

DOSSIER

Internationalization of educational policies within the framework of human rights

**Education as a human right and the human right to education:
the national aspect in the internationalization process of the
educational policies*****A educação como direito humano e o direito humano à educação: o
nacional no contexto da internacionalização das políticas educacionais***

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ABSTRACT

This article examines education as a fundamental human right, focusing on the interaction between national educational policies and the international human rights framework. It discusses how the right to education is present in global and national legislation, including Brazil's 1988 Constitution, and the challenges of effectively implementing this right amidst pressures from international organizations and neoliberal influences. The paper also addresses the inequalities and exclusionary policies that hinder the full realization of this universal right, emphasizing the need for policies that respect social and cultural diversity.

Keywords: Right to Education. Educational Policies. Internationalization. Human Rights. Social Inequality.

RESUMO

Este artigo explora a educação como um direito humano fundamental, focando nas interações entre as políticas educacionais nacionais e o contexto internacional de direitos humanos. Aborda como o direito à educação está presente em legislações globais e nacionais, como a Constituição Brasileira de 1988, e discute os desafios para sua implementação efetiva, especialmente frente às pressões de organismos internacionais e à influência do neoliberalismo. O artigo também problematiza as desigualdades e as políticas excludentes que dificultam a realização plena desse direito universal, enfatizando a necessidade de políticas que respeitem a diversidade social e cultural

Palavras-chave: Direito à Educação. Políticas Educacionais. Internacionalização. Direitos Humanos. Desigualdade Social.

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Introduction

When we are willing to reflect upon the relationships between the internationalization of educational policies and education as a human right, in the social sphere, and the human right to education, in the scope of human rights, we are provoked to face the complexity that characterizes them, beyond any simplistic perspective of narrating the obvious or superficial understandings and analyses. That is why we proposed this dossier, to provoke researchers from Brazil and other countries to present some research results and/or political-epistemological reflections, deepening the understanding of this set of relationships.

For starters, we believe that it is important to refer to the fact that education is a fundamental human right – that every single person must have access to – and an obligation of the State, considering the responsibility it must assume to ensure the effective exercise of this right which is present in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (sic) as a fundamental human right, in the wake of the affirmation of human dignity as the basis for the formulation of that Declaration. When we approach this right – from the individual perspective of the human right to education – it is also present in most legislations worldwide, especially, in Brazil, where it appears in the article 206 of the 1988 Citizen Constitution (Brasil, 1988).

From the perspective of the Declaration of Human Rights, enacted in 1948 by the United Nations (UN) (Brasil, 1948), the responsibility of the signatory States would be to promote the exercise of this right until 100% of the population – all people – have ensured it. Our insistence on the understanding that a universal right belongs to all people, which would be obvious from the name itself, has clear reasons, which are linked to problems found in Brazilian and international educational policies. As a matter of fact, there are different reasons that are articulated to establish that a universal human right belongs to mankind. From meritocratic policies – excludent by principle and definition – to the problems faced in different educational daily lives contexts, there are many unmet demands that cannot be contemplated in the realities of different population segments. And this makes the debate on the topic of this dossier necessary.

Futhermore, the notion of subjective public right combined with the obligation to exercise it brings the need for reflections – as it has currently being done – regarding the limits of families' rights in managing the schooling of their new generations, the effective conditions for exercising this right regarding different populations excluded from it for different reasons, of which we list some of the main ones: refugees; immigrants; a large part of the planet's female population, for different reasons; undesirable due to ableism, homosexuality or transsexuality. The list is not exhaustive, but it helps us to take these issues as necessary points to be considered in our reflection, and to understand to what extent educational policies are relevant to their development.

Therefore, in this dossier, the proposal is to, by understanding the breadth of the field of study of educational policies in their relations with the right to education and the social and political conditions that involve its effective exercise, present reflections and plural approaches to the topic, considering its different facets and possibilities, principally concerning what differentiates education as a universal human right from the human right to education of every citizen on this planet and, evidently, more specifically in Brazil.

