
The Life Project in the New High School in Bahia: from the person under law to the self-entrepreneur

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Abstract

This article analyzes the Life Project as a subjection/subjectivation device that is part of the New High School curriculum in Bahia. The aim is to monitor its effects on student education. It works with a discursive field made up of a set of materials produced by the Bahia State Department of Education, normative documents, as well as materials from advertising campaigns, government speeches, among others. It identifies that the curricula, by producing youth as a lifestyle, cause updates in the Life Project device, in which the person under law makes way for the individual who is a self-entrepreneur.

Keywords: Life Project. High school in Bahia. Device. Self-entrepreneur.

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O Projeto de Vida no Novo Ensino Médio Baiano: do sujeito de direitos ao empreendedor de si

Resumo

Este artigo analisa o Projeto de Vida como um dispositivo de sujeição/subjetivação que faz parte do currículo do Novo Ensino Médio na Bahia. O objetivo é acompanhar seus efeitos na formação dos estudantes. Trabalha com um campo discursivo constituído por um conjunto de materiais produzidos pela Secretaria de Educação do Estado da Bahia, documentos normativos, além de materiais de campanhas publicitárias, discursos governamentais, entre outros. Identifica que os currículos, ao produzirem a juventude como um estilo de vida, provocam atualizações no dispositivo Projeto de Vida no qual o sujeito de direito dá lugar ao sujeito empreendedor de si mesmo.

Palavras—chave: Projeto de vida. Ensino médio baiano. Dispositivo. Empreendedor de si.

El Proyecto de Vida en la Nueva Escuela Secundaria de Bahía: del sujeto de los derechos al emprendedor de sí mismo

Resumen

Este artículo analiza el Proyecto de Vida como dispositivo de sujeción/subjetivación que forma parte del currículo de la Nueva Escuela Secundaria de Bahía. El objetivo es monitorear sus efectos en la formación de los estudiantes. Trabaja con un campo discursivo constituido por un conjunto de materiales producidos por la Secretaría de Educación del Estado de Bahía, documentos normativos, así como materiales de campañas publicitarias, discursos gubernamentales, entre otros. Identifica que los currículos, al producir la juventud como estilo de vida, provocan actualizaciones en el dispositivo Proyecto de Vida en el que el sujeto de derecho cede lugar al sujeto emprendedor de sí mismo.

Palabras clave: Proyecto de vida. Nueva Escuela Secundaria de Bahía. Dispositivo. Emprendedor de sí mismo.

Introduction

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Presented as a *post-scriptum*, an appendix to his book *Conversations*, Deleuze (1992) states that disciplinary societies, whose techniques, and procedures were thoroughly studied by Foucault, were giving way to control societies. We are living in a period of transition between a model of society in which the exercises of power are benefited from the means of confinement (prison, hospitals, factories, schools), which are a type of open and continuous control. It is as if the institutional walls had been torn down and the operating logic of closed institutions was now spread throughout the social field. In other words, we have become “prisoners in the open sky” (Pál Pelbart, 2000, p. 26).

Deleuze (1992) argues that, in societies of control, business logic has come to preside over disciplinary institutions. The company has replaced the factory, just as permanent formation tends to replace school. In this logic, we will always be in a constant process of formation and continuous control will replace examination, which is characteristic of disciplines. “This is the most guaranteed way of handing the school over to the company” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 279).

The identification of business principles in school management and their effects on everyday school life has been a recurring argument in educational literature in recent years (Dolabela, 2003; Laval, 2004; Dardot, Laval, 2016; Freitas, 2018). In Brazil, Luís Carlos de Freitas (2018), in reviewing the historical trajectory of reforms and their deepening in the field of education, points to the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (2016) as a milestone for the intensification of business logic in educational processes. School curricula have become promising territories for reformist interventions to take flight, set goals or, at least, try to outline them.

In this direction, the author goes on to problematize the effects of business logic on educational management, showing, among the negative effects produced by it, the emphasis on methods and techniques (“neo—technicism”) and the displacement of collaborative actions in favor of vertical accountability that removes the possibilities of grassroots constructions and imposes a power that is exercised in a pyramidal way (Freitas, 2018).

