Considerations and inquiries about the dynamics of the Brazilian state facing the demands of schooling: instruments, dilemmas and complexity

Considerações e indagações sobre a dinâmica do estado brasileiro frente as demandas da escolarização: instrumentos, dilemas e complexidade

Consideraciones y consideraciones sobre la dinámica del estado brasileño frente a las demandas de la escuela: instrumentos, dilemas y complejidad

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this study is to understand issues of public policy, government and governance in relation to Education in Brazil, making use, for this analysis, of an understanding of evaluative and managerial instruments, in addition to public policies aimed at school education, to understand the scenario built in national education. Under the guise of cognitive analysis of public policies and their foundations, the state of the art is mobilized to better understand and analyze the guiding concepts of this work, which also considers theories about a change in the bias of bureaucracy and its role in the state. In the end, it is noted that the actions of the Brazilian government, in line with international pressure and evaluation mechanisms, assume an interventionist and inefficient character, which places the equitable democratization of education, advocated in the 1988 Constitution, as a challenge yet to be reached and with many obstacles along the way.
Keywords: Assessment. Educational system. Public policy. Schooling. Territoriality.

RESUMO
O objetivo deste estudo é compreender questões de políticas públicas, governo e governança em relação à Educação no Brasil, fazendo uso, para essa análise, de um entendimento dos instrumentos avaliadores e gestores, além de políticas públicas voltadas para a educação escolar, para compreender o cenário construído na educação nacional. À luz da análise cognitiva das políticas

públicas e seus fundamentos, o estado da arte é mobilizado para melhor compreender e analisar os conceitos norteadores desse trabalho, que também considera as teorias sobre uma mudança no viés da burocracia e sua atuação no estado. Ao final, nota-se que as ações do governo brasileiro, em linha com mecanismos de pressão e avaliação internacionais, assumem um caráter interventivo e pouco eficiente, que coloca o a democratização equânime da educação, preconizada na Constituição de 1988, como um desafio ainda a ser alcançado e com muitos entraves pelo caminho.
Palavras-chave: Avaliação. Escolarização. Política pública. Sistema educacional. Territorialidade.

RESUMEN
El objetivo de este estudio es comprender los temas de política pública, gobierno y gobernabilidad en relación con la Educación en Brasil, haciendo uso, para este análisis, de una comprensión de los instrumentos evaluativos y de gestión, además de las políticas públicas orientadas a la educación escolar, para comprender el escenario construido en la educación nacional. Bajo la apariencia del análisis cognitivo de las políticas públicas y sus fundamentos, se moviliza el estado del arte para comprender y analizar mejor los conceptos rectores de este trabajo, que también considera teorías sobre un cambio en el sesgo de la burocracia y su rol en el Estado. Al final, se observa que las acciones del gobierno brasileño, en línea con los mecanismos de presión y evaluación internacionales, asumen un carácter intervencionista e ineficiente, lo que coloca la democratización equitativa de la educación, preconizada en la Constitución de 1988, como un desafío a ser alcanzado y con muchos obstáculos en el camino.
Palabras clave: Enseñanza. Evaluación. Política pública. Sistema educacional. Territorialidad.

INTRODUCTION

This text is the result of the first moments of a study contextualized in two perspectives; one that seeks to understand public policy issues from the perspective of a cognitive approach that contains an effort to apprehend such policies as normative cognitive matrices, constituents of the interpretation of reality where public and private actors are inscribed. Another is the one that seeks to discuss the modes of action of the government(s) in the educational system through the instruments constructed and instituted for this purpose, since, once they are constituted as normative cognitive matrices, they "guide" the system of interpretation of reality.

This study starts from a consistently established hypothesis about the reality perceived in the Brazilian educational context that, being heavily dependent on the public power, does not receive government actions that result in its improvement, despite the regulation and control instruments established impose this as a need. This hypothesis allows us to infer that the political proposals for actions and regulation of the Brazilian State are apparently ineffective in their purpose of meeting the demands of schooling for today's society in Brazil. Since the country's redemocratization, at the end of the 1980s, due to changes in the agenda of actions and in the way of establishing the forms of regulation, the State was structured based on issues related to a Brazilian model of development that, unless better understood, remains until the present day[1]. The current educational context is guided and regulated by Law 9394/96 - Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB - Portuguese initials) - and by the National Education Plan (PNE - Portuguese initials) (Brasil, 2014), which determine and establish guidelines, goals and strategies for educational policy for the next ten years. It is also considered for the context the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC - Portuguese initials) ratified in 2017" which, called as "normative document", presents a set of guidelines and foundations with a view to "essential learning" and "consubstantiate, in the pedagogical scope, the learning and development rights of students in basic

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[1] The actuality expressed here does not bring data from the last two years considering the change of governments and the moment in which social distancing is installed due to the Pandemic of the new Corona Virus.