The field of research in educational public policies

The field of study of public policies in general, and educational policies specifically, is not an old field, having emerged in the interwar period – in 1936, Harold Laswell was the first author to present a proposal for the study of policies, with the notion of policy analysis¹ – and only consolidating itself after the Second World War, in the late 1950s, with Herbert Simon's perspectives on policy makers, a notion that was still limited, as it was only aimed at disputes between groups of decision-makers in the formulation of policies. (Najjar; Mocarzel; Santos, 2019). Only in 1959, Charles Lindblom proposed a more in-depth perspective addressing the relations of power between different social groups involved in policies and the integration of different phases in understanding decision-making processes.

In 1965, Davis Easton was the first author to treat public policy as a system, establishing relationships between formulation, results and the environment. A good summary of this process is presented by Moreira (2017).

The idea of the State ability to solve problems, by the formulation of policies, began at the beginning of the 20th century, but it was in the interwar period, and until the beginning of the 1960s, that new forms of investigation into public policies began to emerge and reached its peak with the publication, in 1951, of "Science of Public Policies", by Laswell, co-authored with Lerner. Considered one of the "founding fathers" of this field, Laswell has his name, along with Herbert Simon, Charles Lindblom and Davis Easton, associated with studies in which public policies are defined based on the analysis of problems and the search for solutions on the part of governments (Parsons, 1995; Souza, 2006 *apud* Moreira, 2017, p. 4).

It is in Moreira that we find a relevant critique of the models of this period, all characterized by analytical linearity and, disregarding the complexity "of the trajectory of policies and the actions of hundreds of actors and interest groups in different contexts and arenas, both public and private, in this process" (Moreira, 2017, p. 5), therefore unable to address the current challenges in the field. More specifically in Brazil, it is in Azevedo (2004), Souza (2006) and Di Giovanni (2009) that we find contributions that we chose to highlight, to highlight not only the political and epistemological complexity mentioned at the beginning of this article but also the complexity of the studies that they dedicate themselves, identified from Moreira (2017) on.

Azevedo (2004, p. 5) states that the concept of public policies implies considering the power resources that operate in its definition and that have State institutions, especially the governmental machine, as their main referent. The author also understands that structures of state domination condense conflicts infiltrated into the social fabric. From this perspective, for Azevedo, the State/government is the main formulator of public policies, which derive from clashes between social demands and governments counter position.

Souza (2006) understands that public policy aims to put the government into action. Therefore, it is not necessarily a government action, but an influence, a variable for the State/government

¹ In English, there are three distinct terms to identify "policies" – policy, politics and polity – due to the differentiation between formulated public policies, their formulation processes and contents and the political institutions responsible for them, respectively.

action. In this conceptualization, public policy even serves to align perspectives and reorganize actions that are already underway. Thus, this author formulates and defends the notion that public policy analysis is a field of knowledge that seeks, at the same time, to 'put the government into action' and/or analyze this action (independent variable) and, when necessary, propose changes in the direction or course of these actions (dependent variable).

Finally, Di Giovanni (2009, p. 4-5) understands that public policies and their field of studies are configured as a contemporary form of exercising power in democratic societies, resulting from a complex interaction between the State and society, in a broad sense, which includes social relations also carried out in the field of economics (Di Giovanni, 2009, p. 4-5). In this sense, the author deepens Souza's perception; by reinforcing the dynamism of public policies, he creates two excerpts and identifies four elementary policy structures.

Firstly, the author conditions the public policies to democratic societies, recovering the Latin meaning of the term public – *publicus* – related to the people and consider the public policies absent from authoritarian societies, in which they are treated as forms of confrontation between State and society. Secondly, the author argues that public policies have elementary structures that prevent them from being seen as exclusive weapons of an intervening State, it is a relevant issue for understanding the field in its most recent evolution.

The first structure would be the formal one, which comprises the analysis of theory, practice and policy objectives. The second, the substantive structure, relates the actors, interests and rules imposed on the rites while the third, the material structure, involves the issue of financing and support necessary for the enactment of policies.

The symbolic structure, the best of all, works with the values, knowledge and languages of policies and their formulators. Di Giovanni concludes his proposal for reflection by understanding that it is based on the structures mentioned and the interactions between them, that we can understand public policies as plots full of influences and conditions; by doing so he gets close to contemporary international authors' thoughts.

