

The Centaur of educational policy: conditions for innovation in the high school reform in São Paulo, 2019-2022 * 1,2

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the implementation of the high school reform in the State of São Paulo, focusing on the *Inova Educação* program, a curricular component of all the formative itineraries of the New High School, in the period 2019-2022. The methodology used is participatory research with the Public School and Democracy Group (GEPUD), which brings together communities from 15 state schools in the São Paulo network, five case studies, interviews with educators and analysis of content proposed by private agents formulating the program. Based on Gramsci's concept of the State (2014), community participation in the decision-making process of the policy cycle and changes in the material conditions of schools are considered mediating elements in the analysis of this educational policy. The exclusion of community input, alongside a performative invitation to participate in institutional spaces of the Department of Education, in which the communities attended the presentation of the program by private agents, without the right to express their opinion, stand out; the precarious context of the implementation of the reform that affects the right to education of students with the low supply of classes in the formative itineraries, in addition to the exclusion of scientific and humanistic knowledge necessary for understanding and overcoming social problems. The anti-democracy that constitutes the program is represented by the spoken and unsaid content of the educational policy: what is proposed by its formulators and what was experienced by the communities of the schools participating in the research. In this sense, we seek to indicate that the problem of the reform of high school did not consist only in its implementation, but lies in its conception.

Keywords

Inova Educação – High school reform – Educational policy – Community participation – Material conditions of schools.

* English version by Vanessa Santana dos Santos. The authors take full responsibility for the translation of the text, including titles of books/articles and the quotations originally published in Portuguese.

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2- This paper is based on the Master's Dissertation, defended in March 2023, at the Faculdade de Educação of the Universidade de São Paulo, with the title: *Public schools between diktates and resistances: the Inova Educação program in the São Paulo education system (Alencar, 2023)*.

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Introduction

The high school reform has been severely criticized by education movements, and scientific research has provided pertinent analyses and evidence on the trajectory of this policy, already characterized as the worst reform in the history of Brazilian education. In turn, private agents, privileged formulators and defenders of maintaining the reform proposal claim that, during the Bolsonaro government (2019–2022), there was a problem of lack of coordination and, therefore, the errors are due solely to the implementation of this policy.⁵

In May 2019, during the João Dória administration (2019–2022), from the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), the State of São Paulo was the first federated entity to implement the high school reform, through the Inova Educação program. The São Paulo State Department of Education (Seduc), with then-secretary Rossieli Soares, carried out, based on the aforementioned program, a curricular reform for elementary school II and high school, with the inclusion of three subjects, Life Project, Technology and Electives, as a diversified part, extension of the time students remain in schools to 5 hours and 15 minutes, seven classes per day (for schools with part-time periods in the morning and afternoon), adjustment of class time from 50 to 45 minutes and provision of training activities for educators (São Paulo, 2019).

The program is one of the results of a partnership between Seduc and the Ayrton Senna Institute (IAS), which developed a prototype in 2019 and applied it to 24 schools in the state capital, with the aim of guiding its implementation in all schools in the state network (Goulart; Alencar, 2021).⁶ As of 2021, the components of the Inova Educação program will be included in all the formative itineraries of the New High School in São Paulo.

During this period, in the face of strong mobilizations for the repeal of the high school reform and statements by private agents justifying the existing problems as resulting solely from the implementation process in the states, it is important to ask: what forms of implementation were adopted in the state of São Paulo, which has the largest state public school system?⁷ Under what conditions were the measures to change the New High School promoted?

The objective is to analyze the implementation of the high school reform in São Paulo, focusing on the Inova Educação program, in the period 2019–2022. Community participation in the decision-making process of the policy cycle and changes in the material contexts of schools are considered as mediating elements in the analysis of this educational policy. The study has as its theoretical framework the Marxism of Antonio Gramsci (2014).

5- According to analysis by Cássio. Available at: cartacapital.com.br. Accessed on: August 8, 2023.

6- With the signing of the Cooperation Agreement, the Volkswagen Foundation began participating in the writing and review groups for the São Paulo Curriculum and the prototype of the program began, with the production of teaching materials in 24 state elementary and high schools in the city of São Paulo, with training for managers and teachers at these schools. Seduc invited the Regional Education Directorates of South 3, East 2, Central South and North 1 to participate in the program and indicated as selection criteria for schools the position in the São Paulo State Education Development Index (Idesp), location in the capital and tenured teachers and managers with at least three years of experience in the same school unit. After that, the prioritized schools received invitations to join the program (GEPUD; Ação Educativa, 2021).

7- In 2019, the São Paulo state network served a total of 3,656,265 students in different stages and types of education, enrolled in 5,681 schools and had 146,464 teachers working as permanent employees, through temporary contracts or through the Consolidation of Labor Laws (National Institute of Studies and Educational Research Anísio Teixeira, 2020).

