

ARTICLE

**COSMOPOLITANISM AND PERFORMATIVITY: CATEGORIES FOR
AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMPETENCIES ON THE NATIONAL
CURRICULAR COMMON BASE**

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ABSTRACT: The article discusses the categories of conformation of the subjectivities adapted to social scenario of the capital crisis, specifically the categories cosmopolitanism and performativity, and as the category of competences, emphasized on the National Curricular Common Base, relates to them. The neoliberal education reforms have the role of producing conformity by means of unilateral training for work and for a proper citizenship at this time features: job insecurity and rising unemployment, competitiveness, State repression and the annihilation of the resistance of the working class and, as ideological backdrop, the process of shifting responsibilities to the individual scope. The competences are a form of adaptation of the educational project to this kind of sociability, which empties the professional qualifications for individual employment pathways, insecure, subject to constant evaluation. Thus, the cosmopolitan, as an entrepreneur himself, is the design of suitable human formation to the neoliberal performative spirit.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism. Performativity. Competences. BNCC.

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COSMOPOLITISMO E PERFORMATIVIDADE: CATEGORIAS PARA UMA ANÁLISE DAS COMPETÊNCIAS NA BASE NACIONAL COMUM CURRICULAR

RESUMO: O artigo discute as categorias de conformação das subjetividades adaptadas ao cenário social de crise do capital, especificamente as categorias cosmopolitismo e performatividade, e como a categoria de competências, enfatizada na Base Nacional Comum Curricular, se relaciona com elas. As reformas educativas neoliberais possuem o papel de produzir conformismo por meio da formação unilateral para o trabalho e para uma cidadania adequada às características deste tempo: precariedade do trabalho e aumento do desemprego, competitividade, repressão do Estado e o aniquilamento das resistências da classe trabalhadora e, como pano de fundo ideológico, o processo de deslocamento das responsabilidades para o âmbito individual. As competências são uma forma de adaptação do projeto educacional a este tipo de sociabilidade, que esvazia as qualificações profissionais para percursos laborais individuais, inseguros, sujeitos a constantes avaliações. Assim, o cosmopolita, como empreendedor de si mesmo, é o projeto de formação humana adequada ao espírito performático neoliberal.

Palavras-chave: Cosmopolitismo. Performatividade. Competências. BNCC.

INTRODUCTION

This paper intends to raise some discussions about a very fruitful understanding of how certain theoretical categories truly come to life through neoliberal educational reforms, in order to place educational projects subordinated to capital in crisis during contemporary times. Therefore, the role of education is the development of adaptive and adaptable subjectivities in the scenario of social and economic crisis, for which the categories cosmopolitanism and performativity compete, and related to them is the category competence, presented in the National Curricular Common Base - BNCC, which is CNE-CP Resolution No. 2 of December 22, 2017.

Popkewitz (2009) is a reference in cosmopolitanism, and it is by this author that we understand that the cosmopolitan formation is directed towards individuals who not only adapt to the system but who truly desire it. In other words, it is a matter of instilling processes of conformity and active acceptance of the competitiveness system, naturalized by the cosmopolitan person, the result of the hegemonic struggle of the ruling classes at a time of structural crisis of capital (MÉSZÁROS, 2011).

Ball (2005), on the other hand, is our reference to the study of performativity, which is a “political technology”, according to the author’s Foucauldian precepts. The social environment where the cosmopolitan person lives is a scenario filled with judgments, public comparisons of results, control and continuous evaluations, which demand attention to productivity and actions’ cost-effectiveness at all times.

Competence, understood as the ability to mobilize knowledge, skills, and values, refers to solving problems in an environment characterized, as we have seen, by cosmopolitanism and performativity, a typical scenario of neoliberal sociability (ANDERSON, 2003; WATKINS, 2012; ROSS, GIBSON, 2007; RAMOS, 2001; SILVA, 2008; ZIBECCHI, 2014).

It is through this categorical analysis of neoliberal educational reforms (MELO, 2016), and specifically focusing on BNCC, that this work was developed in three parts, the first being this introduction. In the second part, we will deal with the founding categories of the construction of subjectivities in neoliberal sociability, which are cosmopolitanism and performativity. In the third part, the category of competence in the BNCC will be treated specifically as an ideological synthesis of a neoliberal educational reform whose objective is the development of adaptive and adaptable subjectivities for the capital crisis scenario in the Brazilian reality.

COSMOPOLITANISM AND PERFORMATIVITY: UNILATERAL HUMAN FORMATION IN TIMES OF STRUCTURAL CRISIS OF CAPITAL

Neoliberal educational reforms, driven by nation states and influenced by national and international private agents, bring in their midst a project of radical commodification in education, as in the classical sense, in the formation of human capital and of productive workers, and as well as a frontier for the realization of capital, both as an investment for the production and promotion of commodity-education, and for the struggle for the distribution of public funds.