In the context of the New High School, by problematizing the effects of this type of rationality, several studies (Lopes, 2019; Macedo; Silva, 2022; Silva, 2023, among others) have identified the inclusion of the “Life Project” in school curricula as a pedagogical device that operates in the production of the self-entrepreneur student. Roughly speaking, these studies see the Life Project as a curricular time/space which, by disseminating neoliberal principles (entrepreneurship, productivism, competitiveness, utilitarianism, accountability), would be enhancing the production of subjectivities and ways of life shaped by contemporary capitalism, engendered in certain pedagogical practices.

According to the National Common Curriculum Base, the inclusion of the Life Project in the curriculum has the following objectives:

[...] to value the diversity of knowledge and cultural experiences, to appropriate knowledge and experiences that enable them to understand the relationships inherent in the world of work and to make choices in line with the exercise of citizenship and their Life Project, with freedom, autonomy, critical awareness, and responsibility (Brazil, 2018, p. 9).

In other words, it is a curricular time/space that is not limited to teaching certain school content. Here, what matters is not the acquisition of certain knowledge external to the individual, but that the student creates/recreates

ways of reflecting on him/herself and projects their personal/professional future. Thus, the Life Project can be thought of in the realm of self-experience, insofar as, through texts, videos, questioning and other pedagogical procedures, students are directed towards a specific type of practice whose *modus operandi* is reflection on him/herself.

In considering these possibilities of understanding, I assume the idea that subjectivities are not fixed molds, servile decals to capitalist impositions, but rather are living sets of strategies, shifting territories that, despite their ties, escape. In addition, I also consider that, in school curricula, various other networks of knowledge-power circulate, intersect, establish connections, dispute truths among themselves and do not necessarily submit to dominant strategies.

It is true that “[...] we belong to devices and we act in them” (Deleuze, 1996, p. 159), but perhaps following the lines of escape, the fractures present in the devices can give us a breath to think about possibilities of reversal that go beyond domination and subjection to the devices that subject us. Put in this way, I raise the following questions: Aren’t the lines of escape, the fractures in the lines of sedimentation, reconfiguring the Life Project device? What directions are being drawn by the lines of actualization present in this device?

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Having said that, this article mobilizes some concepts taken from the philosophies of difference and operationalizes the notion of device worked on by Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze (1992; 1996) to do “ground work” (Deleuze, 1996, p. 276) in the sense of draw a map, identify directions, twists and turns and, ultimately, follow the lines that shape the Life Project as a subjection/subjectivation device that crosses curricula and constitutes individuals of experience, considering three domains: knowledge, power and subjectivity.

To this end, I constitute, as the corpus of analysis for this text, the set of materials produced by the Bahia State Department of Education, as well as by private organizations that establish partnerships with it, to guide/support the pedagogical practices to be carried out by teachers in the development of the Life Project, which is part of the New High School curriculum. To this discursive set, I added normative documents, advertising campaigns, government speeches/practices echoed by the media in favor of the approval and subsequent implementation of this level of education throughout the national territory.

I organize this article as follows: initially, based on the theoretical frameworks chosen to support the analysis, I have established some considerations about the relationship between neoliberalism and subjectivities. Here, I select some theoretical—conceptual shortcuts from Foucault’s work to select the conceptual tools needed to operationalize the challenges proposed in this article. Next, I discuss the Life Project as a pedagogical device that produces contemporary youth as a way of life to be guaranteed by the New High School, a type of “social duty” (and, therefore, a right for young people) that becomes part of the school’s social functions. In the aftermath, I focus on the curriculum of the New High School in the state of Bahia and, in it, I analyze the Life Project. I identify that the individual of rights is becoming the person who is a self-entrepreneur. Finally, I make a few remarks which, in closing this text, open new and further problematizations on this subject.

Neoliberalism and subjectivities — some considerations

Two courses taught by Foucault at the Collège de France are references to analyses concerned with understanding neoliberalism from a Foucauldian perspective. They are: Security, Territory, Population (1977-1978) and Birth of Biopolitics (1978-1979). In these courses, Foucault analyzes the conditions of possibility that allowed power to invest in the conduct of lives, affecting subjectivities.