With a qualitative approach, it uses as its methodology participatory research developed over 27 months, between August 2019 and October 2021, together with the Grupo Escola Pública e Democracia (GEPUD), a group that brings together communities from 15 state schools in the network and promoted the development of several alternative activities to the Inova Educação program.⁸ With the purpose of showing the diversity existing in the process of implementing educational policy, five case studies were carried out in 2021 on a sample of schools whose communities are located in peripheral and centralized territories of the capital of São Paulo and cities in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, when four directors and a coordinating teacher, members of GEPUD, were interviewed.⁹

In order to present this work and the ideas presented, the article is divided into three parts, in addition to the introduction and final considerations. In the first part, we address the references that support the discussion; as the title of this article alludes, the metaphor of the Centaur is articulated with Gramsci's concept of the State (2014). In the following two parts, we analyze the lack of spaces for community participation for consultation and debate on the high school reform; the precarious context of implementation of the reform that affects the material working conditions and the right to education of students.

The Centaur

You must therefore know that there are two ways of fighting: one, with law, the other, with force. The first is proper to man; the second, to animals. However, since the first is often not sufficient, it is advisable to have recourse to the second. It is therefore necessary for a prince to know how to use animals and men well (Machiavelli, 1999, p. 111).

Another point to be fixed is that of the “double perspective” in political action and state life. There are several degrees through which the double perspective can be presented, from the most elementary to the most complex. But they can be theoretically reduced to two fundamental degrees corresponding to the dual nature of the Machiavellian Centaur, savage and human, of force and consensus, of authority and hegemony, of violence and civility, of the individual moment and that of the universal (of the Church and the State), of agitation and propaganda, of tactics and strategy (Gramsci, 2014, p. 1576, Q 13, § 14).

For the analysis of politics, we learn the metaphor of the centaur used by Machiavelli and taken up again by Gramsci, as it symbolically expresses the theoretical and practical themes and problems of force and consensus as foundations of the State in the relationship between political society and civil society.

8- GEPUD was created in 2019 and brings together professionals from public basic and higher education (in the case of higher education also from private institutions) in the state of São Paulo to discuss the relationship between educational policies and school practices. It has dedicated itself to studying the educational proposals of the São Paulo state network and discussing their implementation in school practice, guided by the constitutional principles of the right to education, democratic school management and the socially referenced quality of public education. Information about GEPUD is available at gepud.com.br. Accessed on: October 15, 2021. The process of resistance and appropriation of GEPUD is portrayed in: Alencar and Perrella (2022); and Alencar, Moutinho Jr and Jacomini (2023).

9- It was taken care regarding research ethics procedures, with terms of consent from the schools and authorization to record the interviews. The names of participants and schools are fictitious. Project approved by the Research Ethics Committee: No. 45796621.1.0000.5421.



In the case study carried out, these conceptual tools help explain the conditions of innovation in educational policy for public schools in São Paulo, through which we examine dimensions of the pedagogical relationship between the State and school communities in the implementation of the Inova Educação and New High School programs.

We consider public policies as “an expression of complex movements that bring together efforts from different agents to embody a series of actions and behaviors that produce repercussions in social life” (Silva; Jacomini, 2016, p. 94-95). In this way, public policy is thought of as a unity between universes of power relations and guidance for decision-making in light of reality.

From this perspective, we admit both open disputes and the overcoming of the fixed and immutable conception of human nature. Based on the legacy of pedagogy, according to which the appropriation of knowledge produced historically by humanity is mediated not only by the organic scope but also by the social dimension of the subjects, the struggle through the educational policy of public schools finds its central object in the social relations of force.

We use the understanding of the Integral State, developed by Antonio Gramsci: “[...] by State we must understand, in addition to the government apparatus, also the ‘private’ apparatus of hegemony of civil society” (Gramsci, 2014, p. 801, Q. 6, § 137). In which these two dimensions of the State (political society and civil society) maintain a relationship of unity-distinction whose separation is methodological, since “in concrete historical life, political society and civil society are one and the same thing”, representing the Integral State, “civil society [...] is also a ‘State’, in fact, it is the State itself” (Liguori, 2017a, p. 261). In this sense, the government apparatus, responsible for the legal exercise of coercion, is joined by consensus, indicating that the hegemony of one class over another results not only from coercion but also from persuasion, with education being a privileged space for the exercise of consensus (Jacomini, 2022; Alencar; Moraes, 2023).

The use of force by the state apparatus, although it is constantly present as a power, does not occur without mediations that allow attempts at political direction through consensus to be exhausted, even if often based on manipulation by opinion apparatuses (Aliga, 2021).

