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# The Coexistence of Neoliberalism and Democratic Socialism in recent Brazilian Educational Reforms

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## 【要旨】

ブラジルはBRICsの一員として急速な経済成長を遂げたことで注目されているが、教育改革も急速におこなわれている。ブラジルの経済成長の要因は、国際機関の介入のもと新自由主義的改革を断行したことによるが、今日の教育改革もまた新自由主義的な発想のもとでおこなわれている。

まず本稿が取り組んだのは、ブラジルの教育改革を象徴すると思われる四つの教育改革を概観し、新自由主義的改革の実相を明らかにすることである。ここで見出されたのは、教育改革がナショナルテストや数値化を伴って加速化し、学校各々に数値目標が課せられ、教師の給与体系にも影響しているという実態である。他方で、新自由主義的改革に抗うような教育改革もみられた。すなわち、再分配を基本とした社会民主主義的な教育改革が取り組まれている。

では以上のような二つの志向をもった教育改革は、いかなる影響を現場に与えているのであろうか。本稿ではこれらの教育改革が与えた影響について、二つの学校を取り上げ分析した。ここでは、新自由主義的な制度に取り組みながら、福祉政策と連携した教育制度を同時に実施しなければならない現場の困難さを明らかにした。

## 1. Neo liberalism and Educational Reform

Brazil is experiencing fast economic growth in the past decades, after a remarkable economic crisis in the 90's. Nowadays, Brazil is considered one of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) and it is also part of the BRICS because of the changes that are happening under the influence of international organizations such as the World Bank and IMF-sponsored programs (Kempner and Jurema, 2002). Their aim is to control cultural and especially economic instability in NICs, promoting changes in their structure. For example, World Bank suggests that those countries should be in conformity with standards from other developing countries and should also promote social structure changes. These reformations proposed are based on neoliberal ideas. According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

What is the influence of neoliberal reforms to developing countries? According to Torres (2006), neoliberal reformation can be effective for a world that is globalized but there are some points that should be considered concerning countries in Latin America. He also affirms that there are 3 main influences

from neoliberal reforms. First, the political economy in education, then connection between education and work, and third, the establishment of an educational level that needs to be attained.

This research will focus on this influence indicated by Torres (2006), discussing educational reforms that happened in Brazil under the neoliberal ideology. And it will present data about how schools are being affected by recent educational reforms.

## 2. Brazilian Educational Reform

In the 90's, education in Brazil was characterized by a significant inequality in finance, access and quality of education. One of the most important issues at that time was to promote universal access to primary school. Another problem was regional differences in quality of education, because of the several underdeveloped regions and regional disparities, and a decentralized educational system.

Brazilian companies could not compete with the opening to external competition and international agencies spread the idea that to survive to competition, the education level needed to improve. At that time, the policies adopted had influence from the Thatcher's model. However, according to Oliveira (2007), even though World Bank and other international organizations influence changes on the educational field in Brazil, they do not determine all changes. In 1990, the government signed the Education for All agreement, with 155 other countries, promising to assure basic education of quality. Another action was the creation of SAEB (National Basic Education Assessment System), an evaluation only for a sample of 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Fundamental Education and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Medium Education students.

To better understand education in Brazil, let's outline its structure. Brazil is composed of 26 states and the Federal District. The education is regulated by the Federal Government, which defines guidelines for the organization of educational programs. Local governments are responsible for establishing state and educational programs following their guidelines and for using funds supplied by the Federal Government. However, each State and municipalities have autonomy to design their own education system, based on certain guidelines from the National Education Bases and Guidelines Law (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação), known as LDB. The Brazilian government approved this law in 1996.

Education is divided into four levels: Pre-School Education, Fundamental Education (Fundamental Education I and II), Middle Education and Higher Education.

- a) Pre-School Education – Municipal Government responsibility. It is aimed at children under 6.
- b) Fundamental Education - free for everyone and mandatory for children between the ages of 6 to 14.