Indeed, educational reforms are constituent parts of the social domination forms, involving, therefore, relations of power in society. The central purpose seems to be the production of conformism, as Gramsci clarifies in a classic synthesis present in Notebook 13, paragraph 7, of Prison Notebooks, when he analyzes Machiavelli’s book *The Prince*.

Question of the ‘collective man’ or of ‘social conformism’. Educational and formative mission of the State, which always has the purpose of creating new and higher types of ‘civilization’ and the morality of the wider popular masses to the needs of the continuous development of the production economic apparatus, and, therefore, of elaborating even physically new types of humanity (GRAMSCI, 1998, p. 21).

The objective of producing conformism is never ready and finished though. It is a suspended relation, in an unstable equilibrium, that produces an “underlying conflict” (HARVEY, 2014), which explains why there is strong state interference in the educational system at this point, in order to give it an organicity and functioning in such a way that it seems to be a project of all and for all, as a “social pact” (FÁRIA; MELO, 2014).

Nevertheless, the strong state presence in the educational system occurs in a context of subordination of nation states to the broad power of multinational corporations and the financial characteristic of capitalism, represented by equally powerful international organizations, especially the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and others.

Thus, in fact, we see nation states becoming agencies for capitalist reproduction, as Mészáros (2011) denounced regarding the crisis of 2008 and the help that the United States gave to that country's great financial corporations. The unproductive financial sector ends up directly influencing the crisis in the economy productive sector.

As a result of historical development under the rule of capital in its structural crisis, in our own time we have reached the point where we must be subjected to the destructive impact of an ever worsening *symbiosis* between the state legislative framework of our society and the material productive as well as the financial dimension of the established societal reproductive order (MÉSZÁROS, 2011, p.25).

It is in this scenario of overwhelming domination of capital in crisis that neo-liberal policies in general come forth, especially education neo-liberal policies. In this way, the founding axis of neoliberal sociability is the transference of responsibilities from the community to individuals (ROOS; GIBSON, 2007). It attaches itself to the ideological belief in individual freedoms and free enterprise, which is politically covered itself as the idea of a “minimal state”, and ends up becoming a mystifying formula, given the strong presence of the state in various sectors, as commented by Gerson (2012, p.100).

The state has stepped forward to enforce profitability and privatization via deregulation of things (banks, corporations, charter schools) and the elimination of regulations that protect people and basic rights (labor, students, teachers, protestors, immigrants, etc.), while simultaneously increasing punitive and disciplinary regulation of people.

In what concerns the state's coercive role, it has nothing to do

with minimal. And, also, there is nothing minimal in the state in the mediations that it makes with the financial and productive capital, in terms of transferring resources to the private sector.¹

It is precisely in this period of repression to forms of social resistance rising (Zibechi, 2014), that neoliberal policies consummate another fundamental facet: the precariousness of labor (ALVES, 2000; 2007; ANTUNES, 2004; 2005; CAVALCANTE, 2018; GOUNET, 1999; HARVEY, 2002; HOLANDA, 2001; KUENZER, 2007).

The condition of precariousness is intrinsic to the sociometabolic relation of capital, that is, the constitution as free and wage labor already contains this condition, since it is and always will be, under the system of capital, exploited labor. Still, the present precariousness advances on the forms of work that historically received some social protection from the nation states. The contemporary structural crisis, whose historic milestones refer to the oil crisis of 1973 and perpetuate itself to this day, has as a characteristic weakening of the working class resistance, and therefore, an advance on what used to be labor rights.

The process of precariousness of labor is, therefore, a process of suppressing the obstacles constituted by the class struggle in relation to the voracity of capital. Precariousness has a sense of loss of rights accumulated over the years by the most diverse categories of employees [...] it is, thus, a way of being social-historical of the ontological condition of the labor force as a commodity. As long as there is precariousness, that is, as long as there is subsumption of labor in relation to capital, there will be an objective possibility of precariousness. (CAVALCANTE, 2018, p.26).

The empirical facet of this socio-metabolic condition of labor in the capital system is the huge number of unemployed and a significant portion of fixed-term, part-time, day-labor, or even informal employment contracts with no state guarantee.

Thus, in broad terms, this is the social scene in which the educational reforms are inserted, and, consequently, in this context the subjectivities adapted to the capital crisis are produced, which main characteristics are cosmopolitanism and performativity, elements that will be discussed hereinafter.

COSMOPOLITANISM: A HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL SALVATION IN A NEOLIBERAL SOCIABILITY CONTEXT

In the context of neoliberal sociability, the educational project becomes a project of human development which is subordinated to the demands of the market. The typical individual commonly found is the “entrepreneur,” who is nothing more than someone

not conformed to his situation and who, moved by the belief in the capitalist system, acts voluntarily to better place oneself in the market, as an entrepreneur (even managers of themselves), as in the labor market. For this purpose, the individual acts rationally, within the limits given by access to available information, in order to qualify and place oneself always in a proactive position in the work contexts in which they find themselves (WOLF; MELO, 2014).