Hegemonic apparatuses such as churches, private associations, unions, parties, the press, and schools materialize the State’s relationship. For Gramsci (2014), through these civil society organizations, the State not only has and demands consensus, but educates this consensus, maintaining the balance between the use of force and the repeated formation of certain consensuses, isolating and destroying others (Aliaga, 2021). Thus, the State as a set of practical and theoretical activities that the ruling class justifies, maintains its dominance, and obtains active consensus from those governed, is also a terrain of conflict, as an instrument of a class, as a place of hegemonic struggle and a process of unification of the ruling classes (Liguori, 2017a).

From Gramsci’s perspective, the struggle of hegemonies is not only the struggle between worldviews, it is also the struggle of the apparatuses that function as material supports for the ideologies in dispute, organizing and disseminating them. The hegemonic apparatus therefore emerges as immediately fundamental for the exercise of hegemony,



as it is linked to state articulation and creates ideological terrains for the conformation of consciousness (Liguori, 2017b).

The school could be seen as an apparatus of hegemony – a complex educational agency whose task is to promote an educational model capable of developing and extending the capacities of human understanding (Meta, 2017). A pertinent approach to analyze the Inova Educação proposal in the state schools of São Paulo, seeking to understand the process by which educational policies build consensus through the curriculum.

With this, we believe in the connection between hegemony and ideology, also emphasizing that the dispute for hegemony is an open process, but with a central outline of the role assumed by the State, in the strict sense, political society. The *modus operandi* adopted in schools has connections with political struggles within the State. These can either favor the participation of the subaltern classes in the materialization of policies, or use authoritarianism and the centralization of decisions within the political society.

Inova Educação, as a school reform policy through curriculum, is seen as an action to maintain the hegemony of the dominant class perspective in public schools. It aims to build social containment, under the guidance of private agents, in the content of new subjects and in the requirement of socio-emotional skills, present in current curricular policies.

During the implementation of the program, Seduc chose researchers who were critical of its policy as the first obstacle to be overcome. This is due to the fact that the high school reform is too unpopular in the academic community. Dossiers in educational science journals, with selective criteria, and collections of articles were published criticizing it. Former secretary Rossieli Soares, all studies critical of the reform are biased, do not provide evidence of the educational reality and are productions without dialogue with schools.¹⁰

The Government of the State of São Paulo, which at that time had been under the neoliberal management of the PSDB for 24 years, took the initiative to bring together political and private agents to mobilize public opinion, including schools and their communities, to conform to the planned changes, even though there were no spaces for listening and consultation.

In the second half of 2019, an event called Movimento Inova was held at the Paulo Renato Costa Souza School for the Training and Improvement of Professionals in Education of the State of São Paulo (Efape), with the aim of promoting experiences of the three new curricular components, with the participation of students and teams from the schools, members of Seduc, the former governor of the state of São Paulo João Dória (PSDB) and several speakers from the private sector. Among the private agents mentioned were institutions with important influence on the country's educational policies: Instituto Ayrton Senna, Fundação Lemann, Fundação Telefônica Vivo, Fundação Vanzolini, Microsoft, configuring an arrangement of formulators of the new curricular policy of the state network that maintains the participation of private agents acting *pari passu* with the State Government.

10- The former secretary made these statements at the following events: "5ª Conferência FAPESP 60 Anos: O Uso de Evidências e Dados para a Melhoria da Educação Nacional". Available at: fapesp.br. Accessed on: July 22, 2022; and "13/01/22 - Live secretário - Novo EM". Available at: [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com). Accessed on: July 22, 2022.



The clash of values in the repressive context shows the ideologically extreme practices employed by the ruling classes in the political, moral, and economic crisis of the system itself. Just as Bolsonarism and Olavism were bizarre ideological movements in the context, the PSDB government in São Paulo manifested its own in educational policy.

The speeches within the scope of the Inova Movement are guided by the insertion of the market lexicon, reproducing the “educational” forms of the corporate sector with motivational lectures, with a self-help content, and even some that blatantly present the celebratory content of entrepreneurship, of the company as a pedagogical model and a curriculum impoverished under the guise of expanding student choice as an educational innovation.

The pragmatic nature of teaching in accordance with the individual objectives of students’ life projects is emphasized, with a view to partnerships with private agents:

We are talking to a *startup* that is a kind of *Linkedin* for students, for everyone to create their life project and manage their life project [...] and act at school according to their life project (Movimento Inova – Lecture “Education for the 21st Century”, 2019, unpaginated).

In turn, Viviane Senna, from the Ayrton Senna Institute, gives schools the role of flexible training for work, characterizing a different moment in the history of capitalism and pointing out the need for school reforms to help young people adjust to this different period that she already foresees.

60% of the students who are sitting in classrooms today will work in jobs that do not exist [...]. How are you going to prepare this student for a job that you don’t even know exists, what form will it take? You can’t prepare them in the same way, do you agree? They will need skills such as openness, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to adapt to changes in an increasingly greater volume (Movimento Inova – Lecture “Socioemotional Skills”, 2019, unpaginated).