education". This study seeks to discuss the genealogy of this "policy", as a cognitive and normative matrix, and the possible (or necessary) changes in the modes of regulation, since these instruments are products of decisions that have in the determining references the producers of these decisions. In these instruments, mainly the concepts of: guidelines, goals, strategies and regulation, will be interpreted as action axes and used as analysis categories (Muller & Surel, 2002). We appropriate these concepts to identify, analyze, interpret and understand, through the foundations employed, the procedures and processes through which public action is established, promoted, guided and coordinated, with the purpose of achieving desirable solutions, in relation to situations problems. Afonso (2008; in Fialho & Verdasca) conceives and guides us that "[...] the regulation of public policies and public action, in education, is conceived as a process composed of a complex set of actions and interactions, carried out by multiple actors, producing the coordination of collective action in the provision of education as a public good" (p. 6, our translation). Thus, understanding the entire process underlying decision-making with a view to establishing instruments that will give materiality to government actions implies a search, in the form of analysis of these instruments, of the perceptions of governments and advisory groups through which such decisions passed in its trajectory until its implementation. This allows us to explore the knowledge effectively mobilized and officially recognized by peers, for this action (decision) from the Government to the State.

CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT BRAZILIAN EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Public policies in Brazil are being analyzed and evaluated, since the country's redemocratization in the 1980s, due to the change in the public agenda that, in the previous decade, was structured based on issues derived from a Brazilian model of development. The debate took place on and from the redistributive "*impacts*" of government actions and on the type of rationality that guided the established modernization project. As one of the focuses of this new agenda, questions about institutional organization come first, with actions being understood in terms of decentralization, participation, transparency and redefinition of the public-private relationship in policies. Then, with the effects of the end of the authoritarian period, some obstacles to the achievement of effective social policies remained and this favored countless other studies on public policies for the educational area. Afterwards, in a third moment, the international diffusion of a structural reform ideal, of the State and of the State organizational bureaucratic apparatus, becomes the main principle for the organization of the public agenda of the 1980s and 1990s, which provokes a proliferation of studies of and about public policies. The components of the institutional rearrangement gained great centrality in the government agenda, the mode and quality of public intervention in the economy and society as an object of study, enables the emergence of an empirical research program on issues related to the efficiency of policies and programs of governments (Melo, in Miceli, 1999, p. 81). No stranger to international issues regarding studies on the effectiveness and quality of the public sector, they recognize that evaluation assumes an institutional role and initiates the construction of numerous instruments for this purpose. In the late 1990s, also by constitutional precept, Brazil adhered to the principles of liberalism and, consequently, to the principles of performance established with an international dimension through *accountability*[2]. It seems that the transition between the dictatorial period and redemocratization led the country and its political leaders to certain ideological adhesions that reoriented the Brazilian state to the liberal state, but this was not enough to also reorient the methods and techniques of investigation, studies and research about how would behave this "new" state, now called post-

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[2] See an in-depth discussion on the term accountability, its polysemy and necessary understanding in the context, its ambiguities and reductionism in theoretical and conceptual treatment, in addition to its uncritical uses in the text of Almerindo Janela Afonso, *Políticas de responsabilização: equívocos semânticos ou ambiguidades político-ideológicas? Revista de Educação PUC-Campinas*, v.23, n.1, p.8-18, 2018. https://doi.org/10.24220/2318-0870v23n1a4052

bureaucratic[3], in relation to society in general and education in particular. Institutionally, a culture based on performance with strong economic appeal and rationalization of services is established. Since then, countless instruments have been developed and used, both for measures and for regulation, through normative legal frameworks with a view to achieving results and making them accountable. Inquiring and discussing about these instruments of action, the principles of accountability, the defining and influencing factors of political decisions, the dynamics of action in this current state through public agents is also the purpose of this study. It is considered that, based on the available data, the Brazilian state is not having success in its educational policy for basic education (or for higher education, although this is not the object of this study).

The proposed investigation, according to Leite and Peres (2015), in a work of public policy analysis in which the authors rely on the qualitative analysis of secondary and primary data, based on the literature called post-positivist public policy on transfer and dissemination of policies, indicating authors of references as the great common denominator for the valuation of ideas and cognitive processes in political decision-making. In search of a certain distance from determined precepts established in orthodox principles of positivist welfare economics and an approximation of conceptions that evidence other dimensions with different degrees of importance, such as subjectivity, interpretative normativity, argumentation and sociopolitical and idiosyncratic contextual aspects of each case in the analysis of public policies. Persuasion, rhetoric and interpretation must also be considered as important elements of analysis in this post-positivist orientation.