The neoliberal educational project, as expressed by BNCC and the competence category, obeys the precepts of business projects, which is summarized by Melo (2010, p.188) in his analysis of the National Industry Confederation (CNI).

For entrepreneurs, it is important that workers act for a constant adaptation, aiming for their employability, as this is reflected in higher productivity; but it is also in their interest that the workers in the companies be entrepreneurs in terms of not being able to accommodate themselves to the given situations and constantly seek improvements in the work processes, leadership in the teams among other characteristics of the intrapreneur, that is, of the entrepreneur employee.

Thus, this displacement of responsibilities to individuals gains a concrete substrate in the development of the entrepreneurial profile, which are responsible for their initial and continuous training, as well as for the maintenance and development of their career and/or business.

Cêa (2007, p.313) presents an excellent synthesis of entrepreneurship and its role in times of capital crisis, as a form of individual salvation.

First, confronting the problem of unemployment, in the current context of capitalist relations of production, requires a double condition: that the subjects deliberately seek their own autonomous forms of survival and that they intend to take the initiative to be an entrepreneur of their individualities. Second, to the extent that poverty and misery deepen as structural elements of the economic and political movement underway, it is necessary that they be administered, a role that belongs to the State, since the market constitutes the space, par excellence, of the *laissez faire*.

In this context, the bourgeois education project seeks to instill cosmopolitanism, as a form of individual salvation, in a frayed social web by both the crisis of capital and the ideological forms of coexistence with this crisis and the bourgeois proposals of overcoming.

Education is a part of the long gearing of capital's expanded production and reproduction, and as we have said, its main role is to produce conformism. We can say that "problem solving" learning is a privileged form that neoliberal educational reforms have found for this purpose, as Fullan (2002) argues.

Popkewitz (2009) criticizes this neoliberal foundation of educational reforms, for whom problem solving has two functions:

the first is the development of teaching procedures that develop a mentality adapted to pragmatic rationality, aiming for objective answers. But it is that problem solving's second function that approaches cosmopolitanism.

problem solving directs the conduct principles as moral principles, which relate more to unfinished cosmopolitanism than to mathematical reasoning *per se*. Troubleshooting is not just about solving problems! Effective instruction should enable children to 'want' them, in addition to being 'able to'. (POPKEWITZ, 2009, p. 159).

Before proceeding with the discussion, it is important to emphasize that cosmopolitanism is an inheritance of Illustration, of modern rationality, the formation of the so-called "world citizen", born with modernity. This rational individual, who acts according to purposes (WEBER, 1977), calculates risks, and bets on strategies and tactics for his own life, individually, in accordance to the advent of bourgeois civil society, which fragments relationships, individualizing behaviors and objectives. The cosmopolitan is, therefore, one who is guided by one's own goals in the midst of a jungle of many other cosmopolitans in the same situation, and whose stories of private salvation may crash into each other, impelling Hobbesian competition.

Thus, the solving problems capacity presents this double dimension: to develop rationality, which is expressed in behavior, and internalization and naturalization of ways of being, in a world of uncertainties and insecurities derived from the structural crisis of capital.

Another aspect of cosmopolitanism is what Popkewitz (2009) calls "double gestures", which is the double movement of inclusion and exclusion through the normalization mediation. "Normalizing means a political and social technology of segregation from those who have the cosmopolitan requirements of those who do not have them" (MELO, 2016, p. 50). Globally, what produces this type of sociability are the most dramatic exclusion processes, which primarily affect populations whose patterns of life and sociability do not fit into cosmopolitanism. "The capital system, after all, not only creates more commodities than necessary for consumption, but also makes millions of people 'surplus' [...]" (MELO, 2016, p. 51).

Social normalization is also reflected in school and in the educational system, and neoliberal educational reforms are expressions of this process. School education is a normalizing agency, tuning what is and should be a formed person, who is and should be the productive worker, what should be the curriculum and should not be present in it as educational content and practices. Thus, the school adjusts both those that are adapted to cosmopolitanism,

and isolates and excludes those who do not have the requirements to be cosmopolitan, after all: “The manifest function of the modern school is to teach children cosmopolitan principles about reason” (POPKEWITZ, 2009, p. 20).

Normativity separates who are entrepreneurs and those who are not; separates those that the market can capture as labor force and those that do not fit its requirements, or that are “left behind”. And in times of crisis, this social selection makes this reality even more dramatic. According to the OECD, which we classify as an agency of cosmopolitanism.

As OECD economies are increasingly based on knowledge, young people are expected to have solid core competencies to actively participate in society and labor market. Education systems should guarantee that the youth achieve a minimum level of transferable and useful skills, not only in professions and jobs, but also in other areas such as family and social life (OCDE, 2015, p.76).