In this adjustment lies the lowered and instrumental intentionality of the competence that young people need, expressed in the words of the speakers at the Proa Institute: “how to answer the phone”; “how to close a cash register” (Movimento Inova – Lecture “Electives and their connection with the life project”, 2019, unpaginated).

Such interests in the implementation of the Inova Educação program and the high school reform in São Paulo inform options that lead to the belief that the key to change lies in the curricular dimension as well as in teaching methodologies, disregarding the contradictory element: consulting communities about the direction of the educational process and the necessary investment in improving study and work conditions.

Pseudo-participation/”participacionism” or lack of community participation?

The propaganda tone that Inova Educação would be a success, as part of the high school reform, was used in events to publicize the program’s political-pedagogical assumptions. The speech by former executive secretary Haroldo Rocha in 2019 is an example of this, as he discloses that the objectives of improving the quality of education



would be achieved without any measures regarding the implementation of the program being taken:

Students want a school that makes sense for their lives [...]. Inova is the search for this. [...] That is why Inova is already a success: because students want it, teachers want it (Inova Movement – Lecture “Education for the 21st Century”, 2019, unpaginated).

If the Inova Educação program contains measures desired by the subjects of the São Paulo network, what means were used by Seduc to consult the opinion of school communities regarding the implementation of changes in educational policy? During the research, we did not find positive answers to this question.

The day they said it would be, it would be, right? [...] so the pilot project began, so many schools now, so many schools later, next year it will be everyone, there was no consultation, no consultation (Nara, Director of EE Rosa).

No, it was direct, like, [...] there [referring to the Education Directorate of the region] we have a lot of assistance, [...] they always call a meeting, always to explain, kind of to... ensure that it is passed on as per the script (Clarice, Director of EE Anis).

[...] we didn't have any consultation process. This was already a project that came with the Secretariat. When this new secretary came in, the Secretariat's educational policy was already Inova, there was no consultation. It was based on a presentation to us. “Let's build together” but it was already ready (Adriana, Director of EE Tulipa).

Each government, when elected, seeks to leave its mark on its global policy in the various departments; in the case of education in São Paulo, Inova Educação program was the main agenda in the period 2019–2022. The political element that runs through governments in São Paulo is the lack of consultation spaces for the implementation of Seduc programs and projects; this is a characteristic of its way of operating in the period, aiming to contain popular participation and the concentration of economic and political power in the executives. of the government and private agents. And with the Inova Educação program, it was not configured differently; there is a *modus operandi* of emptying the democratic management of public education as a relevant aspect, both in terms of the management of the system and of the school, and juxtaposition of a vertical relationship in the formulation of the agenda of educational policies, with little or no participation of the school and local community, but privileges to entities linked to capital, as demonstrated by the director Adriana.

We were not approached by any teacher at the school saying that they were being consulted about Inova. [...] in 2019, we, principals, primarily of high school, elementary school 2 and high school, were invited to two days of training, we were summoned, we were not invited, we were summoned to two days of training about Inova by the secretary of education, in February, in Águas de Lindoia, and there we were introduced to the Ayrton Senna Institute, which thought of



all this, which developed and implemented it. We had several classes, they were not discussions, they were classes. [...] It was a presentation. It came ready-made. The entire 2019 was spent discussing how to implement this [...] (Adriana, Principal of EE Tulipa).

With the privilege granted to private agents outside the São Paulo state network as the main actors in the implementation of Inova Educação, with emphasis on the Ayrton Senna Institute, the São Paulo government uses the tactic of the authoritarian leader who seeks to appear non-directive, in order to favor integration into the authoritarian conformism that is the core of the program.

As already highlighted, there is a *sui generis* type of participation process, pseudo participation/“participationism”, in the words of Tragtenberg (1989, p. 16): “you participate in the responsibilities of management, even if reality does not confirm it”. Education workers, instead of being called upon to be part of the decision-making process, are required to participate simply to agree. Participationism serves as an ideological mechanism for engaging the masses in their own system of exploitation, and the hierarchical relationship, conservative by its very nature, “brings elements of magnificence and is intended to maintain the *existing*” (1989, p. 16, author’s emphasis).

The tendency towards repetition characterizes this form of organization, through the increasing use of different techniques imported from managerialism. Also among the testimonies of principals and teachers, the means of collecting information regarding the program’s proposal caused some confusion, since their workday is full of demands and filling out standardized forms, whose conscious purpose of educational policy is to make the school principal an “efficient” bureaucratic manager and not an educator.

The adoption of Inova Educação is unclear in light of the non-explicit objectives on the part of Seduc, as it requires forms on topics that have not been debated in the communities, nor have they become established as points of discussion in schools.