With these investigation procedures, it is sought to understand how the government acts, and by which principles it is guided when proposing certain public actions for education and schooling. In Brazil, there is the perception that "public policies" is the set of actions (or non-actions) of government and, in this sense, public policies for education are the set of these for society in the area of school education. The cognitive analysis of public policies is, in this context, one more procedure in the search for a broader understanding of this dynamic in the set of state actions. This type of study reveals that normative cognitive matrix(es) maintain or support those ideas or representations that defined the decisions taken. Numerous reference authors, such as Miceli (1999) and Arretche (2003), do not hesitate to state prominently that, in addition to the absence of a theoretical school with the capacity to accumulate long-term knowledge, research methods have received little attention in the debate. Souza (2003, p. 17, our translation) states that "the area still presents an excessive use of narratives that are not very guided by models or typologies of public policies, by theories close to the object of analysis and which maintain an exaggerated methodological lightness". Such procedures would hardly bring satisfactory answers to understand public policy for education as a set of actions derived from the instituted power, regulating and guiding education systems, instituting, regulating and guiding school education as well. Educational public policies concern school education and, in this sense, education is only school education when delimited by a system that presents itself as a result of these established and duly regulated policies. Schooling, however, is configured in a proper environment for pedagogical and educational activities, the school; a space for dialogue and formation that energizes a community, articulating distinct parts of a highly complex process: students, teachers, servants, parents, neighborhood and the Government (as the State in Action).

The actions of the public authorities produce effects on the educational system with deep interventions in schooling, sometimes inadequate to the dynamics of pedagogical practice in everyday life, but the cognitive processes involved in the construction and implementation of these actions do not seem to pay attention to these inadequacies. In general, there is a certain discrepancy between the guidelines and their rules and the structural and conjunctural reality of the school units

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[3] See the discussion on this conception of the post-bureaucratic state in Christian Maroy, Vers une régulation post-bureaucratique des systèmes d'enseignement en Europe? Sociologie et sociétés; Volume 40, numéro 1; 2008.

in the network of schools that make up the education system. The understanding of a reality impregnated and masked by "expectations" and "desires" that, although not so evident, can be perceived and evidenced in the speeches and instruments used that, at the same time, explain and seek to justify and interfere through actions/ interventions in this daily life.

In this context and sense, the cognitive analysis of Public Policy, as an analytical research methodology, proposes plausible hypotheses for the studies of the knowledge underlying the regulatory actions of governments in the field of education. A close look at ongoing actions, through available public programs, makes it possible to inquire and argue about the modes of regulation established through these instruments, and also about the option for performativity[4] in the Brazilian state. Since the 1960s/1970s, the development of "mass" educational systems, in the results of international research, show that this regulatory model is now "worked" by educational policies that seek to replace or superimpose new institutional arrangements on it (post-bureaucratic), based on guidelines from an evaluating State (Maroy, 2008). Even without an experience or structure that favors this condition, the Brazilian State, when implementing the new LDB in the 1990s, with the principles established by the new Constitution, assumes this role and begins to show that it is in a process of transition. The classic bureaucratic model used to overcome patrimonialism in the public sector is gradually being replaced by what appears to outline a model called "post-bureaucratic", with deep roots in the bureaucratic, but with clear traces of the managerial model. Programs, instruments, and actions bring about the regulatory state. This situation is evidenced by the search for effectiveness through the analytical-comparative valuation between the proposed goals with the effects produced and the expected, concrete, observable and measurable results, bringing some of the logic of the private managerial rationality to the public sector (Torres & Kerbauy, 2019). These goals are pursued and followed by technical guidelines, administrative and management guidelines, normative rules for institutional actions of the state and other actions. Therefore, it is evident that those proposals included in the PNE (transformed into Law No. 13,005/20147) comply with part of this regulation with a regulatory function in the logic of managerial governance[5] (in the post-bureaucratic state). The materiality and feasibility of these targets will be verified through the application of these measurable and observable regulatory instruments used by governments, as they materialize operationally, in addition to other forms, through census data collection and large-scale assessments. Therefore, it is important to clarify that the instruments of public action among the so-called "government technologies", in recent Brazil, are on the rise with the emergence of new issues in public policies or for the reorientation of older ones. This situation brings the need for reforms in the conduct of public policies while revealing a certain approximation to managerial models inspired by market regulations. It should be clarified that, theoretically, the instruments are institutions created based on short-term calculations, with the purpose of strengthening the positions of power and the respective decision makers. They have an auxiliary function linked to secondary political beliefs and are directly related to the technical or procedural dimensions (budgets, programs and rules) established from the decisions made. It is for these and other characteristics of government actions that attention to instruments should be highlighted, as it allows for the analysis and discussion of the processes of change and learning inherent in a public policy. Proposals for action by governments in Brazil, whether on behalf of the BNCC or on account of the proposals presented by the different states of the Federation, in general, are absolutely

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[4] This term is used here in the sense given by S. Ball who conceives performativity as a technology, a culture and a method of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and demonstrations as means of control, friction and change.

[5] In the scope of this study, we assume the term Governance as the set of measures and rules that guarantee the proper functioning and control of a State, an institution or an organization, public or private. It is multi-stakeholder management. There is a deep discussion about this concept in Ysa, Tamyko; Albareda, Adrià and Forberger, Sarah (2014). What is governance. In *Reframing addictions: policies, processes and pressures.* ALICE-RAP Editors, (pp.8-16).

interventionist. Which means, in a way, employing certain means to adjust the behavior of actors involved in public programs, such as persuasion, from the technical perspective of communication and language, and coercion, by establishing binding regulations beyond argumentation and economic and financial encouragement[6] (Lascoumes & Simard, 2011).