For Foucault (2008), what lies at the root of liberalism is the establishment of a new regime of truths by the political economy, from which the market (subsidized by the knowledge of the political economy) will occupy the status of defining the general policy of truth: dictating, prescribing, imposing the truth that will internally limit government practice. If, in his previous studies, Foucault questioned the conditions that made it possible to enforce the sovereign’s will in the defense of territory (societies of sovereignty) and how (at what price and using what strategies and techniques) it was possible to discipline and maximize the forces of a human multiplicity for the sake of the rising capitalism of the 18th century, now, the problem that arises is: How can the population be governed in the most profitable and efficient way?

The emergence of the population as a political problem and the consequences it gave rise caused a shift in government practices, which began to

focus not only on the administration of the territory, but also on the regulation of the population and its singularities. Foucault (2010) refers to biopolitics as a type of power that acts on life (biopower). This power is no longer directed at the body of the prince, but at the body of the population. From the perspective of biopolitics, individual importance is considered when it is part of a population that can be measured, identified, treated: longevity rates, birth rates, mortality rates, health rates, etc.

Although the State is considered a type of political power that ignores individuals and focuses its interests on the population, or even on certain classes and/or groups among the citizens, the author emphasizes that “[...] State power (and this is one reason for its strength) is a form of power that both individualizes and totalizes” (Foucault, 2013, p. 227). This is because the modern State has integrated techniques of individuation (pastoral power) with procedures of totalization (biopower) in its new formation.

In Foucault, the processes of subjectivation are dealt with in their historicity, thus, moving away from the notion of free, sovereign, timeless subjectivity. The problem is how an individual subjected to a device can exercise practices of freedom, since these are intrinsic to power relations. The author argues that, “[...] at the heart of the power relationship, incessantly ‘provoking’ it, lies the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom” (Foucault, 1995, p. 244-245). In short, if devices are inventions designed to assault subjectivities and direct behavior, the forces of subjectivities resist and take themselves as an object of creation.

The discovery of the lines of subjectivation redesigns the cartography of the devices (prison, hospital, etc.) that Foucault had studied until then, not because the dimensions of knowledge and power have been relegated to the background, on the contrary, the exercises of knowledge-power are used to capture and shape the processes of subjectivation, but they escape them.

Foucault (1995, p. 244) defines a device as “[...] a decidedly heterogeneous set that encompasses discourses, institutions, architectural organizations, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements [...]”. In short, the said and the unsaid are the elements of the device, which is the network that can be established between these elements. In other words, the lines of subjectivation will outline new configurations of knowledge-power regimes and, correlatively, new forms of production. In short, it

can be said that subjectivity involves an attitude towards life, or even a way of life. It is a process of differentiation. They are lines of escape, lines that fracture and cause discontinuity with the device itself, forging other and new configurations, other devices.

Deleuze (1996, p. 85) argues that a device is a “[...] skein, a multilinear whole, composed of lines of different natures”. He stresses that these lines do not follow directions, but trace processes that, at times, come closer together, and at others, move apart. In Deleuze’s reading (1996), Foucault operationalizes the cartography of a device by considering three major bundles of lines: knowledge, power, and subjectivation. These are mobile lines, without defined contours, they are flows that intertwine, mix, unfold one over the other, or give rise to others, through variations or even mutations. Untangling the lines, drawing a map, is the exercise to be undertaken when seeking to map a particular device. So, let us get to it!

Relations between youth and citizenship — updates on the Life Project device

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Despite the current uncertainty about the future of High School in Brazil, the fact is that Ordinance no. 627, of April 4, 2023 (Brasil, 2023), only suspended the deadlines set out in the National Implementation Schedule for the New High School, but reformist ideals and their neoliberal principles continue to guide High School in our country.

The New High School is part of a discourse in which Brazilian High School is portrayed as an obsolete level of education, experiencing a crisis of social legitimacy, as far as that it is not attractive to young people and does not respond to the desires and expectations of youth, as Mendonça Filho argued when launching the booklet on the New High School in the Federal Senate.

Almost 2 million young people are excluded from the market, marginalized or easy prey for drugs, and there is a full awareness throughout society that there is no path to development that does not go through education. Progress is being made. Dialogue is present and we do not stop having the courage to face obstacles (Brazil, 2017).

According to the speeches produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), the change in High School is aimed at

[...] to guarantee the provision of quality education to all young Brazilians and to bring schools closer to the reality of today's students, considering the new demands and complexities of the world of work and life in society (Brazil, 2019).