There was a time, I think it was in 2019 too, when they asked for a survey of students. [...] to see how much students felt welcomed or not at school. In fact, when they launched Inova in 2020, they launched it based on this survey, mentioning this survey that they had in 2019, [...] it’s the school climate survey, that thing, what is climate? We’ve never heard of this term in education, school climate. [...] a survey comes, it needs to be answered, but no one knows why, where it will be used, how it will resonate in our work next year and everyone had to answer, because there was pressure. Now Seduc has been working a lot with rankings, “Ah, at such and such school one hundred percent of the teachers responded, school ‘x’ fifty”, they start to release the percentage to rate, right? This school is the good one, this one here is not (Geraldo, Coordinating Teacher at EE Dália).

These changes came suddenly, with quick news as usual. [...] In fact, this reform, this project of change, of altering the curriculum, was not arrived with dialogue, only reports from the education board, they went over there how Inova would be implemented, how this would happen, but there was no form of consultation. [...] They do so many things through the platform that after you find out that it is not research or anything, but they transform it into... They call it research, right? (Itamar, Director of EE Íris).

By imitating business organizations, public schools lose their legitimacy in terms of their democratization, as they disregard their specificities and their objectives of expanding human intellectual capacities, and instead emphasize the alienation of ethical, political, and moral responsibilities. Under the constant response to forms and supposed research required by the government, educators are confined to achieving goals, “in an evaluocratic and quantofrenic regime, imprisoning them in programs, computer platforms, new forms of work organization, and direct supervision modalities” (Lima, 2018, p. 25).

The long-standing managerialism in São Paulo’s educational policy, or its synonym, management for results, coexists with Inova Educação even though it uses the rhetoric of success fueled by youthful interest and choices in subjects. On the other hand, educators are overburdened with these forms of information gathering that appear to be modernizing, to the benefit of “demobilization as a formative requirement” that reinforces the subordination of public school educators and “the sense of intellectual superiority of technocrats” (Tragtenberg, 1989, p. 33).

The democratic political participation of the community is what qualifies school management in the complexity of the pedagogical action attributions. It is clear that this involves a reasonable knowledge of the structure and functioning of the school and the system. What we are stating is that the mere formal presence in the presentation of the Inova Educação program does not constitute a qualified presence, as it is not supported by consultation and collective decision-making processes with the school communities, since “it is necessary to have access to the entire structure of the school in order to exercise the right to participate” (Perrella, 2015, p. 186) with the possibility of discovering the differences between public and private, universal and particular, different types of interest and distinction between “full heads” and “well-made” heads.

In this way, political participation in the collective definition of the educational project builds learning that presents strong indications of the transition from passive citizenship to active citizenship, which requires the viability of the school space through the role of the school principal as an interlocutor in the democratization of relations between educators, families and students.

We agree with Gramsci (2014) that the search for consensus and a future regulated society, the possible overcoming of the distinction between governed and governors, involves another way of building democracy, which is not limited to voting and the liberal election process, since there are certainly “more substantial ‘democratic’ forms than the current formal ‘democratism’” (Gramsci, 2014, p. 820, Q 6, § 168). Among the possibilities for strengthening democracy that elevates subordinate social groups to a condition of leaders of society, there are the implications in the plan of pedagogical organization:

The democratic tendency, intrinsically, cannot mean only that a manual worker becomes qualified, but that every “citizen” can become a “governor” and that society places him, even if “abstractly”, in the general conditions to be able to do so: “political democracy” tends to make rulers and governed coincide, ensuring that each governed person learns more or less free of charge the necessary general “technical” preparation. But in reality, the type of school that prevails in practice shows that this is a verbal illusion (Gramsci, 2014, p. 501-502, Q 4, § 55).



The democratic management of public education must necessarily imply community participation. Therefore, there must be a concern with participation in decision-making and not only in the execution of pedagogical action, contrary to what we saw in the implementation of Inova Educação.

Of the conditions of authoritarianism in schools, those of an institutional nature are among those that most hinder the establishment of democratic relations and, consequently, the participation of the community in school management. The successive government measures of São Paulo's educational policy establish a denial of democratic school management that treats it, under the terms of the New Public Management, in a managerialist dimension of efficiency and under pragmatic guidelines for school principals, as if they had autonomy only to manage the scarcity of resources and excessive bureaucratic demands in their role at the school (Jacomini *et al.*, 2022).

This hypertrophy of the “technician” ends up hiding the essentially political nature of the problem of public education. Placing the principal as the ultimate person responsible for this type of school serves the State as a mechanism to hold the school principal accountable for the inefficiency and poor functioning of the school, often making him the target of hatred and accusations from the community, which turns against the *person* of the principal and not against the induced nature of his *position*, the impositions that lead him to act against the interests of the social classes present in the public school (Paro, 2016).