This OECD exposition reveals the cosmopolitan character of educational reform, which encourages the new generations active adaptation to the capitalist economy, naturalized as a “knowledge society”, and the formation of rational subjectivities, adapted and adaptable both to the labor world and social life. It is about including the “competent” and, consequently, excluding or marginalizing the “incompetent”, misfits and blamed for not having the cosmopolitan profile.

These occurrences introduce an educational “disenchantment” (WEBER, 1992), reducing the system to commodification, of human formation as “capital” for companies. Education departs to be an end in itself, it becomes a way of finding individual salvation projects. Muñoz (2002, p.192) sums up this climate of cosmopolitan education with these words.

In this network of qualities by half and empirically documentable and measurable efficacies, education as valuable experience in itself; as a space of social and personal development in its broadest sense and tradition is emptied or seriously changed. And thus, mortgaged and instrumentalized, seeking for results, products, the most profitable and redeemable diplomas in the labor market or other personal and social transactions.

This “disenchantment” through the path of neoliberal desertification (ANTUNES, 2004), finds an important reflection and continuity in the performativity category.

PERFORMATIVITY AND THE EMPIRE OF SOCIAL CONTROL OVER INDIVIDUALS

In this section we are going to focus efforts on the understanding of performativity, as an expression of social

domination that directly affects education. Performativity, according to Ball (2005), is a political technology, an organizational culture and a method of social regulation, as so:

[Performativity] uses judgments, comparisons, and demonstrations as a means of control, friction, and change. The performances of individual subjects or organizations serve as parameters of productivity or outcome, or even serve as demonstrations of ‘quality’ or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection. (Ball, 2005, p.543).

From the outset we point out that in this base established by Ball, subjects who hold tools, power and/or have legitimacy to classify, and those who are classified, are separated and hierarchized. In the case of neoliberal educational reforms, States are the great evaluators of educational systems, that is, they are the system’s “auditors”, even if the criteria are not always autonomously constructed, considering the dependence of international agencies such as the OECD and PISA (MELO, 2016). Furthermore, the central evaluation body does not always contribute with the means available to the performance of the individuals and institutions evaluated, which means, according to Ball (2004, p.1116), performativity helps the state to have a “distance government”, “Ruling without governing”.

Returning to the heart of Ball’s citation, performativity is based on hetero-generated judgments of value, that is, produced in the absence of the evaluated subjects. These judgments encompass comparisons as well, these are the fundamental characteristics of performativity. The resulting comparison is the mercantile logic shifted to the performative evaluation of systems, schools, and individuals in education.

Performativity is achieved through the construction and publication of information and indicators, as well as other institutional achievements and promotional material, like mechanisms that stimulate, judge, and compare professionals in terms of results: the tendency to name, differentiate, and classify. (BALL, 2005, p.544).

Publication of results and comparisons are others performative characteristics we can join to those previously mentioned. This performative scenario exposes individuals and institutions by means of achieved results, without necessarily taking into account not only the process, but the limitations that affect these individuals and institutions in their process of producing results, including well-known processes of students’ selection from schools as matter to control the placement in rankings (MELO, 2016; BALL, 2010). In the concrete case of educational reforms, the full weight of the evaluations falls on teachers and schools.

In addition, in this performative climate, measures like the famous prizes for teachers and schools, which favor the creation of obscure ways of achieving competitive results, generate frauds and, not always healthy, everyday processes in educational relations, widely reported in the press, a true “terror system” (BALL, 2002). This is how Ball summarizes (2005, p.549).

It is the generalized effect of the visibility of evaluation that, penetrating our way of thinking about our practice, produces performativity. Often, the requirements of such systems generate useless or even harmful practices that, however, meet the performance requirements. Within a matrix of performance-related assessments, comparisons, and incentives; individuals and organizations will do whatever it takes to distinguish or survive.

What we have here is the transformation of a complex educational relationship, which involves subjectivities mediated by social relations and curricular contents, in only numbers and percentages placed in comparison tables. Though, the same performative effort is not put in to build a healthy climate in schools. As Ball (2005) states, what matters is only our performances, not that we care about each other. And he adds: “[...] that we offer our contribution to the construction of convincing institutional shows and ‘products’” (BALL, 2005, p.557).

Finally, the fundamental pedagogical relationship itself is perverted, the relationship between teachers and learners. The pedagogical work is no longer “for” children, for example, but is applied “to” them, so that they produce the expected results on the large-scale exams. Ball (2005) translates these as “inauthentic relationships”, which distort the formative character of school education.

Indeed, it is even true that “being a teacher” itself goes through the process of inauthenticity, since its daily action is guided by external mandates (“I do what I am told to do”), which dispenses believing in what is done (“I do not believe it, but I do it”). In addition, much more is lost in this process, not without cost, as Ball (2001, p.156) tells us: “The worker is not usually taken into account when referring to the cost of achieving greater effectiveness (intensification, loss of autonomy, more direct supervision and evaluation, lack of participation in decision-making, lack of self-development through work)”.