This level of education is provided by the municipal government and the state government.

- c) Middle Education - mainly provided by the State, it is also free, and is not mandatory.
- d) Higher education - free at public universities (state government and federal government).

With strategies of flow correction to reduce the gap between the student's age and grade, the construction of new buildings, and other strategies, more than 96% of the population at schooling age is attending school. The access improved. Therefore, the politicians and those in the education area are now especially claiming a better quality of education.

Another focus lately has been the teachers' training programs, both initial during undergraduate course and in-service. Depending on the region, there are still teachers that have not graduated. LDB was a

tentative to avoid those practices but in remote places where teachers who are available do not meet this requirement, they are sometimes the only ones to teach.

The education reform that is happening also had the influence of the results of Pisa 2000. Even though Brazil is not member of the OECD, it has participated at the PISA evaluation since 2000. This first edition, Brazil was in the last position of the 31 participant countries. Three years later, the participation has increased to 50 countries, and Brazil ended with 37<sup>th</sup> place in reading, 39<sup>th</sup> in science, and 40<sup>th</sup> in Mathematics. In 2006, within the 57 countries, Brazil was in the group with lower positions. If we compare the students who are in the first tenth (better grades) and the ninth tenth of the distribution (worst grades) at Pisa, the best students performance is 83% better then the students with the lower grades. In Mathematics is 134% difference, and in sciences there is 96% difference total (Waltembeg, 2005, p.87).

## 2.1. National Test - SAEB and Prova Brasil

Brazil only recently developed an evaluation system to be used to formulate educational policies. The Brazilian Assessment System for Basic education (SAEB) was created in 1990 by Ministry of Education (MEC) to evaluate educational quality. A sample of 4th and 8th grade students of fundamental education and the 3rd grade of middle education from public and private school located at urban and rural schools are evaluated in Portuguese and Mathematics every 2 years. SAEB was the first national test used to deeply diagnose the educational system. Since it is a sample test, the results can be measured only by States.

Prova Brasil was created in 2005 to evaluate all the schools. The 4th and 8th grade students from urban public schools with more than 20 students take this test that evaluates Portuguese and Mathematics. The test results can be measured by school, and they provide performance details of each school in the country.

The MEC says that those two tests, SAEB and Prova Brasil, aim to evaluate the systems, not the students individually. Since the curriculum is too large to be checked in one test, the students receive different tests that will test various abilities, and each test will cover part of the curriculum. In other words, a group of students answers various tests. The results will reflect abilities achieved by a group of students according to the Brazilian Curriculum Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais) and to curriculums of different states and cities in Brazil. In 2007, 21 different types of tests were applied to different students.

The tests are complemented with a socioeconomic questionnaire filled out by the students that can give factors that could be associated with performance. Other questionnaires are filled by teachers and principals, giving details about their socioeconomic and cultural level, their academic background, and working conditions. It also collects information about school climate, infra-structure, human resources, leadership and management styles and other information about the school.

The information obtained by SAEB and Prova Brasil and by the questionnaires can be used by the Federal Government, the State Government and the Local Government to define actions to improve the quality of education and to reduce inequalities that are so extreme in Brazil. For example, data from SAEB revealed that reading skills were low and that children who attendant pre-school tended to have better reading skills by the end of 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In order to change this reality, the government decided to expand the basic education from an 8 year to a 9 year period. The mandatory education will start at 6

years old as the transition happens. The first year of the mandatory education is being used as preparation to teach children to read and write at 7 years old. With this process, the municipal government is expected to be responsible for all the Fundamental Education level from next year. This transfer of responsibility from State Government to Municipal Government is part of the municipalization process.

The ministry of education also expects that the results of Prova Brasil and SAEB will be used by teachers, principals and by society to promote discussions and changes in pedagogical work that could improve educational system's quality.

