that the State did not make available and in the direction and educational and social management in general, mainly in countries where these processes have been less intense (CARDOSO, 2009, p. 826, our translation).

For the Directive to apply, the arguments used to encourage commercialization and business knowledge are the performance results obtained by education systems. One example is school dropout data, which has exerted strong pressure on Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Turkey and Iceland.

The European Union repeatedly recommends funding education based on performance and efficiency, condensed in the idea of “doing more with less”, “adopting smart policies to support human capital and improving employability”, “promoting debates on sustainable and



balanced financing mechanisms with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders", while indicating the need for structural reforms, especially considering the 2008 crisis, to contain the public deficit, increasing productivity for economic growth, in addition to proposing the creation of structural reform in certain educational systems (CE, 2014).

In this case, the discourse most efficiently finds two types of funding: one that rewards good results and one that penalizes bad results. However, the European Union itself recognizes problems that arise from this option of providing resources, as these rewards "may make schools that are already good become even better, while schools at a disadvantage may have more difficulties in obtaining an improvement" (CE, 2014, p. 9, our translation).

One of the fields most cited by the European Union is teacher training, which in the context of capitalist reforms has the regulation of spaces of professional autonomy incorporated by surveillance mechanisms made available by the European Union, with the aim of "ensuring the adherence with conviction of teachers to the proposed values" (CARDOSO, 2009, p. 825, emphasis added, our translation). In this sense, it is important to consider that the reforms did not simply mean proposals for the State to deregulate education. According to Ball (2001, p. 104), these prescriptions are regulatory processes because "they do not exactly represent the abandonment by the State of its control mechanisms, but rather the establishment of a new form of control".

The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) is another international institution that has a strong influence in the dissemination of the "new paradigm of educational government", in which the imperatives of economic policies prevail in the guidelines as the main narrative to the detriment of the social purposes of education. The proposed reforms advocate the "installation of a set of policy technologies that 'produce' or promote new values, new relationships and new subjectivities in the arenas of practice" (BALL, 2001, p. 103, emphasis added, our translation). However, the author still alerts to the need to evaluate this process empirically in each nation-state, contemplating different elements.

There is indeed a convergence of international educational and welfare policies within a global educational agenda, but this does not mean that the policies of each national state represent its transposition, or the loss, by the nation-states, of total control about their political decisions, because "education has a complex set of relationships with and within the processes of globalization" (BALL, 2001, p. 112, our translation).

In this sense, the author differentiates in Europe the places of inhabitants who speak the English language, where greater uniformity and central determination occurred, with the return

of liberal policies of the 19th century and the opening of education to profit. In turn, in continental countries, the tendency is to observe a broader institutional autonomy, with the introduction of new models of public management, creation of mechanisms of competitiveness between public providers and increase in the participation of the private sector.

Thus, if, on the one hand, the strong foundations of the Social Welfare States were preserved, on the other hand, capitalist reforms do not allow one to easily state that the standards of living in Europe were preserved, which usually receive praise or that workers accumulate wage gains and manage to keep good jobs. Many transformations took place in the organization of production and the State, especially with regard to income transfers and the provision of services (CORREIA, 2021)

The impacts on education were also great and, to a certain extent, altered the formation of educational systems, which began to incorporate visions and partners directed towards proposals committed to the market's designs, with specific forms of articulation between the State, the market and society and some different ways of privatization. Despite the maintenance of social spending with the Social Welfare State, the appropriation of resources was strongly directed towards the private sector, thus inserting capital into a new business, with a new source of influence and profits. A new paradigm of articulation between the social spheres.

### **Final remarks**

In every social process, there are reforms and/or impositions of the system, but there is also resistance, and the conformation that public policies take over the years in the most varied contexts is the result of power relations. In this context, possibilities for changing what dominant groups defend and propose exist and can be discussed to organize movements against, for example, budgetary restrictions in the areas of social policies.

In this sense, we end this text with a brief quote from Poulantzas (2015, p. 130, emphasis added, our translation), recognizing that in society there are contradictions and disputes between fractions and between classes, which are expressed in a specific way in the very core of the State, characterized as the “material condensation of a relationship of forces between classes and class fractions, as it is expressed, in an always specific way, within the State”. It is the dialectic that makes it possible to reflect and act in reality from the class struggle and the strength that the dominated classes have in the formulations and configuration of the State, as

the part of the resistance mentioned at the beginning of this text to the destruction of the Social Welfare State in Europe.

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