Thus, the performative environment, which is the materialization of bureaucratic domination in contexts of capital crisis; discourages, disappoints and makes teachers sick. And yet, it introduces an element other than classical control, the Bentham’s *panoptíc*, which is instability and uncertainty about evaluative parameters. The limit

can always be changed and enlarged without any control from those whose heads are on the chopping block. The results and the scales cannot be anticipated before the final result, they depend on the others performance, and the published comparisons generate results that could not be anticipated, generating anxiety and fear.

THE COMPETENCES IN THE BNCC

In this part of the article we will discuss the competence category as it appears in Resolution No. 2, approved by the Plenary Council of the National Education Council and published in the Official Federal Gazette on December 22, 2017, which “institutes and guides the implementation of the National Curricular Common Base, to be mandatorily respected throughout the stages and respective modalities in the scope of basic education “(BRASIL, 2017).²

Although, before specifically discussing BNCC’s text, in the first part we will elaborate on the main characteristics of the competence category according to the literature about work and education (RAMOS, 2001; SILVA, 2008).

COMPETENCES AS A CATEGORY OF BOURGEOIS PEDAGOGY

At this stage, we can analyze the category of competence, understanding it as a derivation of the previously delineated categories, cosmopolitanism and performativity, by composing with them the social forms of production of subjectivities adapted and adaptable to capitalist society in crisis, or, in other words, to the neoliberal period.

That is because we do not understand the category of competence without taking into account the social determinations for people in this period of crisis, in which stories of individual salvation become the predominant and naturalized forms. A time in which precarious work or unemployment is an increasingly close frontier for the working class; a time of labor instability, which exterminate old work relations, validated socially and collectively by the professional identity, and instead place labor relations based on individual capital and labor connections, or by flexible and individually built routes, weakening the resistance of work against capital, even mediated by the social devaluation of the old professions. A time in which all educational relations perish as value per se and are subordinated to the instrumental rationality of capital, which reduces education in unilateral formation of human capital for business and productivity (RAMOS, 2001; SILVA, 2008).

The competence category has several layers to be stripped. The first, the most external, is the one that is placed like a social relations mediator. As already mentioned, the rise of skills in the labor field is due to the ideological shift, to the neoliberal taste, from typical fordist professional qualifications to the concept of competencies, which is the form assumed by flexible precarious employment in toyotism (RAMOS, 2001).

Professions were governed by defined social relations, with a delimited body of knowledge and professional practices, socially recognized and protected by trade union representations and labor laws. Certainly, there have always been unregulated professions, not recognized as such, and therefore socially devalued. However, the fordist era was characterized by a labor organization that had a confrontation position to the capital, and it generated important achievements for the working class.³

What is happening today is that the condition of precariousness advances over all occupations, which implies, among others, the fragmentation of professional identities and, therefore, of unity in the struggles of work against capital, which occurs in the midst of conditions for material life deterioration. That leads to the individuals' isolation in their private lives, regulated by routine (HELLER, 2008; SCHVARZ, 2016). Emptying professions and qualifications leads to a progressive precarious labor world, guided by competence. In addition, by the competence hegemony, a subjectivism process of the relation between capital and work, eroding the class solidarity that characterized the Fordist period. According to Ramos (2008, p. 300):

Competences, based on evaluation and validation procedures, are considered as structuring elements of the work organization that was once determined by the profession. While the domain of a profession, once acquired, cannot be questioned (maximally, it can be developed), competencies are presented as unstable properties inside and outside the work activity. This means that management based on skills concludes that a salaried employee must undergo permanent validation, constantly proving his suitability for the job and his right to a promotion.

Therefore, the element of instability and individualization, as they appear in the matrices categories, cosmopolitanism and performativity, are also the foundations of the transition from qualifications to competences. Hence the competences identification with neoliberal educational reforms, which precisely make concrete projects of individual salvation, linked ideologically with processes of weakening collective actions of the working class.

A second competence framework, still in relation to professional qualifications, is the emptying of educational content on behalf of a series of tacit and behavioral competences, which become the goal of school education and neoliberal educational reforms. The 1990s saw the rise of skills at the center of Brazilian educational reforms after the country entered the international agreement called the World Declaration of Education for All, known as the Jomtien - Thailand Conference, 1990. It established the so-called “basic learning needs”. It is in this document that our educational reforms of that period were inspired, and it is to these assumptions that the current BNCC returns.

In this document, the competences logic (and, consequently, cosmopolitanism and performativity) is observed in action, by the centrality in “learning”, as outlined in article 4:

1. Whether or not expanded educational opportunities will translate into meaningful development-for an individual or for society - depends ultimately on whether people actually learn as a result of those opportunities, i.e., whether they incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values. The focus of basic education must, therefore, be on actual learning acquisition and outcome, rather than exclusively upon enrolment, continued participation in organized programmes and completion of certification requirements. Active and participatory approaches are particularly valuable in assuring learning acquisition and allowing learners to reach their fullest potential. It is, therefore, necessary to define acceptable levels of learning acquisition for educational programmes and to improve and apply systems of assessing learning achievement. (WORLD CONFERENCE, 1990).

