

# Presentation – Dialogues about different ways of privatization: research paths about the subject<sup>1</sup>

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## *Apresentação – Diálogos sobre distintas formas de privatização: caminhadas de pesquisa sobre o tema*

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### ABSTRACT

The current text presents concepts that base the researches developed by the authors and organizers of this dossier who integrate interinstitutional research groups dedicated to the study of the privatization processes in the educational field. The concepts of privatization, democratization and the relationship between the processes of privatization and the movements that occur in the redefinitions of the State's role in this particular period of the capitalism in which these studies happen constitute the inner core of the essay. In addition, there are the categorizations developed by the research groups as they analyse the different privatization processes of the public assets in Brazil. The research journey of the organizers in their respective research groups was a process where the highlighted concepts were built and appropriated by all researchers of both groups, which have been also announced. The path justifies the organization of this dossier, which is guided by the affirmation of the need for deepening the conversations between researchers from Latin America – a region marked by fights in favor of the constitution of Democratic States, but also by the progress and setbacks of the capital over the public assets. The text is concluded with a brief introduction to the articles that are part of this dossier.

*Keywords:* Privatization. Democratization. Latin America.

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## RESUMO

O texto apresenta conceitos que fundamentam as pesquisas desenvolvidas pelas autoras e organizadoras do dossiê, ambas integrantes de grupos de pesquisa interinstitucionais dedicados ao estudo dos processos de privatização no campo educacional. Os conceitos de privatização, democratização e a relação entre os processos de privatização e os movimentos que ocorrem nas redefinições do papel do Estado no período particular do capitalismo em que acontecem os estudos constituem o núcleo central do texto. E, ainda, as categorizações que os grupos foram desenvolvendo conforme analisavam os distintos processos de privatização do público no Brasil. Os percursos de pesquisa das organizadoras em seus respectivos grupos, processo por meio do qual os conceitos em destaque foram sendo construídos e apropriados por todos os pesquisadores de ambos os coletivos, também são brevemente anunciados, uma vez que a trajetória justifica a organização do dossiê, orientado pela afirmação da necessidade de aprofundamento nas interlocuções entre pesquisadores da América Latina, região marcada por intensas e históricas lutas pela constituição de Estados Democráticos, mas também por retrocessos e avanços do capital sobre o bem público. Encerra-se o texto com uma breve apresentação dos artigos que compõem o dossiê. *Palavras-chave:* Privatização. Democratização. América Latina.

The current dossier aims to bring elements to the debate about the relationship between the public and the private in the Latin-American countries, understanding that this relationship which is characterized by tenuous dividing lines, have been showing different ways with important implications for the recent democratization of the education in the region.

The architects of this dossier have acted in the foundation and integrate the Latin-American and African Network of researchers about privatization of education (RELAAPPE)<sup>2</sup> and they also participate in two research teams: Relationship between the Public and Private in Education Research Group (GPRPPE)<sup>3</sup> and Research and Studies Group about Educational Policies (GREPPE)<sup>4</sup>. The research teams develop research about the privatization of education with a specific method and agenda, however in an ongoing conversation.

We performed together national researches as: “Money straight to school: a redefinition purpose of the role from the State in education” (PERONI; ADRIÃO, 2007) and “Analysis of the consequences of partnerships between Brazilian

2 See RELAAPE, available from: <https://www.relaappe.fe.unicamp.br/pt-br>

3 See GPRPPE, available from: <https://www.ufrgs.br/gprppe/>

4 See GREPPE, available from: <https://www.greppet.fe.unicamp.br/pt-br>

municipalities and the Ayrton Senna Foundation to the educational provision” (ADRIÃO; PERONI, 2011). This path and the continuous concern in deepening the discussion about the privatization of education make us mobilize ourselves and effortlessly reunite several contributions in this dossier.

We judge it important to extend the theoretical dialogue between the researchers to deepen the debate and to get together all pieces of this enormous puzzle which is the relationship between the public and the private. We intend to show what is specific from our countries as well as what we have in common as they are characteristics of this particular period of capitalism.