Stephen Ball, since the beginning of the 1990s, has been an influential author in Brazil, being mainly responsible for the notion of "policy cycle" for the development of studies on public educational policies from the perspective of breaking the linearity of the early days of the field, from the "statist" perspectives of his understanding, proposing that analysis be carried out considering the circularity in the participation of different social actors in the definition, implementation, evaluation and reformulation of public policies in general, and educational policies in particular.

His main follower in Brazil, Jefferson Mainardes, shows how Ball and Bowe (1992) introduced the notion of a continuous cycle consisting of three facets or political arenas: intended policy, actual policy and policy-in-use. And based on the interlocution and articulation between them, they created the notion of a "policy cycle."

Firstly, the authors identified the "intended policy" as the instance that deals with the intentions, not only of governments and their bureaucrats, but of all actors involved in the debate, such as unions, entities, schools, research groups, etc. Then, in its development, the policy changes, through amendments, vetoes, requests for review, public challenges, court decisions and other

mechanisms. They call this process the “actual policy.” Finally, “policy-in-use” is the practical aspect, which transforms the policy based on social interpretations and, as time passes by, based on the use the social actors make of them. These notions are unfolded later, in the identification of the policy cycle, which proposes that their study should consider the three main contexts that, in a cyclical and articulated way, involve them.

Summarizing the proposal, widely explored, published and studied in Brazil (Ball; Bowe, 1992; Mainardes, 2006; Ball; Mainardes, 2018), the context of influence involves social actors who “dispute” policy projects; the context of text production involves the process of writing, consolidating and approving of the “official” text that defines a policy and the context of practice that talks about the “implementing” processes and policies use in the spaces of social practice to which they are addressed to.

The policy cycle approach is a method for policy analysis, designed by Ball and Bowe as an alternative to proposals that work with the idea of policy “implementation”, in whatever sense this term may be used. It differs both from conceptions that exclude the school from the political process and silence the voices of its actors, and from ethnographically based micro studies that show how the “intentions” of political texts are deeply connected to the school environment and “reflect” the macro political economic and political determinations and (theoretically) give teachers and/or students the power to subvert the status quo (Bowe; Ball; Gold, 1992 *apud* Moreira, 2017, p. 5-6).

Based on this conception, both the authors themselves and different scholars contribute to the reflection on public policies and their implementation processes. In Santos (2012) we find the notion of “political refraction”, which proposes to understand that, when they reach their “destinations”, official proposals are not put in practice and viewed as a mirror reflection as their designers imagined. On the contrary, deviations and changes of direction are made, in a process that, in a certain way, “distorts” the proposal, as occurs in refraction processes.

In 2016, Ball, Braun and McGuire published an emblematic work for those who effectively believe in the mutual and circular influences among the three contexts, aiming to escape the supposed supremacy of the context of influence other contexts – which would bring the notion of the policy cycle closer to topdown understanding of their implementation. The authors state, in this work, that educational policies are not implemented as imagined by those who designed them. They are staged/performed² according to the conditions of each space-time in which they are “used.”

The notion above brings them closer to the thinking of Michel de Certeau (1994) who, in his understanding of everyday life, defends the idea that “everyday life practitioners” do not passively consume the rules and products that are given to them for consumption, they use them according to their needs and they modify them. Thus, we always seek to mature our ideas and reflections with

² When translating the work into Portuguese, the translators chose to understand the term “enactement” as acting. After reading and studying the work, other authors understand that the term staging would have better characterized what the authors present. Following the translator, Mainardes and others (Vieira; Moraes; Campos, 2021; Batista; Braga, 2023) have been developing studies in the field of educational “policy action”, while Oliveira (2023) and others (Marcondes; Freund; Leite, 2017) have chosen to name the “operation” carried out in schools, by their subjects, as the staging of policies, understanding that the texts are staged – as in theater – by the subjects of the schools, understanding that the policies do not act, it is the subjects who act on them.

Ball and his collaborators, and the perspective here is that schools “make” policies according to their characteristics and possibilities, never “implementing” them as they come to them, instead they articulate and establish dialogues between the different proposals that arise.

This brief theoretical history of the field and about the proposal of this dossier would not be complete if we did not address the internationalization issue and the specific problems we face in Brazil in this “globalized” scenario, which is strongly influenced by the proposals and orders of the so-called international organizations and neoliberalism that guide them – which often attack the right to education in the underdeveloped nations in the name of the ideas of global capitalism, mercantilism and other relevant issues to the debate proposed here.