Here is, in summary, the full range of characteristics of adapted education to the crisis of capital and synthesized in the concept of “education for all” and “basic learning needs.” At first, we see the characteristics of cosmopolitanism in the idea that learning must follow pragmatic rationality, useful for naturalized social life and decontextualized from its class character, as well as the possibility of mobilizing this knowledge, skills in life practical situations, which means, in this context, the “effectiveness” of learning. It is in fact the prevalence of “knowing to be”, derived from cosmopolitanism, over to do and know-how (MELO, 2010).

On the other hand, the way to do this is to focus learning the very action of individuals, a role that belongs to the active pedagogies, captured by the neoliberal ideology and thus empty the role of teaching, that is, empty the role of the teacher (emptying that causes the crisis in this profession currently). And, finally, the text approaches the characteristic of performativity, centrality of the performance evaluation of students and systems, according to criteria previously adopted.

Silva (2008, p.16) sums up the competences' scenario in education:

A first hypothesis deriving from the conceptual framework of competences was defined based on the idea that it carries an instrumental conception of human formation and this is present in the regulatory provision of curricular reform. This hypothesis is explored with reference to Bernstein's assumption that theories of competence lead to an understanding that human formation occurs by simple contact between the individual and the environment, regardless of cultural practices that differentiate individuals and groups and independently also, of the meanings that derive from these practices.

Here again we have the criticism of competences because this is an expression of the stories of individual salvation, as well as their instrumental rationality, of solving problems pertaining to the naturalization of capitalist social relations. In the context of a sociological analysis, it is about qualifying competences as a form of adaptation of the individuals to the social functions, in a functionalist conception, in which these roles are naturalized according to the social divisions existing between the classes and social groups.

In order to confirm what was said above about the centrality of competencies in educational reforms in the 1990s, we now present an excerpt from an important business document, called "Basic education and vocational training", formulated by CNI in 1993, period when ideas from the Jontiem Conference were penetrating our country. In this document, which for any more attentive observer became the basis of the educational reforms of the Brazilian State in that period, entrepreneurs indicate the basic skills required for workers:

In addition to quantitative modernization, it is necessary that school play the pedagogical role of stimulating in the student critical elaboration, independence and capacity to organize the work itself. These are, in summary, the basic skills to be prioritized in general education and vocational training curricula. The need points to an educational system that provides a new type of formation, for a man who creates his own history, capable of acting under certain conditions, freely choosing the alternatives presented to him by the world of work, whether in the company, or in the productive sector as a whole. (CNI, 1993, p.14-15).

Primarily, and summarizing all that has been said previously, it is necessary to understand that competence is not a neutral category, but in a social dispute, and, therefore, mediator of the hegemonic struggles in society over human formation projects. In this context, entrepreneurs since the 1940s, at least, have been socially disputing the Brazilian educational project (RODRIGUES, 1998), and in this case, it is perceived that there is an adaptation of the business project

to the times of capitalism in crisis, in which the stories of individual salvation, expressed therein in crystalline shape, are the form of individuals functional adaptation to the system.

From there, we notice that basic skills are not related to the content domain (“critical elaboration” appears as something ethereal, without real meaning), but to behaviors (independence) and everyday actions (organization of the work itself), which is in perfect harmony with the idea already presented of the emptying of the professions and the instability in the labor field.

In the second part of the above quotation, entrepreneurs determine a schooled education project clearly linked to cosmopolitanism, when it comes to the formation of a new human being, who builds one’s own history, seeking individual solutions, which is also in perfect synchrony with the aforementioned on the fragmentation of the world of work and the individualization of workers in their relations with capital.

Although this is an extremely provocative and complex topic, we consider that we have given clues to the understanding of competences as the ideological axis of educational reforms in the current period. Next, based on all this, we will briefly review how competencies appear in the current educational reform, the BNCC.

COMPETENCES AS THE FORMATIVE FOUNDATION OF BNCC: UNILATERAL FORMATION TOWARDS A COSMOPOLITAN AND PERFORMATIC SOCIABILITY

In this last part of the article, we briefly describe and analyze how competencies appear in the text of Resolution No. 2, dated in December 22, 2017, which “institute and guide the implementation of the National Curricular Common Base.” It is not possible to evaluate BNCC in its entirety in this article. However, in order to summarize the more general criticisms of this neoliberal curriculum reform, we will express here the main topics to be explored in other studies: BNCC means a rupture in the federative pact, in the sense of centralizing the entire educational policy of curricula and evaluation (which can be evidenced in Art. 5; 7; 16 and 18); regression in themes of diversity, such as the inclusion of Religion as an area of knowledge, and the postponement of the introduction of the issue of gender and sexual diversity in BNCC (which is present in Art. 14, 22 and 23); teacher training should be linked to BNCC (Art. 17); all MEC programs and projects must refer to BNCC (Art. 19), including PNLD – National Textbook Program (Art. 20).