## 2.2. School evaluation - IDEB

The Basic Education Development Index, known as IDEB is an index calculated according to the performance at the National Test (Prova Brasil) and attendance rate. It was decided to use both measures to prevent schools from promoting only automatic approval to the next grade, or on the other hand, increase retention rate to improve student's performance only to get good results on those coefficients. The scale goes from 0 to 10, and each school has a biannual target until 2022<sup>1</sup>. The target for 2022 is 6, a score that is compatible with grades that have been obtained by countries from OECD if a similar methodology is used. As the schools try to achieve intermediate goals in a short period of time, it is expected that IDEB will contribute to reduction of inequality in educational quality.

The results can be used to identify weakness and strength of each school, helping the government to correct weakness, giving technical and financial support to schools with lowest scores. IDEB identifies schools that need help, using measurable criteria, and obligates the Federal Government to take action and make volunteer transfers based on certain criteria. Those schools have to make a detailed project to improve their students' performance that will be sent to the Ministry of Education in order to receive a special financial support to help them to improve their scores. However, the funds can take more than one year to be received, and the teachers have struggled with the difficulties to improve their scores.

Since the education system is not equal in all states, and the constitution gives a certain amount of autonomy to each school to manage itself, a national test raises criticism. Schools that admit students from low socioeconomic classes argue that even though teachers do their best trying to teach, students are not motivated to learn and the support from families is not enough. This is a barrier to improve their score. Another difficulty is that schools with higher IDEB do not receive financial support and still are expected to keep improving their performance. School principals are afraid that they will not be able to improve at the same rate that they have been improving.

## 2.3. The connection with the Reform of the Social Welfare - Bolsa Família

President Lula supporters that elected him were mainly part of the working class and they had high expectations to this left wing leadership (Working Party). As a result, the federal government prioritized poverty alleviation. One of the policies to achieve this objective was the creation in 2003 of Bolsa Família Program (Family Allowance), with financial and technical support from World Bank. It is a financial aid to families in poverty or extreme poverty, and integrates other programs such as Fome Zero (Zero Hungry), Food Allowance and Gas Allowance (a transfer to compensate for the end of federal gas subsidies).

Families whose income per-capita is below 140 reais a month, an income considered as poverty, can subscribe to Bolsa Família to receive 22 to 200 reais a month, an amount that depends on the number of children and their ages. Furthermore, an additional of 68 reais per month is given to families whose per-capita income is less than 70 reais, considered as extreme poverty. This is called Basic Benefit, and has no conditionality. The program distributes funds to more than 12 million families, more than 46 million people, making Bolsa Família one of the largest conditional cash transfer program in the world. In 2006, Bolsa Família cost was about 0.5% of Brazilian GDP, about 2.5% of total federal government expenditure. The 4<sup>th</sup> National Report of follow up on the millennium development goals points out that 12% extreme poverty in 2003 decreased to 4.8% in 2008. (MDS, 2010).

The program consists of 3 main actions: transfer of wealth, conditioned transference, and complimentary programs.

- a) Transfer of wealth - promotes reduction of problems resulting from poverty situation;
- b) Conditionalities - reinforce access to basic social rights in education, health and social welfare. The conditionalities include attendance at school for children and their vaccination. For future mothers, it is required to have periodical examinations during their pregnancy. This program attempts to both reduce shortterm poverty by direct cash transfers and reduce longterm poverty by increasing human capital through conditional cash transfers and complimentary programs, and education to interrupt the cycle of transmission and reducing the future poverty.
- c) Complimentary programs - help to give new opportunities for families, investing in human capital to support them to get out of the vulnerability situation they face, interrupting the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Complimentary programs include literacy for adults, and supplementary courses. According to the Department of Social Development, 47 thousand people who received the allowance finished courses in civil construction and tourism, and another 31 thousand are attending school. The other 27 thousand receives supplementary tuition in fundamental and medium education. (MDS, 2010)

Even though Bolsa Família is not a program to improve performance, some principals and teachers note that attendance rate increased because of this program. Parents who are afraid of losing the right to receive the financial aid are encouraging their children to go to school. The problem with this policy is that students come to school only to avoid losing money but are not motivated to study.