Since the publication of Provisional Measure No. 746, on September 23, 2016 (Brazil, 2016), which was later transformed into Law No. 13,415 on February 16, 2017 (Brazil, 2017), a series of public demonstrations have denounced the authoritarian nature and dismantling of High School proposed by the government. Education workers, class entities, unions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) gave visibility to strong public demonstrations that culminated in the occupation by students of more than a thousand schools across the country, the so-called "High School spring". Given this scenario, how would the government be able to expand and consolidate the reform of High School if it did not sell young people¹ the promise of immediate happiness, freedom, empowerment, and decisions about their future?

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Using the slogan: "New High School: those who know, approve", the Ministry of Education and Culture's mega-advertising campaign put into circulation different social contexts, in which happy, smiling and confident young people projected their now promising, innovative and stimulating futures. Ortega and Hollerbach (2022) analyzed the advertising marketing used by the Temer government and pointed out that, in addition to the central expression "New High School", words such as "more", "choose", "decide", "freedom", "to want", "to study", "future", "stimulating", etc. were recurrent in the videos and other advertising pieces that circulated in the mainstream television media.

More recently, in 2021, in trailer format, with a soundtrack from a Marvel movie, the Ministry of Education and Culture put out another advertising video with different characters (parents, students, teachers, young students, family members), set against different backdrops such as school, home, parks, roads.

Are you ready for that?
In 2022...

The Federal Government, through the Ministry of Education,
presents,
New High School!

It is real, now we will be able to choose which area of knowledge
we want to delve into and even choose to do technological voca-
tional training.

And we teachers are going to help you build a life project.
Preparing you for the full exercise of citizenship and for the world
of work.

Soon in schools across the country! (Brazil, 2021).

Mixing action and science fiction, using language accessible to young people, these streams of images and sounds do not just inform about the arrival/implementation of the New High School in Brazilian schools. Rather, by targeting young people, the section of the population they intend to reach, they mobilize the sensitivities, affections, desires, and expectations of a universe of people (young people) who consume subjectivities, ways of life and build a new ideal of personal/professional success.

In this direction, the national policy for High School underway in Brazil invests heavily in the subjectivity of young people. It is in the production of contemporary youth, their ways of life, their ways of living, their meanings of life, that “neoliberal governmentality” (Gallo, 2017) is concerned. As Mbembe (2018, p. 16) warned us, it is the making of the “new man”, that is, “[...] a new human individual, self-entrepreneur, moldable and summoned to permanently reconfigure himself according to the artifacts that the time offers”.

It is worth noting that the current configurations of power are no longer aimed at manufacturing a docile, disciplined body that is useful to the modes of production of industrial capitalism, characteristic of the disciplinary societies studied by Foucault (1987). Today, investments of power affect the body/subjectivity, producing the dream of the “strong” body, worked on by machines and equipment, in gyms, beauty salons, crazy diets, plastic surgery and a whole range of procedures aimed at stylizing the body dictated by the beauty standards imposed by neoliberal societies.

Exercises of power over the body promote the spectacularization of self-image and relationships with others. They update an exercise widely used as self-knowledge practices in pedagogical dynamics: “How do I see myself”, today updated by the recurrent selfies and other “instant” records that provoke

"[...] an unfolding between the person him/herself and an external image of him/herself" (Larrosa, 1994, p. 47) and occupy social networks giving public visibility to the vitality, beauty and well-being achieved.

"Learning Pills"²: the Life Project in Bahia's New High School curriculum

The Bahia State Department of Education followed the national regulatory frameworks and maintained the curricular architecture nationally proposed. According to the guidelines contained in the Bahia Referential Curriculum Document for High School, the Life Project is conceived as a curricular component that should not aim "only to define a career or profession, but (which) contributes to students learning to make choices" (Bahia, 2022):

[...] the Life Project must occupy the privileged field of strengthening youth empowerment and the construction of identities, we invite education professionals to recognize their students as holders of knowledge, with their forms of sociability and cultural practices, taking advantage of this singular moment in human development, to foster the construction of the "self", to stimulate autonomy, to encourage our young people to prepare themselves to go beyond what is often believed and credited to them. We must not waste the extraordinary power that young people have to build their identities (Bahia, 2022, p. 434).