This situation is clearly observed in studies on local governance and governance regimes that, based on the criteria of ease of introduction and accommodation in the structure of the system and its effectiveness in public actions, establish a typology for the instruments in relation to the resources used in different governances. They are: Law and regulation; Public expenditure and taxation; Bureaucracy and management; the Institutions; Information, persuasion and deliberation and; Networks and governance feature. Attention should be paid to the typology that exists here: laws and decrees, normative acts, formal opinions and official guidelines. Despite the differences observed from country to country and from sector to sector, some recommendations are made regarding the uses of these means, such as taking a closer look at top-down approaches and traditional instruments that do not always legitimize public action or motivate actors (Katzenstein, 2001). Just for the record, governance in the State of São Paulo reorganizes the entire administrative and management structure of the Department of Education through a single Decree (n. 64,187, of 2019) with 126 Articles. When analyzing the arsenal of implicit and explicit instruments in the means used by the Brazilian state for public actions in general, it is evident why the term governance is evident, but it is not surprising, since governance is a convenient concept. A descriptive idea of reality, but also a normative ideal associated with transparency, ethics and the effectiveness of public action. Governance, therefore, becomes a word that illuminates public action, accommodating technical objectivity in itself (Pitseys, 2010/2).

Governance, thus understood and associated with the instrumental means of public action, allows us to better understand the political decision formulated by niches of party power and that meet coalition arrangements for "governability", but disregard the complexity, dynamics and chronology of trajectory that permeates the organizational structure of the state to its capillary effectiveness in society and that, therefore, will be doomed to failure or stagnation in insufficient standards in view of the expectations of society and, in general, of the government itself. Public schooling directly receives the effects of political clashes produced by differences between trajectories, operational interpretation or hybridization of models with the symbolic, structural or institutional realities of the school in the most diverse social environments considered (Maroy, 2008). However, the regulatory state is charged, but not responsible, for the insufficiencies of programs and processes. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the structural fabric existing in the bureaucratic organization of administration in the public service, through which these instruments are transferred to the "street level" distribution instance (Lipsky, 1980). For example, the specific case of the instrument used in ENEM and its results, the production of indicators, the comparative technical analyzes between the data produced are explicit regulatory instruments used by the government to provide basic education at secondary level. Data from recent years of application of this instrument reveal linear stability in student performance at levels below the basic.

Thus, it is worth noting the undeniable expansion of schooling in Brazil, at least in the last 25 years, both in basic education and in higher education, however, there is no qualitative equivalent in performance in the same proportion. Rationality is valued, but it is increasingly reduced to instrumental rationality. With the concern to improve quality, valuing efficiency, "performativity" (Ball, 2003) tends to disconnect from the purposes for which it is intended, in addition to this the aggravating the situation, already grievous, of devaluing the teaching profession contributes to a great extent to the inability of producing in the expected results (Moreira & Cardoso, 2020). Therefore, the expansion, as a result of the democratization process of basic schooling, provided a

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[6] These are the categories, or typologies, of the means established in the studies by John Peter (2001) used in this study because they are close to the categories that emerge in public programs in Brazil.

significant increase in demand for this level of education, both quantitatively and qualitatively, but is still far from an equitable universalization. Schooling is becoming significantly more complex in its pedagogical work, both because of the diversity it concentrates and the need for permanent qualification present within the school unit, a direct effect of political-administrative actions that make new structural and operational arrangements to be implemented. This context implies considering other fundamentals that are not within the scope of the actions developed so far, but necessary to understand the entire pedagogical dimension of the educational act at school. Systematizing, organizing, proposing updates and providing "in-service training" in the educational system has not been enough. In addition, as a result, the most important function of schooling - inclusion - is weakened and becomes insufficient to meet this demand. What is verified in this daily life of the "real" school is an apparent process of dismantling the educational structure, both due to the excess of normative and operational demands and to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness itself, which, in effect, gradually builds an apparent "disabling" of institutionalized public agents for qualified assistance in this process. This happens when the valorization of instrumental efficiency, technically standardized, prevails over respect for the pedagogical and solidary commitment, over educational purposes and the values that underlie a certain standardization of standards proper to professional teaching autonomy. In this context, it is necessary to ask: what kind of knowledge supports this situation or even legitimizes it? Therefore, is it not evident that there is a need for a certain local dialogue as a form of persuasive regulation? While the lack of legitimacy resulting from persuasion remains, we are faced with the persistent state of crisis in education. We experience a state of permanent insufficiency of political proposals that are consolidated so such State actions produce the expected results, there is an apparent inertia in the face of the low mobility of the system and the gradual degradation of the educational process, which requires us to make efforts to overcome the situation of fragility of the complex environment of schooling with its pedagogical reasons and education in general (Fert, 2017).