Another problem is that the money that was supposed to be used for education is been used for other purposes. For example, in the beginning of the year, students from São Paulo State receive school bags, notebooks, pencils and other things to be used at school. Some students feel shame to use the material with the government symbols so they refuse to use them. This is a delicate situation. When the government gives money, it is not always used properly for education, and when they give materials, students refuse to use them. A better solution is still necessary.

Among the criticism is that Bolsa Família discourages the search for employment. Employers say that some workers do not want to be registered as employees anymore to be able to receive the allowance. It is said that this program leads its beneficiaries to an accommodation, because of the paternalism involved. However, researches by World Bank conclude that the program does not discourage work (Bramatti, 2007). And according to Medeiros et. al., (2008) programs such as Bolsa Família reduce poverty and

inequality, under costs which are compatible with the Brazilian budgetary capacity.

## **2.4. Reform in the budget distribution – FUNDEF/FUNDEB**

Two other policies that have been affecting education directly are funds created in the past decades. This education finance reform aimed to improve access and quality of education. The Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Teacher Appreciation (Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento do Ensino Fundamental e de Valorização do Magistério), known as FUNDEF was implemented in 1998 and was valid for 10 years. The Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Education Workforce Enhancement (Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação), known as FUNDEB, came after that and will be valid for 14 years. The criticism against FUNDEF was that this fund was only used to fundamental education and other spheres of education were not prioritized. The next fund, FUNDEB, expanded its action to the basic education, including the pre-school and education for adults.

FUNDEF was created to promote greater equity in schooling among the states and more than 5000 cities by guaranteeing a minimum expenditure per student only for fundamental education. With FUNDEF, finances invested in each state were calculated according to their own tax contribution. In other words, wealthier states had higher expenditure per student. However, with FUNDEB, a fund for each state was created, and both state and municipal government contributed to it. The funds are redistributed to each state and municipality on the basis of the number of students enrolled. In case the funds per-student is below a certain amount, the federal government supplements it.

## **2.5. Neoliberal and social democratic influences that are affecting the Education Reform in Brazil**

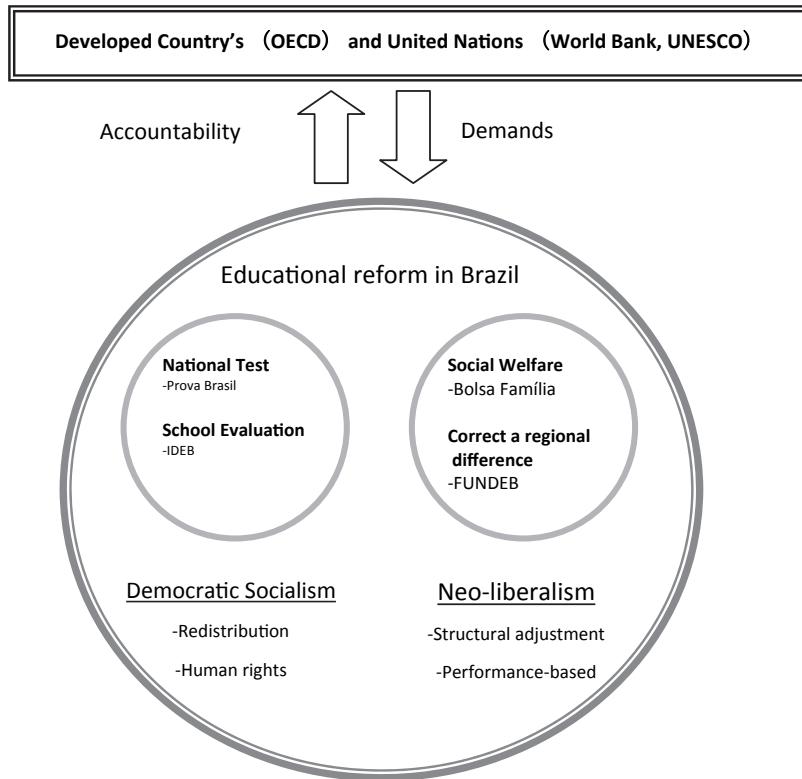
As it was presented, various reforms were made in the educational system. The creation of IDEB and implementation of the National Test (Prova Brasil) can be seen as a neoliberal reform. On the other hand, there are also reforms that aim to promote social justice, such as Bolsa Família.