Understanding the specificities of the privatization process in each country in the same period of development of capitalism, allows us to comprehend what brings us close and the diverse dynamics through which the capital demands overlap the social policies. The efforts to keep the dialogue and analysis must lead to the enhancement of the thoughts with the consequential increase of the critical construction capacity as a way to resist, in a scenarium highly complex in which the public privatization cannot be understood exclusively by the transference of the public property to the private sector.

The GREPPE works with the ideias from Bielfed and Levin (2002) for the term privatization, which is understood by the authors as an “umbrella” capable to cover since the transfer of activities, establishment of new markets, assets and responsibilities from government/public institutions and organizations to private individuals and agencies. Understood in this way, the privatization indicates the necessity of studies that include these different possibilities.

Another strategy for further development of the analysis consists in considering the privatization according to specific dimensions, however connected. The GREPPE, in this perspective, adopts in its own studies as dimensions of privatization: **educational provision, curriculum and management** (ADRIÃO, 2018). The **privatization of the educational provision** occurs mainly in three different ways: public funding of the private provision, growth of its own private provision and programs that fund the parental choice. The dimension of the **curriculum**, implies private actors taking their own responsibility for the supplies, construction and coordination of pedagogic activities. The dimension of **educational management**, lastly, implies since the adoption of private management methodologies by the public authorities, delegation of responsibilities to private actors or transference of the management (ADRIÃO, 2018).

In the dimension of the curriculum we witnessed the dispute that involve large corporations by the offer of several supplies, since private educational systems (ADRIÃO *et al.*, 2009, 2016; GARCIA, CORREA, 2011) to the creation and commercialization of platforms and diverse technology supplies

(BORGHI, 2018). Regarding the educational and school management, the researches in Brazil indicate the presence of corporations in the implementation of programs which bring to the school and public bodies technologies of the private management (GARCIA, 2018a, 2018b) and, further, the transference of the school unities to the private management as we can see in recent governmental initiatives around the country. Finally, we have to consider the massive transference of public funds to the private sector in the constitution of the educational provision (ADRIÃO; DOMICIANO, 2018).

Both dimensions have a dialogue with the fundamental perspective that the private sector focuses on the content of education (PERONI, 2018). As analyses David Hill, there is a business plan **in** and **for** education (HILL, 2003) which we have to consider as it happens taking various ways. We highlight that the privatization in primary education is increasingly configured by the articulated action of business-based actors.

O GPRPPE built concepts based on the information and the necessity to deepen the analysis to understand better the multiplicity of ways that we found the processes of public privatization. The answers were never simple and they are part of a long and ongoing research path. We have always understood that we had a theoretical research at the same time that we gather the distinct privatization processes.

The concept of privatization of the public is part of this research movement. We understand that the public and the private as corporate projects which are related to themselves (PERONI, 2018). Each day, we combine the public to equality, social rights, democracy and to the collective. The private, on the other hand, is associated with the individual, meritocratic and competitiveness, content that have the purpose linked to corporate projects which are defended by the analyzed individuals in the neoliberal perspective as well as in the neoconservative perspective (PERONI; LIMA, 2020).

Throughout the research we observed that the private did not occur only as a change of property. The path of the studies allowed us to verify how the privatization processes occur inside the State and the civil society. Whereas civil society has the public as a permanent agenda, as well as the most important ONG National Campaign for the Right of Education which, along with other social movements, fights to achieve the education as universal right, there are governments which we have studied that have as a policy the privatization of the public.

The partnership between the public and the private have showed us that the school keeps public, the State pays the professionals, however the private sector defines the content of the education through the training of teachers, monitoring, school management, ready to teach lessons, routine setting, anyway, everything

that matters to establish the role of the education in the society. This process occurs also through the definition of the educational agendas, which we call the policy ways, as an example the performance of the All for Education Movement.

Another important topic for the analyze of the relationship between the public and the private, which became more evident during the research process, is related to who are the individuals, which are the relationships and which is the content of the purposes. The private cannot be treated as an abstraction: they are individuals or collectives (THOMPSON, 1981) which bring to its content, linked to the corporate projects, the dispute of the educational agenda and its materialization. We have also analyzed how organic intellectuals, organized in *Think Tanks* and Institutes linked to the capital and the neoconservatism have been performed in education (PERONI; OLIVEIRA, 2019; MENDES; PERONI, 2020).