Today[7], Brazil is going through a time of political and economic problems, unless analyzed in greater depth, due to the mistakes of governments and programs, originating, in theory, in the existing ideological matrices within the scope of Brazilian society, in the structure of the state and in the distribution and party organization that makes up the current public power. This situation, notably, weakens political power at different levels of the country's federalized structure and significantly affects local dialogue through regulatory instruments in this segment. Thus shows the exemplary case of the "occupations" of schools that made the government of the State of São Paulo revoke[8] a state law that restructured the entire organization of the official education network in São Paulo. In an emblematic way, this situation characterizes incapacity, with loss of effectiveness of traditional public policies that privilege bureaucratic regulatory mechanisms. Therefore, in this sense and context, a certain empowerment of the "street level" public agent is necessary, as an articulating and mediating entity in the complex dynamics of public action that is far beyond the influence and control of political authority. This loss of effectiveness shows that public action, by involving different agents in a multiplicity of actions and interests, legitimate or not, produces results that fall short (or at least different) from those expected by the traditional hierarchical and normative regulatory power.

The deepening of studies on these topics in the light of cognitive analysis of public policies, their foundations and "*state of the art*", in addition to mobilizing the theoretical framework and operational concepts of this methodology, to better understand the guiding fundamentals

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[7] In the discussion that I present, I have disregarded the effects of the pandemic situation by not sticking to this moment that disfigured the dynamics of the political and educational system.

[8] On December 5, 2015; the governor of the state of São Paulo, Geraldo Alckmin, in a measure taken after the series of protests and occupations of public schools, officially revokes the school reorganization in São Paulo through decree 61,692.

(references) underlying the implicit decision-making (sometimes explicit) in the instruments of policy regulation in the field of education, reveals the dimension of the separation of these decisions and the territorial educational needs. In this sense, and along this path, it will also be discussed, in the context of established cognitive and normative matrices, the concepts and foundations that guide the perception of decision makers, implicitly or explicitly, through the regulatory instruments produced for education in Brazil today; the LDB, the PNE and the BNCC. The topical analysis of instrumentation, considering the change in traditional methods, which replaces observation and analysis, to the detriment of sociological tradition, from the perspective of instruments as non-neutral devices that produce their own effects with some independence from the pursued objectives, reveals more substantive contents of public policies allowing for better criticality in relation to them. This instrumentation brings to light another theorization underlying the ruler/governed relationships (Lascomes & Le Gales, 2004). According to these authors, the effective content of public policies, in the so-called conventional entries, becomes invisible to established classical approaches and methods. The functionalist or purely technical approaches of the instruments can present themselves as without political interference, allowing different sectors or agents (actors) a "*purely*" technical coordinating action. However, on the contrary, the instruments of public action are not tools devoid of axiological neutrality[9], but rather impregnated with these intentions.

Public action (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2010) is a sociopolitical space built both by techniques and instruments and by purposes or contents. Thus, an instrument of public action is configured as a technical and social device with the purpose of organizing specific social relations between the government, the structural dynamics of the state in which it finds itself and its recipients, according to the representations and meanings that carries. This approach, supported by critical studies on management, denaturalizes the neutrality of technical objects by showing that their dynamics, in the structure of the state, conform much more to the determinants than to their own characteristics and to the implicitly condensed information they bring (Hood, 1986; 2007). The instrument of public action makes it possible to think about public action itself through the components that structure them. However, as explained at the beginning of this article, what is observed is that the political proposals for actions and regulation of the Brazilian State are apparently ineffective in their purpose of meeting the demands of schooling in today's society. Some needs and ailments are persistent and remain for several decades. In terms of performance, there is an apparent stability in the development of basic education at insufficient levels, especially when compared to international indices and standards. In this sense, the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), used by the OECD[10], is a reference for the analysis of school performance in 79 countries. In 2018, this survey included Brazil and the Brazilian result in comparison with the average obtained by the OECD countries, seen in figure 1[11] (Brazil - Country Note - PISA 2018), shows the extent of the discrepancy between these contexts.

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[9] Axiological neutrality - *Wertfreiheit* - it is a methodological position that sociologist Max Weber proposed in Le Savant et Le Politique, which aims to make researchers aware of their own values during their scientific work, in order to reduce as much as possible the biases of their own value judgments.

[10] The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was founded in 1948, under the name of OEEC – Organization for European Economic Cooperation, to organize the effort to rebuild the part of Europe aligned with American interests after World War II. It functions as a forum for discussing issues related to the development and improvement of social or economic policies.

[11] Data taken from the report produced by the OECD on PISA 2018 - Brazil - Country Note - PISA 2018 Results - Volumes I-III © OECD 2019.