The specific question of competencies is defined in Art. 3:

In the scope of the BNCC, competence is defined as the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures), skills (cognitive and socioemotional practices), attitudes and values, to solve complex demands of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work.

Sole Paragraph: For the purposes of this Resolution, based on the caput of art. 35-A and in Paragraph 1 of Art. 36 of the LDB, the expression “competencies and skills” should be considered equivalent to the expression “learning rights and objectives” in the National Education Plan (PNE) Law. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 04).

We will refer here to the considerations previously raised by Silva (2008), for whom competencies reduce human formation to a mere relationship between individual and environment, in order to solve problems, find solutions to the complexity of the daily life and work, individually, bringing too little training as the appropriation of culture, socially considered, emptying the school of education. This is precisely what we find in the official characterization of competences in this article of the BNCC, and which immediately refers to the cosmopolitan formation already dealt with in this text.

The reduction of learning rights to competences and abilities⁴ means nothing less than the utilitarian, cosmopolitan and performative facet of this reform, whose centrality, by unifying learning rights at the national level by large-scale evaluations, wants nothing more than to implement a performative system. This is clear in Opinion No. 15 of 2017, which approved the BNCC in the Plenary Council of the National Education Council.⁵

the organization of Basic Education in different stages and modalities, with the indication of the general competences and specific skills in each area of knowledge, will allow, on the one hand, the adjustment of the matrices of large scale evaluations and, on the other, that each institution or learning matrix can elaborate its own formative process evaluation matrices to support teachers' work. (BRASIL, 2017a, p.30).

So, at the end of the day, standardized competences are in the interest of improving effectiveness of large-scale evaluations, which in fact constitute the centrality of neoliberal reforms, and therefore this is the most important part of criticism of educational systems in general. What led Ross and Gibson (2007) to talk about the “fabrication” of the educational crisis as an ideological fallacy in the process of transferring responsibilities from the state to individuals. Therefore, competencies in the BNCC are a category immersed in the complex web of categorical relations in neoliberal sociability, that is, a unilateral formation for work and life in a “naturally” competitive and individualistic society.

Lastly, Article 4 of Resolution No. 2, dated December 22, 2017, explains the 10 competences or learning rights, valid for all students of basic education. For the purposes that we propose to analyze here, we can say that at least eight of these objectives are related directly or indirectly to cosmopolitanism, the objectives: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Of these objectives 2, 5 and 9 are directly related to problems and conflict resolution. Now we are going to highlight four of these competencies or learning rights.

1. To value and use historically constructed knowledge of the physical, social, cultural and digital world to understand and explain reality, continue to learn and collaborate in building a just, democratic and inclusive society;

2. To exercise intellectual curiosity and to resort to the proper approach of sciences, including research, reflection, critical analysis, imagination and creativity, to investigate causes, to elaborate and test hypotheses, to formulate and solve problems and to create solutions (including technological) based on the knowledge of different areas.

6. To value the diversity of cultural knowledge and experiences and to appropriate knowledge and experiences that enable them to understand relations properly from the world of work and make choices aligned with the exercise of citizenship and the individual's life project with freedom, autonomy, critical conscience and responsibility.

10. To act personally and collectively with autonomy, responsibility, flexibility, resilience and determination, making decisions, based on ethical, democratic, inclusive, sustainable, and solidary principles. (BRASIL, 2017, p. 4-5).

Concerning the first item, cosmopolitan competence is verified in the formation of citizenship, rational and bearer of future projects, that is, the “world citizen”, in a conception clearly aimed at generating social consensus on the bourgeois education project. After all, by bringing the idea of participation, a just, democratic and inclusive society, the official text presents a seductive discourse for the social common sense, as well as sympathy. However, this characteristic cannot be considered isolated from the others.

The second objective falls behind this generalization and brings to education the purpose of training citizens who are capable of using knowledge, research, curiosity and creativity to solve problems, which is the typical cosmopolitan development that, inserted in the neoliberal ideology, places individuals to be the managers of their own lives. In the sixth objective, this is incorporated with the pragmatically directed appropriations for personal choices, for the achievement of individual life projects, taking responsibility for them. And finally, in the tenth learning objective, what is seen is the consolidation of this

cosmopolitan ideology of the rationality: the individual responsible for decision-making, resilient to face difficulties and overcome them.⁶

At this point of the analysis, we can summarize that the BNCC, by contemplating competences as “learning rights”, and therefore as part of Brazilian neoliberal reforms in the present time, is yet another chapter in the subordination of the state educational project to the mercantile dictation of unilateral formation for a naturalized social life as unstable and competitive. Whose doors must be accessed by individual efforts, resilience and effort, constantly comparable, emptying education in its proper meaning and instrumentalizing school education for the development of skills that are useful for solving problems and surviving in the cosmopolitan and performative jungle that is typical of neoliberal sociability.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our purpose in this analysis was the consideration of two categories, cosmopolitanism and performativity, as axes of the neoliberal educational reforms in the present time, especially in Brazil. This categorical pair refers to the critique of capitalist social relations and the construction of subjectivities adapted and adaptable to the crisis of capital, a period in which the shift of collective responsibilities to individuals becomes more imperative. Hence the need to naturalize competitiveness (performativity) as an element of sociability, and therefore the merit, corollary of this, as an individual objective. This then moves the cosmopolitan citizen to choose between possibilities the ways to better adapt to this reality.