We highlight as fundamental the concept of democratization, since in our research we have worked with the implications of the privatization processes to the democratization of education. We understand that democracy is a process “[...] the democracy is understood as the materialization of the rights in policies that are collectively built in the self-criticism of the social practice” (PERONI, 2013 p.1021).

Another point of our research is fundamental to both groups, besides the democratization, the link between the growth of the public privatization with the diagnostic of the capital, which according to that information, the State is guilty of the crisis and the market must be the quality standard. After the 2008 economic crisis, instead of weakening, capitalism became stronger and reinvent itself in what Harvey (2008) calls restoration of the class power. The crisis became then a reason to increase the changes of the social policies restrictions.

For Laval and Dardot (2017), “neoliberalism works actively to defeat democracy. Piece after piece, impose a global regulatory framework which takes individuals and institutions into an implacable logic,” (LAVAL; DARDOT, 2017, p. 34). When building a system, neoliberalism will undermine the resistance capacity. The authors emphasize that the biggest consequences are to democracy, which they call “de-democratization”.

There is no break to the exercise of the neoliberal power through the law, at the same time that the law turned into a privilege of the neoliberalism fight against democracy. The State of rights is not being abolished from outside, but destroyed from inside to make itself as a war weapon against the population and the dominant services.

In the context, we reinforce the role of the education as constitutive part of the democratization process and the importance of strengthen the comprehension about the implications between the public and private relationship in different countries which have experienced recent processes of democratization, respecting its own particularities and considering the actual historical moment of democratic crisis and increase of the privatization and conservatism on both hemispheres.

In the Latin-American countries, in special after the end of the military dictatorships during the 1980 decade, with the processes of political opening, the democratization in the several instances and social spaces have been achieving more and more relevance. In this context, the axes of the main social movements were linked to democracy, the increase of rights including education, towards the construction of a fair and equal society. But this construction found huge obstacles with the deepening of the capital or global economic crisis and its strategies to overcome (neoliberalism, financialization, productive reestructuracion and neoconservatism) imposing restrictions to the State role as the executor of social policies (PERONI, 2018a).

Knowing that, if the redefinitions of the State's role, in the international field, present important implications to the process of democratization and the minimization of the universal rights and quality for all, this movement is still more problematic in countries that have experienced military dictatorships and recently or still experience fights in favor to materialize rights in policies.

It is known that historically there were a lot of fine divisory lines between the public and the private in the Latin-American countries, since the beginning of the process of colonization until nowadays. The State itself has assumed a space geared to the private interests and the democratization of public education, which is still a long construction process.

In the more recent context in a lot of Latin-American countries, the guarantee of access to public education was increased, which we consider a huge growth. However, we also have verified that the private sector has settled its presence defining the public education. The State, in many instances, continues to be responsible by the access, and even increase the public vacancies, but the pedagogical "content" and the school management is each time more determined by the institutions which introduce the logic of the market, blaming, that acting like that, they are contributing for the quality of the public schools.

Is possible to identify the tension between the fights and the democratic achievements as well as the growth of the private sector related to the public schools disputing the definition of the educational policies and the "content of the school" in a process that transforms the right of education in an arduous negotiation field and profit generation.

Through reflections originated from different research groups from countries of the region, this dossier aims to bring a contribution to the debate about the relationship between the public and the private in education. It intends to happen through a theoretical dialogue with the international production and mainly with research groups which deal with the subject in Latin-American countries. From this perspective, the dossier has two parts which complement each other, the international, regarding some countries from Latin America, and national, which regards the relationship between the public and the private in Brazil.

The first part of the dossier is dedicated to the contributions of research groups which bring reflections from Chile, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay and Spain.

In the second part, there are contributions about the national scenario with seven papers which discuss theoretically specific cases and the incursion of private actors in the Brazilian public schools with texts from different areas and Brazilian institutions: from the South region, Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS, IF/Sul and UFPEL) and Paraná (UFPR and UEM); and from the Southeast region, Espírito Santo (UFES), Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS); emphasizing the regional diversity in Brazil.

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