Recent educational policies in Brazil which are under international influence

From the point of view of political and economic orientation, associated with the consolidation of the principles of neoliberalism, we have a continuous line that crosses the Brazilian governments after the military dictatorship (1989-2002), but one must not forget that each government has its own peculiarities. During Fernando Henrique Cardoso governments (1995-2002), the influences of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund operated more strongly than before, being reinforced as highly relevant guidelines in decision-making national decisions. Although the influences of multilateral organizations were related to policies already in progress in central capitalist countries, Brazil was not favored in such transactions and suffered the damage to the national interests in widening the offer, to its population, to the universal right to education.

In the following period, between 2003 and 2014, there were mainly enormous advances in the social field, especially with income redistribution policies, housing financing and acceleration of growth and consequent generation of jobs and income. In the field of educational policies, in which many affirmative policies have been designed – favoring populations with lower education and income, there has been a parallel growth of the public sector and the private sector, as well as policies articulating both. The age concerning the legal obligation of schooling was from 4 to 17 years old; the number of vacancies in federal higher education doubled, the government invested heavily in technical education, all these factors contributed to the democratization of access to education in the country, which is the main concern of this dossier. However, meanwhile, the transfer of public money to the private sector increased via programs such as University for All - *Universidade para Todos* (ProUni) and Student Financing (FIES) and subordinate relations with the impositions of the international organizations remained the same.

Between 2015 and 2016 – the planning period of the civil-media coup against the President Dilma Roussef – educational policies with a conservative profile grew and, from 2017 to 2022, the current governments promoted, as a project, the disintegration of the State, the relativization of our fragile democracy and the advance of the private sector over the public one, in addition to having approved educational policies – notably in the field of curricular policies – that promote and produce social exclusion, strongly violating the universal right to education – which only worsened

during the pandemic. This means that elitist and exclusionary educational policies have replaced previous attempts to universalize the right to education respecting local idiosyncrasies.

Colonialist subalternization was the focus of internationalization, assuming an impoverished education policy focused, merely, on the technical aspects necessary for students training for labor, following the most perverse impositions on the part of international organizations for the so-called developing countries. We understand that these recent policies threaten, to a greater or lesser extent, the right to education as a subjective public right and as a human right; because they deprive part of the population of access and the possibilities of permanence in the educational institutions which offer free and quality education. The privatization of public affairs through public policies which have a privatizer and exclusionary nature or simply by reducing investments, as recently occurred in Brazil, are issues that inhabit the reflection on educational policies, profiles, proposals and criteria on which they are based.

Considerations

As this article comes to its end, and before we present the texts that make up the dossier, we can state that different governments tend to have different understandings – and, therefore, formulations – of public policies, associated with the political and ideological profiles of the social groups which currently occupy the most powerful political contexts and the disputes in the most influential contexts as well, also the demands that emerge from the context of practices, in a process of mutual influence between them, including the context of text production. The roles assigned and exercised by different actors, public and private, in the process of designing public educational policies allow us to understand their relationships with the right to education, as the articulation between the context of influence and other actors is marked by permanent political disputes of and with the networks that compose them.

Regarding the right to education, our understanding is that it transcends the universalization of schooling and penetrates the social field of the right to learning, which requires decent living conditions, food, housing, clothing, etc. Thus, our defense is that educational policies become democratized and respect everyone's right to education when they respect all citizens' cultural, epistemological, social and individual specificities, in their diversity. In the current scenario, we are facing internal and external conflicts within the government and the international scene, with problems involving protagonism and subordination, but with positive signs in the field of public policies, as it will be possible to be observed in the different articles present here.

Juliana de Fátima Souza's article, "UNESCO, World Bank and OECD: global perspectives on the right to education and implications for the teaching profession", discusses the role of these three important international organizations in the formulation of educational policies, highlighting the influence of the neoliberal rationality and the economics of knowledge on a teacher's role. Souza analyzes how global educational governance, focusing on results, impacts the teaching profession through evaluation and teaching responsibility mechanisms.

Dirleia Fanfa Sarmento, José Antunes de Miranda and Roberto Carlos Ramo contribute to the article “The influence of UNESCO’s ideas on public education policies for the effectiveness of the right: to education in Brazil,” in which they investigate the influence of UNESCO guidelines on Brazilian educational policies, especially in Elementary Education. The research highlights how UNESCO’s ideas impact the conception of public policies in the country and the promotion of education as a fundamental right.