Figure 1. Average obtained by OECD countries vs. average obtained by Brazil.
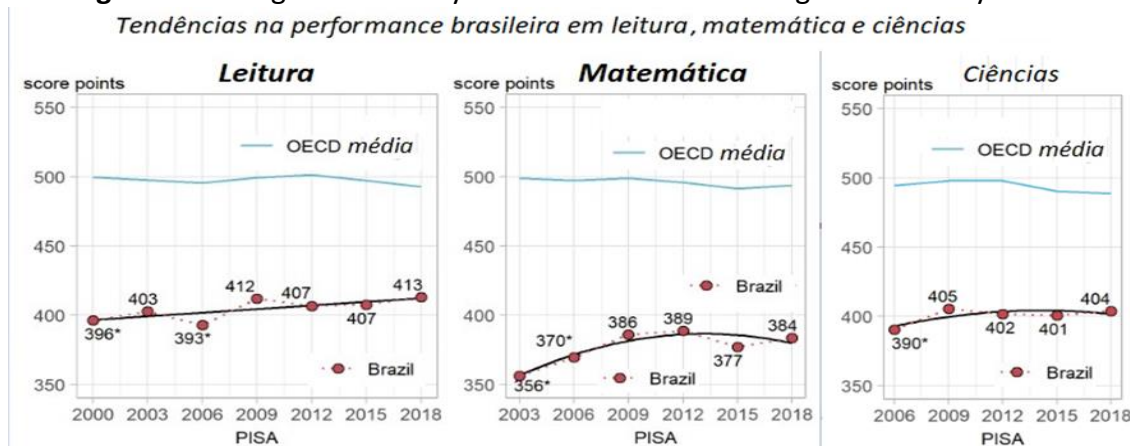
Released at the end of 2019, the results place Brazil: between 58th and 60th in reading, between 66th and 68th in science and between 72nd and 74th in mathematics, in a total of 79 countries.

In this context and sense, it is impossible not to inquire about these results and associate them with public policies and actions for basic school education. We live in a democratic rule of law where this level of formal education is the duty of the state, however, it seems that the state has not been able to provide the desired qualification for the minimum standards of Brazilian schooling. Considering that the state has the institutional, constitutional, legal, budgetary, plans, programs and projects established, why the stagnation at such disparate and unsatisfactorily low levels? There is a perception that we are walking in a circle that closes around a permanent crisis associated with an insufficient operational systematization that takes on a different guise from time to time, from government to government, but with the same qualitatively low essence. Although it is human actions that make structures more dynamic, the dynamics of/in the structural, institutional and pedagogical complexity is far beyond the perception of governments and rulers. The insufficiencies of actions in view of the needs and the law itself, maintain an insurmountable inequality due to an irrecoverable social and educational distance, thus "condemning" the excluded to degradation (Lemes, 2019). These considerations and questions about the dynamics developed by the Brazilian state in face of the demands of schooling place the instruments used in these processes in evident centrality. Here, public policy instruments are not institutions in the sense of being organizations or government agencies, but in the sense that they structure and influence public policies (Lascoumes & Le Galés, 2007, p. 8). From this point of view, the choice (or construction) of the instrument is a matter with a strong political basis, as it is an important constituent of the structure, process and results. In this way, instruments are not purely technical choices and produce effects independently of their stated goals. Instruments structure public policies according to their inherent logic and can be described and classified according to different typologies (Peters, 2000). It so happens that these actions of the public power apparently adhere to an organizational structure understood from an institutionalist perspective; institutionalization was defined in terms of the processes by which certain patterns achieve normative and cognitive fixity and are taken for granted (Meyer, Boli & Thomas, 1987). More pertinent analyzes and discussions are also presented by Di Maggio and Powell (1983; 1991) in what they called *institutional isomorphism* and, later in a new discussion in *The New Institutionalism*, where they highlighted the coercive, normative and mimetic processes of reproduction intrinsic to the concept. In this context, the coercive factors involve the different forms of political pressure through the state itself, which, with its bureaucratic structure, provides supervision and regulatory control; normative regulatory acts and the mimetic forces that guide habitual behaviors and responses, taken for granted in circumstances of uncertainty. However, despite the intensity of these pressures, they are not fully determinants of the dynamics established

in the processes of implementation of the instruments by the state, since, in general, organizations have certain territorial roots[12] in a broad sense, where practices, with a certain frequency, despite being reflections or responses to rules and beliefs, they are also influenced by conventions built in a broader environment such as the cultural one. Here, it is necessary to understand the debates that are established from the grounds presented on institutional theory with a sociological basis, made by Berger and Luckmann (1985). From these authors, it can be seen that, due to the complex intersubjectivity that manifests in the relationship with institutional processes, the pragmatic-utilitarian rationality does not offer sufficient epistemic density to guide the implementation of such instruments and obtain satisfactory results. What is noticed is that public actions do not advance, in this complex web of the structure of the state, in search of a certain understanding of its dynamics, to enable the efficient implementation of the instrument constructed or defined for a given action. The public power seems to believe that the control structure and coercive capacity of the regulation and accountability instruments of public agents are sufficient to guarantee the results, thus diverging the responsibility, or at least is focus, to the agents instead of the regulatory policies and economic/financial subsidies from the government, from the federal to the municipal level (Farenzana, 2010 apud Costa & Vidal, 2020). This context presents evidence that the Brazilian state is currently in an advanced dynamic towards a "post-bureaucratic" model.