Material contexts of schools

The material context refers to the “physical” aspects of a school: buildings and budgets, but also to the staff, technologies used and infrastructure. We address the human workforce and the means of work used to understand the conditions for fulfilling the right to education in schools, in the context of the implementation of Inova Educação and the high school reform.

This mediating element in the analysis of educational policy is due to the fact that the program is based on the government's agenda, considering an idealized context of schools in the Comprehensive Education Program (PEI), for its subsequent generalization across all schools in the São Paulo state network.

The [Inova Educação] program is a way of expanding the successful experiences of the Programa Ensino Integral (PEI) and Escola de Tempo Integral (ETI) and the successful practices already implemented by several schools in the network on a part-time basis to the entire network (São Paulo, 2019, p. 19-20).

The following reports from principals confirm that Seduc's expectations were not in line with reality, which generated dissatisfaction and problems in schools when working with the adaptations that Inova Educação implied. They express nuances regarding this fragmented adaptation for regular schools to follow the PEI school curriculum, while the territorial elements, physical spaces, and teams of educators mediate the understanding of such a process. The first statement is from a principal of a school located in a central neighborhood of Itapecerica da Serra, in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, who, after demands from the Education



Directorate of the region, the school community decided to adhere to the PEI; the second statement is from a principal of a school located in a peripheral neighborhood in the city of São Paulo, one of the largest schools in the network that, in 2020, served an average of 2,300 students; the third report is from a principal of a school located in a central neighborhood in the city of Guarulhos, in the metropolitan region of São Paulo.

Last year, when Inova started at the school, when we needed to implement it, we had very interesting expectations, because we said: “Wow, they’re going to implement something that already exists in PEI schools, right? We’re going to have to organize ourselves with the same amount of time we have here. How is that going to be?” Then they said that the number of classes would increase, but the length of the classes would also be reduced. So we said: “Well, how will this work in practice?” [...] we had to take into consideration the teachers who were there, the teachers who would teach these classes, the human potential that we had at the school and who could teach those subjects (Clarice, Director of EE Anis).

As it is a project that was imported from the PEI school, to be implemented in a regular school, which is very different, then the structure is also very different. So we already imagined that it would have a huge impact. When we watched the Secretariat’s live broadcasts explaining how it would work, we noticed that they said: “We tested it in schools, and we’ve been testing it in small, medium and large schools.” The large schools they implemented had 1,200 students, our school, then, is of monumental size, because our school has 2,300 students and 59 classrooms. At the time, we had 21 [classrooms] per period. So, how would the logistics of implementing a business like this that was created for a small full-time school in a school the size of ours be, with the reality that it is (Adriana, Director of EE Tulipa).

In relation to people management, speaking as the school principal, there was an increase, there were six classes per day, there were now seven, so this, in the volume of the week, from 30 to 35, so there is an increase in the demand for work and the managers of the Education Department, they did not look at this aspect, they did not increase the module of employees, both outsourced and in-house staff, so there is a greater responsibility for the school principal, which is to manage a greater time without having the necessary structure to be able to guarantee the good functioning of the school unit (Itamar, Director of EE Íris).

The reports presented are evidence of a situation of relative concern regarding the implementation of processes that each school team was already dealing with: organization of environments, class times and teachers who would teach these classes. In the interviews with GEPUD educators, it is clear that the real working conditions are an obstacle to the achievement of a socially referenced quality education.

If Seduc, when implementing Inova Educação, pushed the program to adapt it to the high school reform, it is also possible to see that, on the part of educators, there was a mark of resistance in joining the program.

The remaining classes, even all the classes in some curricular component of Inova Educação program, were assigned to teachers on temporary contracts with no ties to the



community.¹¹ This is confirmed by the research carried out by GEPUD in partnership with Ação Educativa, with quantitative data from the process of assigning classes to Inova Educação subjects:

[...] 44% of the classes assigned were for tenured teachers, 11.9% for permanent teachers and 43.8% for temporary teachers. Furthermore, at that time, components were left without teachers, and 17% of Technology and Innovation classes, 35.8% of Electives and 8.7% of Life Project classes were not assigned, this indicates PV [Life Project] is the component with the smallest deficit of teachers in the Program (GEPUD; Ação Educativa, 2021, p. 11).

The interviews conducted in our study allow us to confirm some of the causes of this process. Since the Inova Educação program did not consult the community, school teachers did not easily accept the proposal of subjects whose contents did not include their initial training, nor the scientific-humanistic knowledge subjects taught in schools, thus resulting in a low number of classes assigned in the program's curricular components among effective, "in-house" teachers.

After much discussion, we decided to assign classes. The overwhelming majority of teachers at the school, whether tenured or F, did not want to take any Inova subjects. One or another assigned Inova subjects to make up the school day, to guarantee the school day. [...] the Electives were all for Category O, they were assigned "chopped up", on the day of the "Electives Fair" there was not even a teacher to do a project to do the "Electives Fair" (Adriana, Principal of EE Tulipa).