Why do those reforms have two different approaches that seem contradictory? First, the Brazilian Government did not create solutions for their internal problems locally, but they receive counsel and were accountable to international institutions such as the World Bank, Unesco, United Nations and OECD. For example, Brazil signed the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in 2000. The second goal is to achieve universal primary education. The target is to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. To fulfill this goal, the Federal Government created FUNDEB, expanded adult education, and created PDE (Education Development Plan), a set of proposals aiming to improve the quality of education (Brasil, 2007).

In order to achieve international standards, various types of data started to be collected (Educacenso) and presented as scores such as Prova Brasil and IDEB. Educacenso is an online system that has data about schools, classes, students, teachers, and other school staff. It gives individual data about students and teachers with information such as name, birthday, race, parents name, address, documents, etc. It also gives the possibility to follow the changes on their schooling which subjects each teacher is teaching, and which

subjects each student and class is being taught. São Paulo State took a step further and created its own test, known as Prova São Paulo. This test is not only to evaluate schools and children's performance, but if the school reaches the goals established by the State Government, their teachers receive a financial bonus.

Figure 1 – Educational Reform in Brazil



All the data facilitates comparison with other countries. On the other hand, international organizations also demand human rights protection and promotion of equality. For example, Escola da Família is a program that was created under UNESCO's influence. It opens schools to the community during weekends for activities in three areas: health, sports and work. Undergraduate students and community members work as volunteers on those activities. As a result, the violence at schools decreased about 50% (Fundação de Desenvolvimento da Educação, 2007).

As it can be observed, Brazilian Educational Reform to achieve global standards is neoliberal but at same time is trying to maintain the social rights. These two streams are coexisting. This reform is still in progress, but these remarkable changes have happened in the past 10 years. We will discuss next how these changes are affecting the schools.

### 3. Schools

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), São Paulo State had the highest

GDP between the states in 2007. However, besides being the wealthier state the inequality is still a unsolved problem. The illiteracy rate of persons aged 15 year or older, by color or race was 3.7 % for white, 6.5% for pardo<sup>2</sup>(2), and 8.0% for black. The average years of schooling of persons aged 15 years and over, by color or race is 9.0 years for white, 7.5% for pardo people and 7.6% for black people. And the poverty incidence is 26,60%. In a State still dealing with such inequality, we wanted to observe how the Federal Government policies such as Bolsa Familia and IDEB are being experienced at the local level. Therefore, one public school close to the city of São Paulo and another one in the countryside were chosen for this research. One school has been able to improve their performance and the other is not being able to achieve the goals established by INEP.

### 3.1. School A

This school is located on the outskirts of a medium city in São Paulo State. The economy of this city is mainly based on temporary jobs, especially those connected to tourism during summer. The neighborhood where this school is constructed was established in an illegal area years ago, and some children come from areas that only recently got electricity. The student's parents are mainly fishermen or work in agriculture. Others are Indians<sup>3</sup> and Quilombolas<sup>4</sup> who receive special allowance from the Government.