In partnership with the Telefônica Vivo Foundation, which focuses on supporting the digitalization of public education, that considers the needs of young people in today's world, the Bahia State Department of Education had a heavily stake on the Life Project and prepared several kits with content, guidelines, activities, teaching materials, videos, lives, refresher courses for teachers and managers of the state education network. In 2021, was launched the booklet "Teacher Recognition of pedagogical practices with a focus on Life Projects" (Bahia, 2020). The material published by the Telefônica Vivo Foundation, with Bahia State Department of Education as a "strategic partner", not only brings together "successful" activities carried out by teachers from all over the state of Bahia, but also offers readers interested in the subject school

communities and education professionals suggestions on how to “broaden the Life Project approach”.

To this end, questions such as: How do I see the society in which I live? How do I see its impact on me? And how do I interfere in society? Is there anything I can contribute? How do I intend to contribute to it?” are considered to be “starting points for important reflections on the lives of adolescents and young people, and can have an impact on life in society” (Bahia, 2020a). In the approach proposed for the refresher module, the Life Project should work on three dimensions in an interconnected way: personal (young people’s reflections on themselves); social (reflections on themselves and on the surrounding group) and professional (development of skills for professional life).

For the Bahia State Department of Education, the Life Project is a “methodology” capable of “[...] encouraging, motivating and arousing the curiosity of students in order to direct them towards the construction and realization of their dreams” (Bahia, 2022, p. 4). The Project needs to be understood as “a trajectory in which the student, by getting to know him/herself, is able to situate him/herself in the world, recognize the various possibilities and then draw up a project for him/herself” (Bahia, 2022, p. 6). The Bahia State Department of Education distributed the formative dimensions of the Life Project as follows: Grade 1: self-knowledge; Self vs. other and planning. In Grade 2: planning and in Grade 3: preparation for the world outside school.

In Bahia, the pilot schools started the New High School curriculum in 2020, with the health restrictions of the pandemic period. With regard to the Life Project, the schools distributed to the students material produced by the Bahia State Department of Education called “Learning Pills”. Every week, the students received the “dropes” which kept the procedural instructions, although they changed the thematic composition.

Hello, student! How are you? We hope you are doing well! Remember that, despite the impact of COVID-19, we have prepared some special material to help you through this time of social distancing and to maintain your study routine at home. So, take the “Learning Pills”, a material specially prepared for you! Take them in daily doses, as they will undoubtedly help to strengthen you, acquiring and producing new knowledge (Bahia, 2020b, p. 1, author’s emphasis).

The activities obey the following methodological sequence: A) presentation of a short text (short blog reports, news, motivational texts, etc.), which, despite the different literary genres, have a common discursive logic: to provoke the student to reflect on their way of being through judgment, comparison, description, self-mastery, in order to change their self-image; B) posing questions such as: "Can self-knowledge, looking inwards, questioning oneself, help someone's personal and social life and affect their self-esteem?", "What does happiness mean to you?", "What is your greatest dream?", "Can you list your life goals and establish your values? What if you knew yourself?"; and C) commented answers.

An example:

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful, crystal-clear stream winding its way through the mountains. At a certain point on its journey, it noticed that in front of him was a filthy swamp, which it had to pass through. It then looked at God and protested: "Lord, what a punishment! I am such a clear stream, so beautiful, and you force me to cross a dirty swamp like this! How do I do it now?" God replied: "That depends on how you look at the swamp". If you are afraid, you will slow down your course, turn around and inevitably end up mixing your waters with those of the swamp, which will make you just like it. But if you face it with speed, with strength, with decision, its waters will spread over it, the humidity will turn them into drops that will form clouds, and the wind will carry these clouds towards the ocean. Then you will become the sea (Dalmo apud Bahia, 2020b).

And it continues:

That is life. People crawl through changes. When they get scared, paralyzed, weighed down, they become tense and lose their fluidity and strength. You must really get into LIFE'S PROJECTS, UNTIL THE RIVER TURNS INTO A SEA. If a person spends their whole life avoiding suffering, they will also end up avoiding the pleasure that life offers. There are thousands of treasures stored in places where we need to go to discover them. There are treasures to be found on a deserted beach, on a starry night, on an unexpected trip, on a hang-gliding jump. The important thing is to go and find them, even if this requires a good deal of courage and detachment. Do not look for suffering. But if it is part of the conquest, face it and

overcome it. Take risks, dare, move forward in life (Dalmo apud Bahia, 2020b, author's emphasis).