Every school has category O, there's no way, there's no school that only has staff. [...] we only supplied staff with staff and contracted staff, which are the Os, during the school year, and even the Os that arrived we were able to fill there, so there wasn't much of a problem with the allocation, [...] I think that's a difference, the school where I work, it's a more centralized school, you know? When there's a class there, people take it, when we can't get a class there, for example, it's because no one else is getting one anywhere else, you know? (Clarice, Director of EE Anis).

[...] it was very important for the teacher's work schedule, because, for example, the Art teacher who teaches two classes a week... My teacher who works here twice a week had to work morning, afternoon and evening. [...] so Inova gave us the possibility of adjusting the work schedules with the teachers in the house. Then they improved their assignments (Nara, Principal of EE Rosa).

The situation described by the principals in their schools indicates that, even with debates regarding the political-pedagogical content of the program, the assignment of classes for the components of Inova Educação did not occur based on the content to be worked on by the program or the fact that the schools were able to offer them, but rather because the teachers could compose their working hours in the school unit to which they

11- These are teachers in a functional situation called Function-Activity Occupant (OFA) under temporary contracts, without entry through public examination and without stability, who work as temporary employees and receive lower remuneration than permanent teachers. According to Barbosa *et al.* (2020), the admission of temporary teachers has grown in the São Paulo state education system.



are already linked, to avoid being forced to complement it by teaching one or two isolated classes in other units.

The data exposes Seduc's lack of preparation, showing disorganization in the implementation and assignment of classes to teachers from the state network itself. They indicate that it is essential to open a public selection process and improve the study and work conditions of teachers. However, the path chosen by Seduc was to build consensus regarding the content of the program, by offering a preparatory course, required for teachers who wished to teach Inova Educação components, carried out in two modules, initial and in-depth, offered remotely on the Efape platform, each lasting 30 hours. Participation and approval in both modules were initially a prerequisite for teachers to assign classes. Seduc later backtracked and offered classes in Inova Educação subjects to teachers without the training for such:

[...] before you could only get so-and-so, then you could get so-and-so, then you could only get them with a course, then you could get them without a course (Nara, Director of EE Rosa).

“Oh no, but a course has opened, let's take the course then, maybe we'll get to know it”, then some people start to realize that: “Oh, it's the same as PEI, it's the same...”, because everyone is talking about that course... And then, they only understand this because the people who appear there are people from PEI, so they start to make this link when they start to see the course. But, you took the course, do you have any idea what you're going to do? Not yet (Geraldo, Coordinating Teacher at EE Dália).

[...] the EE Tulipa schedule was ready in 2020... The schedule was ready after the pandemic started, with tele-classes, because we couldn't fit it in. It's like this: everyone picked up the Technology project quickly, the Electives were the ones that stayed. Until the end of the year, there was no Elective teacher. There were Elective classes without a teacher (Adriana, Director of EE Tulipa).

[...] in Technology, each one took it to be able to compose their load, because we also didn't really know what Technology was intended for. So, at that time, we didn't have much structure to provide students with interesting contact, you know? And then, later, when they saw that this wasn't going to work, the schools didn't have all the equipment for Technology, there wasn't much internet and so on, they came up with a speech that would be technology aimed at technological awareness, let's talk about *fake news*, let's teach students to make conscious use of social networks and everything else (Clarice, Director of EE Anis).

Given the program's failure, measures were taken to promote the necessary adaptations to implement the proposal. Seduc itself, which initially established that completion of the Inova Educação preparatory course was mandatory for teachers in order to assign classes for the program, gradually relaxed its criteria so that any teacher could assign classes.

Overall, the process of assigning classes, the requirement for preparatory courses and adequate training for teachers, occurred in a very precarious manner, as confirmed by the GEPUD/Ação Educativa research (2021, p. 11):



[...] the initial course was taken by 129,270 teachers and the in-depth course by 109,369 teachers. However, according to data on the courses offered in 2019, classes in the Life Project, Electives and Technology components were assigned to only 25.75% of the teachers approved in the initial course and 28.97% of those approved in the in-depth course. Therefore, most of the educators who took these subjects in 2020 did not receive specific training.

As director Adriana asks, after almost a year of implementing the program, could the result of unassigned classes not have been foreseen by Seduc? What is being exposed is the repetition of a story already known in the São Paulo public school system: teachers without adequate training, perhaps with little or no experience in education and with lower salaries, become responsible for teaching content proclaimed by the government as innovative.

As the high school reform was consolidated in the São Paulo state network, starting in 2021, with the implementation of student choices through training itineraries composed of Inova Educação content, promises were made to mitigate the lack of teachers through the multiplication of subjects designed according to the interests of young people.