The interview with the school principal was done in 2009. School A has 8 classes, from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 388 students, 23 teachers, principal, vice-principal, and coordinator. Children from various backgrounds attend. There are children with special needs, Indians who came from Indian bilingual schools, and black children. Also, students come from different regions. Even though they try to include everyone, it is being difficult break barriers between groups. For example, Indians are very closed in their own group and do not talk much, and children from different regions do not mix with each other.

"We are trying to motivate them, trying to help to make their culture and values important, show that they have chances in society. It is like when they go to the city they have to forget everything about who they are. If they are fishermen, they will not get fish anymore. They forget their roots. But as we try to help respect their culture and values, they have low performance in the national tests. We are trying to work on both but it has being difficult", says the principal.

Table 1 School A IDEB, 4<sup>th</sup> grade(old system)/5<sup>th</sup> grade

| IDEB Obtained |      |      | Goal |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |  |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| 2005          | 2007 | 2009 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 | 2015 | 2017 | 2019 | 2021 |  |
| 3.9           | 3.8  | 4.2  | 4    | 4.3  | 4.7  | 5    | 5.3  | 5.6  | 5.8  | 6.1  |  |

Table 2 School A IDEB, 8<sup>th</sup> grade(old system)/9<sup>th</sup> grade

| IDEB Obtained |      |      | Goal |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |  |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| 2005          | 2007 | 2009 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 | 2015 | 2017 | 2019 | 2021 |  |
| 3.6           | 3.4  | 3.1  | 3.6  | 3.8  | 4    | 4.4  | 4.8  | 5.1  | 5.3  | 5.6  |  |

Font: IDEB.inep.gov.br

These tables demonstrate that School A is not able to reach the goals established by INEP. Therefore,

the school had the opportunity to submit a project to the Federal Government in order to receive special funds to improve performance. The project involved a partnership with a psychologist to deal with sex with teenagers. The school felt the need to give orientation to parents and teenagers about sex because students are starting sexual life in a young age, and in some cases it ends in pregnancy, leading them to drop out. This project was accepted by the Federal government, and school A will receive funds to implement the project. The principal says that the students felt bad when they saw the bad IDEB scores. It seems that the time they spent at school was in vain. For her, more than quality, equality is more important.

Another action to improve performance has been to promote changes in the curriculum. The principal argues that because contents and abilities expected from students at Prova Brasil are different from their reality, different from what was being taught at school, they are trying to adapt the curriculum. "We need to help the students to think critically, not only memorize facts as was necessary in the education before. They need to learn how to write good texts", says the principal.

About 80% of families at School A receive Bolsa Família regularly and many parents of those children do not have a stable job and rely on the allowance to live. The principal complains that parents are encouraging their children to go to school only in order not to lose the rights to receive the allowance. However, they do not get involved with their children's schooling, and the performance is not being affected. The students are still not motivated to study, and they come to school without actively participating in classes or making an effort to learn.

School A is also facing problems with rebellious students. Even though School A is trying to involve parents, they do not come to meetings and are not being supportive. Some of the parents find it difficult to go to meetings because the school is far from their homes, and transportation is not provided, as it is for students. The principal says that at schools in the downtown area parents participate more, and they do not feel excluded as parents from School A usually feel.

According to the principal, most of the teachers who work at School A also work in other schools. They do not have enough time to prepare for classes and to deal with parents. They are only at school to teach their classes, and this affects the quality of education. "To improve education, parents need to participate more because schools cannot do what families are supposed to do. What happens is that schools have to become their family and educate them, going beyond what we are supposed to. And teachers do not receive the money they should. They come to teach but they cannot teach. They have to become like mother and father, teaching limits, instead of teaching math", said the principal. Another problem they face is that teachers do not settle there. As soon as they have a chance, they transfer to other schools. This constant rotation of teachers is a barrier that has a negative influence on the education quality, making it difficult for them to work as a team. They are there only to teach their classes but do not get involved with the school efforts to improve quality.