Therefore, we have a highly performative society, that is, that places individuals in constant competition, and, with this, the formation of subjectivities that adapt to this situation, rationally formulating solutions for a better social placement. The cosmopolitan, the rational citizen, who acts individually to integrate, is the one who accepts performativity as a principle, and places oneself in the social arena, in the competitive jungle with other cosmopolitans.

Education in the bourgeois project, and in BNCC particularly, as part of that project, has the role of providing competences to cosmopolitans be able to choose and take responsibility for both, the paths covered, and the results achieved. Its role is also to legitimize this system of individual competition and responsibilities displacement, as well as naturalize this situation. To this end, the school, the main cosmopolitan and performatic agent, is emptied of the historically

produced content, and focuses itself, through neoliberal reforms, on useful and transferable skills for life, in order to provide individuals with tools for social life in these already referred terms.

By doing so, neoliberal reforms, and the BNCC in particular, reduce human formation to one-sidedness adaptation to the capitalist system, of increasingly precarious work, and of social obedience, instilling self-control and discrimination mechanisms (the cosmopolitan and performative “self”, and the “others” that are outside this definition).

For resistance against this process, it is necessary to be aware of the mechanisms used in neoliberal educational reforms, and to formulate emancipatory educational projects that take into account the return to community/social values, social integration, the valorization of solidarity principles that counteract to the exacerbation of individualism in society and education.

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NOTES

1 Mészáros (2011) cites the case of the nationalization of the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac companies' debts, which amounted to 5.4 trillion dollars, in the administration of George W. Bush.

2 Although it is not our explicit intention on this particular paper, we must point out that the BNCC's trajectory is a result of corporate groups' pressure, even of a monopolistic nature, which have gained strength from the organization of the All for Education Movement and, especially, of the Movement for the Base. Referring to the initial reflections of this article, this BNCC's aspect places it as a unilateral formative project, in the ways discussed here. On this subject we refer to the works of Neves and Piccinini (2018), and Rabelo, Jimenez and Segundo (2015), among others.

3 The movie *Made in Dagenham* (2011. Directed by Nigel Cole, 1:53) illustrates it very well. The film tells the true story of the strike of working women at a Ford's factory in Dagenham, England, who were fighting for equal payment and better working conditions in 1968. The strike's magnitude and strength led the union to major negotiations (and contradictions in the negotiation process by the union bureaucracies) reaching the high summits of the Ministry of Labor. At the end, women won the desired wage equality in 1970. By the time of the film is set, that is, in the pre-oil crisis, it is able to demonstrate the strength of syndicalism in the classical Fordist era, as well as show us the English welfare state time. Precisely the locus of the neoliberal experience which would begin a decade later, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher.

4 "Skills can be understood as routinized schemes - habits or know-how - and are part of competence. In the words of Perrenoud (1999), skills are schemes with a certain complexity that exist in the practical state, usually coming from intensive training, whose gestures have become second nature and merged into habits. As such, the know-how exists in a practical state, without being always or immediately associated with a procedural knowledge" (RAMOS, 2001, p.236).

5 It must be registered as did Luiz Carlos de Freitas in his blog (FREITAS, 2017), the opposing votes of the following Councilors: Aurina de Oliveira Santana, Malvina Tania Tuttman, and Marcia Ângela da Silva Aguiar.

6 It is Freitas (2018) again who brings the discussion of the relationship between BNCC and resilience, pointing out the ideological foundations of this conception, without, however, using the categories proposed here, but approaching what we have been discussing here the BNCC's relationship with cosmopolitanism and performativity. He analyzes a report from O Estado de São Paulo newspaper, March 4, 2018, entitled: "Only 2.1% of poor students in the country have good school performance." The report is based on the OECD study, which shows that the average of the countries participating in the survey was 25.2% of resilient students, which would demonstrate the crisis of our system, which places Brazil in 62nd place among 71 countries investigated. The concept of resilience is given to students from poor countries that are able to reach level 3 on PISA exam, which means, in this assessment's score, the minimum for "learning opportunities". Melo (2016) demonstrates, for the Spanish case, how the OECD and its assumptions that artificially install a crisis of educational systems, were adopted to argue in favor of the 2013s reform. As a counterpoint

to the neoliberal use of resilience, Marochi (2017) analyses the resilience category from a critical point of view, putting it as a resistance tool in the life of workers / students women of the EJA – Youth and Adult Education.

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