However, the development of the implementation of training itineraries in the state network demonstrated exactly the opposite, creating an unsustainable situation of a lack of teachers in schools. According to the Technical Note of the Public School and University Network (REPU, 2022), at the beginning of April 2022, when the 1st academic semester was already being finalized, 19,996 of the 90,625 classes of the High School training itineraries (22.1% of the total) had not yet been assigned to any teacher, see table 1 below.

Table 1 – Class assignment for high school training programs in the state of São Paulo, 1st and 2nd semesters of 2022

Shift	Total classes	Classes assigned until 04/08		Classes without assignment	
1st semester of 2022					
Morning	50.175	42,223	84.2%	7,952	15.8%
Evening	21,445	14,830	69.2%	6,615	30.8%
Nocturnal	19.005	13,576	71.4%	5,429	28.6%
TOTAL	90,625	70,629	77.9%	19,996	22.1%
2nd half of 2022					
Morning	49,677	39,198	78.9%	10,479	21.1%
Evening	20,905	13,188	63.1%	7,717	36.9%
Nocturnal	19,086	12,339	64.7%	6,747	35.3%
TOTAL	89,668	64,725	72.2%	24,943	27.8%

Note: Database date: Apr 8, 2022.

Source: REPU (2022, p. 21), based on data provided by the Entry and Movement Center (Cemov) of the Human Resources Management Coordination (CGRH) of Seduc-SP, requested via the Access to Information Law.

The propaganda used by the state government during the implementation of the high school reform and, consequently, the training itineraries for Inova Educação members, is that an “educational revolution” was being promoted in the São Paulo education system.

However, in the context of regular in-person classes, after physical distancing during the pandemic, the result was an alarming absence of classes in schools whose communities have the lowest socioeconomic levels. These calculation findings carried out by REPU evidence that students from the lower classes had “instead of five school days per week, only four” (REPU, 2022, p. 21).

The afternoon and evening periods, which serve working students from the lowest socioeconomic strata, are the most affected. In the first semester (until the beginning of April), 30.8% of the afternoon classes and 28.6% of the evening classes were without teachers, which shows that the allocation of teachers, in addition to being affected by the implementation of the NEM [New High School], was even more affected for the poorest students. If, on average, each student in the state school system had one less day of class per week, students in the afternoon and evening shifts had 1.5 fewer days of class per week. In other words, they had access to only 70% of the expected training (REPU, 2022, p. 21).

Through the analysis undertaken regarding the contexts, the innovation envisioned in the curricular reform encountered obstacles in everyday reality, in the precarious material conditions of the schools, in the territorial distinctions in the location of the units, in the intensification of the work and in the assignment of classes to teachers without specific training. Furthermore, it encountered the mark of resistance on the part of educators who did not recognize, in the content of the program, the legacy of the knowledge acquired as school knowledge.

Final considerations: antidemocracy and its educational innovation

The study on the school as a space for the formation of the subjectivities of young people and workers, situated between the dictates of educational policies and resistance to them, had as its main object of analysis the implementation of the Inova Educação program in the São Paulo state education system, the largest public education system in Brazil.

The anti-democracy that constitutes the program was represented by the correlation of social forces that make up the spoken and unsaid content of the educational policy: what is proposed by its formulators and what was experienced by the communities of the schools participating in the research. In this sense, we sought to indicate that the problem of the high school reform did not consist only in its implementation, but also in its conception. Based on the theoretical contributions of Gramsci and the allegorical figure of the Centaur, half beast and half human, we understand that repression and persuasion characterize the *sui generis form* of implementation of Inova Educação program and we were able to understand which processes are involved in it.

If it is a fact that public schools have structural conditions that are not consistent with the best learning, the exclusion of the subjects who study and work there from the process of formulating educational policies is the key that exposes the authoritarianism of the implementation and reveals that such measures described as innovative will not improve the quality of education.



Although educators made efforts to preserve didactic-pedagogical autonomy within schools, the measures imposed within the scope of the educational policy issued by the government created obstacles to the very construction of meaning in educational content that valued significant learning, under frequent propaganda that it is possible to innovate in education without promoting changes in the conditions of study and work in schools.

Based on the comparison of analyses supported by the results found in the participatory research and in the interviews with educators, we witnessed the shamelessness of the proposal that makes up the core of the Inova Educação program, in its attempt to ignore the need to provide public schools with more resources, equipment and material conditions; that it is essential to have a powerful pedagogical advisory team that discusses with school teams the educational purposes of the program and the construction of a curricular policy that, in a complex context of competing interests, can start from popular knowledge and needs, aiming at the scientific and humanistic appropriation necessary for understanding and overcoming social problems.

The research carried out thus aims to contribute to the construction of pedagogical alternatives being carried out by communities of educators and users of public schools, in spaces of active political participation where it is possible to effectively decide on the direction of the educational process.

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