### 3.2. School B

This school is located in a small city in the countryside of São Paulo State. The neighborhood was established by the local government a couple of decades ago as households for people who could not afford

to built their homes and the neighborhood kept growing over the years. The economy of this city is mainly based on the agriculture and aviculture. Most of the parents have manual jobs, or are working on agriculture and aviculture. The families who have a better financial condition tend to send their children to private schools.

The interview with the principal was done in October of 2010. There are 460 students, 14 teachers, 1 art teacher, 1 physical education teacher, 1 auxiliary teacher, a coordinator, a vice-principal, and a principal. In 2007 the approval rate at School B was 97.8%, in 2008 it was 98.3%, and in 2009 it increased to 98.7%.

Table 3 School B IDEB, 4<sup>th</sup> grade(old system)/5<sup>th</sup> grade

| IDEB Obtained |      |      | Goal |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |  |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| 2005          | 2007 | 2009 | 2007 | 2009 | 2011 | 2013 | 2015 | 2017 | 2019 | 2021 |  |
|               | 5.5  | 6.5  |      | 5.7  | 6    | 6.2  | 6.5  | 6.7  | 6.9  | 7.1  |  |

Font: IDEB.inep.gov.br

This school did not receive special funds from the Federal Government to improve their performance, because it is not considered part of the priority group (those schools with the lowest IDEB). Therefore, the school is working to improve its IDESP, the São Paulo State performance score. As the score suggested by the State Government is achieved each year, the teachers receive financial bonus. The principal said that they are dealing specially with the pedagogical aspects to improve the student's performance, comparing what students already achieved with what they need to improve. This kind of information is provided in details with the results of the IDESP and Prova São Paulo. The school analyzes what the students could not achieve, and then special support is given to those with learning problems. Their goal is to help the students with lower performance to reach the same level as the other students.

In order to improve the quality of education and reach the score goals on IDESP, the State Government started to implement the project known as Read and Write (Ler e Escrever) about 3 years ago for the Fundamental Education level 1. São Paulo State provides material for children from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades, material for teachers, and also promotes courses, seminars and training to help teachers make better use of the material in classroom. The government also provided magazines, science magazines, comic books, books, children's literature, newspapers, etc, to increase student's motivation in reading and writing. For those students who could not learn how to read and write by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the school can provide a special classroom for them on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Since there is no retention (progressão continuada) as a State policy, this special class with fewer students was implemented to help students who were behind in the learning process. The normal classrooms have between 30 to 35 students, and this special class has about half of this number.

The other change that is helping to improve the quality of education is in-service teacher's training. There are three groups that are involved.

a) Staff from the Board of Education (Diretoria de Ensino) - they frequently visits schools and classrooms to provide support and training to teachers and school coordinators. Their role is not only to evaluate schools, but also to seek alternatives to improve learning process quality and to train the coordinators.

b) Coordinators - specialists in education and pedagogy that help the principal and vice-principal. At São Paulo State, if a teacher has the desire to become a coordinator, it is required that he have a certain period of time of experience as teacher before he can be submitted to tests for the new function. They visit classrooms, check the difficulties that are being faced by the students, they observe how the teachers are teaching and what needs to be adapted to improve the students' performance. Their role is to put theory and practice together. Coordinators from each school receive training from the board of education every week and give support for the teachers at school.

c) Teachers – they have a special time called HTCP (Horário de Trabalho Coletivo Pedagógico) to come together to receive training from the coordinator, to study, to prepare their classes and to help students who are having learning problems. Until last year they had 2 hours a week and from this year they have 6 hours a week for those activities.

Teachers, coordinators, principals, and the board of education staff are working together to improve education quality. Additionally, all the other school staff are dedicated to the school, and treat children with a special kind of love, says the principal. She also affirms that teachers are more committed with the teaching process in recent years, they are studying more, and the government is providing more support and giving the opportunity for teachers to keep learning.