This discussion, focusing on issues of basic schooling, considers that government actions for this purpose have kept student performance stagnant at very low levels for almost two decades (see graphs presented above) and, based on the available data, no possibility of changes in projections for the near future. The structure of the school is the same as it was decades, maybe centuries ago, this requires a mandatory update, both because of the difference between that society and the current one, as well as a more adequate service to institutional relationships, communication, political movements, the democracy and its orientation towards the modern state and, finally, the question of technology and the respective technological products that transform our habits and impose a relationship of dependence on a plural reading of its objects, whether theoretical or practical instrumental. Due to this complex multidimensionality, the discussion proposed here is based on an approach focused on the interactions between the causes and mechanisms of action, since the theme of reforms is always in evidence in the political discourse(s) and in derivative public action. This approach allows questioning and overcoming certain classic dichotomies in the analysis of public policy, due to changes in the structural dynamics of production and the relationships influenced and altered by communications and interconnections in social networks. In this context, this approach, focusing on the interactions between causes and mechanisms (instruments) of actions, allows us to ask whether, in this context, the State democratically "negotiates" with local entities and schools the objectives to be achieved, the responsibilities and resources for these interactions between causes and mechanisms of action for this purpose? Does the State consider its possibilities of action taking into account the public or the local context of the school? Such inquiries contain assumptions that both answers are negative, both because of the operational impossibility of the system itself and because of the absence of mediating practices within the structure of the state. Therefore, the reflection suggests that this impossibility of administrative legal order, whose determinant of control is exercised through centralized rules and distributed in the form of normative acts regulating the processes that establish a kind of governance by results without, however, defining mediating instruments suitable for the actions of the actors. With the objectives and educational programs to be achieved by the entire educational system defined in a centralized manner, teaching units are left with relative autonomy for pedagogical and/or financial management and, even so, practically immobilized in

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[12] Here I am using the term in the sense discussed by Milton Santos in the text *O retorno do território*. In: SANTOS, Milton; SOUZA, Maria A. A.; SILVEIRA, Maria L., Território: Globalização e fragmentação. São Paulo: Hucitec/Anpur, 1993.

face of the complex Brazilian diversity, especially in recent years when the educational financing was changed through the Constitutional Amendment n. 95/2016, which freezes the investment of public resources in education, so even with several advances there are great setbacks and obstacles to be overcome (Souza, Silva & Sousa, 2019).

The initial issue presented raises the question about the dynamics of the Brazilian state facing the demands of schooling, as the objective is to have an organizational and professional learning process that results in improving the quality of local schooling. This implies, therefore, *ipso facto*, autonomy in the economic and pedagogical management of schools and better preparation to respond to the demands that arise, on the one hand from the educational authorities in the system and, on the other hand, from the territorial and community reality in which they are. For this, the established modes of coordination and control are no longer based solely on verifying the conformity of acts with the rules and procedures, typical of a bureaucratic or even post-bureaucratic model, but modes of coordination are established through the dissemination of standards of reference as "best practices"; integrated formative moments, support for local projects; also in the mediation, contracting and evaluation of processes and results (Maroy, 2005).

Returning to the starting point, and central, of this study means to confirm its inseparability from the issue of change in public action, since this theme, under the name of "reform", is an essential figure in the rhetoric of discourses, but not very pragmatic in public action. In this dimension, what is proposed is to reflect and understand the issues that support the formulations of public policy in the analytical perspective of the cognitive approach that, as constituent matrices of interpretation of the real, guide and reorient the dynamic(s) of State action through instruments of organization and control of institutions. The term "reform" does not have enough semantic density to induce changes, it is just another clothing on what is there. The discussion and understanding of change in public action through reflection on the fundamentals of public policy and theories of public action, show us possibilities for overcoming operational problems and difficulties in the state and, in effect, in the public sector (Palier, Surel et al., 2010). The State, in turn, is often presented as a monolithic set more or less closed in on itself, but integrated in a complex game of interrelations, which imperfectly dominate its environment, which hinders changes of/in public action. There lies a certain difficulty, as the interest(s) must be shifted to issues that have been somewhat neglected until then, in particular the weight that the past has in determining the frameworks and modalities of current policies and even on their adaptive capabilities to public action devices (Muller & Surel, 2002).