In the article “Youth and Adult Education Inc.: impacts from the global agenda in Espírito Santo, Brazil,” Ivan Cardoso Oliosé and Edna Castro de Oliveira analyze the transformations in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) in the state of Espírito Santo. The authors highlight the changes in educational governance and the impacts of the global agenda on the right to education, especially in the context of new governance that is articulated with the principles of entrepreneurship.

Milagros Elena Rodriguez and Ivan Fortunato, in “Liberación Freiriana today: the emergence of an educational policy as humanity in the land - patria,” reflect on the update nature of Paulo Freire’s thinking in the formulation of educational policies. Through a decolonial perspective, the authors pinpoint the way lots of policies that are self-presented as belonging to a Freirean ideary may lack the principles of love and commitment defended by the educator, highlighting the need for a reconstruction of educational practices based on truly setting the oppressed free.

In “Critical analysis of High School curricular reforms: implications for the teaching of Natural Sciences,” Nairys Costa de Freitas, Mairton Cavalcante Romeu and Maria Cleide da Silva Barroso discuss the consequences of New High School curriculum reforms (NEM) for the teaching of Natural Sciences. The critical analysis reveals the emptying of the National Curricular Guidelines (DCNs) and points to the precariousness of the scientific teaching in Brazil.

The article by Marcelo Mocarzel and Fabiana Eckhardt, “Traveling reforms: international influences on curriculum policies in Brazil and the consequences for guaranteeing education as a human right,” examines how Brazilian curriculum policies are influenced by international reforms. The authors analyze the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) from the perspective that these external influences, often Eurocentric, contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities in the educational system.

Juares Silva Thiesen, in “International and bilingual schools as a global representation of internationalized curricula in Brazilian Primary Education,” addresses the influence of international curriculum models in bilingual and international schools, highlighting the reflections of this movement on national curriculum policies and the discursive force promoted by these educational models.

The text by Renato Cavalcanti Novaes, Felipe da Silva Triani and Silvio de Cássio Costa Telles, “The Germ and the Aesthetics of Existence in Physical Education” at schools, the text investigates neoliberal educational reforms in the Physical Education curriculum, opposing them to the idea of “aestheticization of existence”. The authors explore alternatives to the dominant technicist curriculum and discuss the influences of the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM).

Rosenery Loureiro Lourenço and Celi Correa Neres, in “Social practices towards a critical and decolonial internationalization at the public university,” analyze internationalization practices from a decolonial perspective, based on the experience of Mato Grosso do Sul State University (MSSU),

demonstrating how internationalization actions may contribute to increase inclusion and equity chances in higher education.

The article by Omar Cabrales and Florentino Marquez Vargas, “The University and its Responsibility for the Environmental Future and the Human Rights of the New Generations,” investigates the role of universities in promoting educational practices that emphasize environmental sustainability and human rights, advocating the need for a curriculum that responds to global environmental crises.

Antônio Antônio and Paulino Gregorio Armando Kuebo discuss in “Education policy in Angola and the guarantee of the right to education: articulation between the context of influence and text production” the influence of international organizations on Angolan educational policies and how these policies relate to local demands, revealing challenges in implementing the right to education in the country.

Karine Vichielt Morgan and Miriam Fábila Alves, in “Do you come first? The action of the Bradesco Foundation in education,” the authors analyze the role of Fundação Bradesco as one of the main philanthrocapitalist actors in the Brazilian educational sector. The research, based on a bibliographic and documentary analysis, examines the Foundation’s investments and its business management strategies focused on competition and profit, questioning the implications of the privatization process of public education.

Finally, Darlan Pez Wociechoski and Afrânio Mendes Catani, in the article “The academic multifold,” explore the notion of academic multifold on national and global scales. By working with the concepts such as multiterritoriality and world-system, the authors analyze the strategies and representations of academic agents, revealing how the cooperation and competition among these agents reflect the complexities of the global academic field and its interactions with the Brazilian context.

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Author 2 – Conception and design of the dossier proposal; construction of theoretical material and contribution to the preparation and writing of the final text.

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