#### 4. Conclusions

There are regions where IDEB is being carefully considered and is a measure of achievement. It is being used to promote changes and improvement to achieve the quality that is expected from international agencies. However, the discussion with School B's principal revealed that they are trying to improve their score mainly because there is a financial reward. For schools with high score, only being on the top of IDEB in the city was not enough to motivate them.

In other regions, schools do not pay close attention to IDEB. Schools such as School A are dealing with some problems that are not directly connected to the schooling process, such as violence and poverty, which are hard to be controlled only with the school effort. Those schools need local solutions that are yet to be developed, involving not only the Ministry of Education but other Ministries such as the Ministry of Social Development and Fight Against Hunger, responsible for Bolsa Família Program. Bolsa da Família helped to maintain children at school without improving their performance. Therefore, their programs should have more tight connections in order to bring effective changes in the student's performance.

In Brazil, it is impossible to discuss quality of education without talking about the teachers. Their teacher's salary is still very low, and sometimes they are obligated to work at 2 or even 3 schools to support their families. Along with that, the low qualification of teachers is still a structural problem in public education in Brazil. To have a coordinator or more at school is valuable, however, it is not enough. Since to become coordinator or principal they need to have teaching experience, middle leaders are being raised to build up schools. In favelas<sup>5</sup>, principals and coordinators are the key factors that maintain teachers as a team. Teachers with more than 10 years of experience are working together with young teachers to bring changes in poor neighborhoods. However their effort is not being validated by the ranking that occurs under neoliberal practices.

Some parts of the educational reforms have a strong neoliberal influence. With fast economic growth, developing countries are relying on the World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO for their educational reforms. The structural reform is happening through the use of scores such as IDEB and decentralization, pushing municipalization of Elementary Education. Along with that, social democratic reform intends to preserve human rights and to decrease regional differences. FUNDEB is part of the effort to alleviate those differences. Educational reform held by developed countries can be a step that needs to be climbed by developing countries. However they are doing everything simultaneously. It is not like a pendulum, where they are trying to reform each side in turn, but they are trying to deal with both sides at the same time. And schools are living the dilemma of trying to deal with both sides at once. The importance of improving performance and equality is understood, but it does not come easy. Without reforms in public education, and with the economic development as background, families that choose private schools are increasing.

#### Notes

- 1 This score can be accessed by anyone who has internet connection through the government site ([ideb.inep.gov.br](http://ideb.inep.gov.br)). In 2022, Brazil will celebrate 200 years of independence from Portugal.
- 2 Pardo is a race or color category used by (IBGE) in Brazilian censuses. The word is Portuguese for "brown", and it is a broad classification used for Brazilians of mixed race ancestry.
- 3 Indigenous peoples in Brazil comprise a large number of distinct ethnic groups who inhabited the country prior to the European invasion around 1500.
- 4 Quilombolas are descendants of slaves who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until abolition in 1888. There are more than 2000 quilombola communities in Brazil.
- 5 Favelas appeared mainly due to rural exodus in the 70's, when many people left rural areas and moved to cities. Without finding a place to live, many people ended up in a favela. Nowadays, it is a neighborhood with people under poverty.

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## The Coexistence of Neoliberalism and Democratic Socialism in Recent Brazilian Educational Reforms

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Brazil is part of the BRICs, a group of countries known for their fast economic growth in recent years. In addition to the economic growth, educational reforms have also been rapidly implemented. One reason for this economic growth was the intervention of international agencies and the neoliberal reforms that were implemented. The educational reforms were also based on neoliberal ideas.

This article will discuss the influences of neoliberalism on educational reforms in Brazil through four of the educational policies implemented. Each school now has set goals to achieve, and this performance will affect the teachers' income in some States. On the other hand, social democratic reforms are also part of the educational reform.

How are the two streams of educational reform influencing schools? This article will analyze the influence of educational reforms at a local level. In addition, it will discuss the difficulties that schools face now that they have to implement liberal reforms as well as welfare policies related to the educational reform.