Schooling, mainly public, ends up submitting to all these contradictions and analytical incompleteness due to structural determinants of the state itself which, with its organizational structure closed in rigid processes of operational and budgetary control, inhibits effective actions to democratize the school environment in its relations with society itself. We are guided by the legislation that is quite advanced and, from this perspective, schooling configured as democratic, so it is, therefore, in law, but not in fact. The democratic school, at the moment, is still something to be achieved, although there is already much to defend, as it is the school that puts into practice the democratic ideal of a society and seeks to make this ideal the fundamental attitude of the teacher, of the student and of the administration. In this sense, it is necessary to understand the organization's necessary flexibility so that it is adequate to the challenges that will be posed for this trajectory in its complexity and territoriality (Lemes, 2013). Among other difficulties brought about by the search for the democratization of education, there is an apparent contradiction in the political project itself: democratization in schooling would be a utopia that does not withstand the test of reality or a condition of permanent crisis of the devices on which the implementation of this type project support? Where basic education is a right of society, there must be a parallel reorientation of the forms of justice and the State itself, otherwise, the conceptions of justice are diversified and equality is just another definition among others (Derouet, 2010).

Democratized schooling is a conception focused on the issue of cultural plurality and on the education of difference from the pedagogical recontextualization. The teaching practice, as a social and pedagogical practice, in the face of uncertainties produced by its inherent complexity and its consequent paradigmatic fragility, means that the needs of the current school have been addressed by actions that touch its problematic core without producing the intervention effect. Assuming, like J. Ardoino (1993), the hypothesis of the complexity of the reality about which we question ourselves, imposes a multi-referenced analytical view and a plural reading of its objects from different angles, involving specific perspectives and languages, adequate to the required descriptions. In this way, the signs of the exhaustion state of a school and schooling model are evidenced in the face of the requirements of the demands imposed by the democratic state and, at the same time, this process is accelerated by the paradigmatic crises that hegemonic knowledge and the "universal truths" of the educational process are going through (Lemes, 2003). Such demands impose counterproductive demands on school institutions that interfere in the action of educators to produce integration, social bonds, increased skills, development of self-confidence, the creative capacities of the young people entrusted to them, and has a direct effect on increasing their state of exhaustion (Fert, 2017).

Knowledge about cognition and human development, which is far beyond the reproductive expectations of traditional pedagogical purposes, show that the 21st century begins bringing the need for the emancipation of "being" in a digital world, where the issue of technology[13], understood as the epistemology of technique, redefines learning, teaching and, in effect, schooling itself. For this benefit to be disseminated in society, regardless of social and cultural origin, it is necessary to support the discovery and appropriation of these new environments and, above all, put people in a position to learn, create, interact and understand the world with these instruments, mechanisms and underlying logic.

The school, submitted to the intervention and control power of the state, integrates an operational bureaucratic structure linked to the state structure, where there is a strong connection between the theory of the state and the theory of bureaucracy. Currently, in the 21st century, the expansion of the functions of the State in general, and especially social policy and the social welfare system, make the bureaucracy be the very structure on which the State is based and sustained. The history of the modern state shows two dimensions that are integrated and, more than any other(s), forged and structured this state: the capitalist system and the bureaucratic organization (Anter, 2010).

The type of control observed in these bureaucratic plots, in the degree of complexity acquired by the contemporary State, imposes necessary reformulations and gives rise to the concept of regulation, among others. In search of this understanding in the context of education and the emergence of responses to the demands imposed on new modes of governance and coordination of public actions in education, a post-bureaucratic dimension is emerging (Barroso, 2000). Thus considered, education is political and, in turn, the political must become educational and not just repel the incoming threats, especially when these tend to interfere with the pedagogical and school management processes along the paths of the shadows of modernity. This is a difficult but necessary task of an education that does not avoid reflecting on the fundamentals of its project, including the imagination that this implies: the development of the critical function through its various intellectual investments (scientific, philosophical, praxiological...) and the corresponding approaches of "explanation", "understanding", sensitization, "awareness" and "elucidation" that result from this (Ardoino, 1998).

The reflections proposed here, at times argued by the contradictory, place us in front of certain final considerations with a view to a future return to the social and community needs of the school. Does this mean, among other possibilities, a vision of school territory? Let's consider some

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[13] Álvaro Vieira Pinto discusses the meaning of the word Technology as an epistemology of technique in his book O Conceito de Tecnologia, published in 2005.

points for this. Paul Alliès, in his thesis on "The invention of territory", considers that this notion was used from a "natural" representation of political borders that was adjusted, and legally materialized, along with the structural plots of the administrative gears of the Nation state in formation and that this initial political-administrative intertwining was described as a constitutive mark of the French exception and republican centralism. Municipalities are not just interior spaces of the national territory and, perhaps for this reason, the term has undergone variations in meaning over time, both in its administrative and political foundations (Alliès, 1980). The first changes arise from the growing importance of studies and analysis of government actions aimed at the conditions for implementing public policies at the local level. Indeed, other changes are emerging, including a growing responsibility of local communities in relation to issues involving the term and its derivations such as "territorialization" and qualifiers such as "territorial", "territoriality" or "territorialized". These developments reveal, at the theoretical level, new political and administrative issues linked to a general process of decentralization in all national political systems (Alliès, 1980; Barroso, 2005; 2009).

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