Proposed activity:

Overcoming oneself constitutes an important personal victory, the self-overcoming. The values achieved through self-overcoming are invaluable and form the basis for ascendancy over ordinary people (Bahia, 2020b).

Commented answers:

The student should reflect on themselves, their experiences, their way of seeing the world, their prospects for the future and what they imagine is necessary to consider themselves a happy person. In life, anything is possible and achieving excellence and overcoming is no exception. Of course, there are times when we have a conformist attitude towards our lives and thinking about change is the same as thinking about the possibility of failure. Not at all! Excellence is built on the foundation of personal improvement, self-esteem, responsibilities, values, long-term thinking, positive attitudes, ethics and, of course, ambition (Bahia, 2020b).

What is at stake in this activity is not that the student can say/answer anything, in any way. He/she must reflect on their "fears", their impasses in the face of life's obstacles, their caution in the face of risks, based on the logic of self-overcoming. Overcoming requires a judgment of oneself, a mastery over oneself capable of producing a new rhythm in one's way of life, it means going beyond one's current limits, it means self-imposing an accelerated rhythm for decision-making.

In neoliberal societies, where the speed of modulating the flow of desires, consumption, ascension, and success is dizzying, forcing everyone to "reflect on him/herself, their experiences, his/her ways of seeing the world, his/her perspectives on the future and what he/she imagine is necessary to consider him/herself a happy person" (Bahia, 2020b). It is to produce the "master of oneself" individual, who believes that growing more and more is an enterprise to be carried out on oneself towards the promised happiness.

The production of the self-entrepreneur student is taking the place occupied by the individual of rights! Taking risks, competing, valuing oneself,

acquiring excellence, investing in oneself are the values and principles (of the market) that should guide student conduct towards personal promotion and the plenitude idealized by neoliberalism. Educating for the market is the school's new social function and, correlatively, it is the student's duty to become a self-entrepreneur.

The motto is: never to be discouraged, face challenges with courage, pride, and security! Fear, insecurity, and the feeling of risk that these situations bring to subjectivities, especially at this stage of life, must be overcome, "even if it requires a good deal of courage and detachment" (the self-entrepreneur must not show fear or weakness). After all, "excellence is built on the foundation of personal improvement, self-esteem, responsibilities, values, long-term thinking, positive attitudes, ethics and, of course, ambition".

We can see that the activities proposed by the "Learning Pills" are not aimed at acquiring certain school content taken from the scientific field. What students learn is to question themselves and others, based on a set of criteria and rules that regulate and standardize discourse. This learning, that allows them to judge, interpret, control, and lead themselves and others, constitutes the experience of the self.

14 In this sense, the set of questions, whose answers are validated by the "commented answers", structures the eventual field of problematization, defining what can and should be thought about. By asking for the result of the reflection to be recorded (as requested), the student will produce their own text, giving it a certain reality in line with the text read. At the same time, the texts produce the student. In other words, "[...] the problematizations, through which the individual is given as he/she can and should be thought, and the practices from which these problematizations are formed" (Foucault, 2010, p. 15).

The experience of the self, constituted within concrete practices, historically situated, occurs when the individual performs an exercise on him/herself, even from reflective practices: by judging, observing, narrating, mastering him/herself. The relationship between self-experience and subjectivity can be thought of in Foucault's terms as follows:

[...] to study the constitution of the individual as an object for him/herself: the formation of procedures by which the individual is induced to observe, analyze, decipher, recognize him/herself as a possible domain of knowledge. It is, in short, the history of

“subjectivity”, if we understand this word as the way in which the individual transforms the self-experiences in a game of truth in which he/she is in relation to him/herself (Foucault, 1984 apud Larrosa, 1994, p. 42).

Subjectivity is manufactured by the experience of the self. Thus, the concept of the individual subjected to devices, fabricated in knowledge-power relations, starts to engender a new domain that takes place with the active participation of the individual.

Deleuze (1996, p. 16) points out that the three bundles listed by Foucault are lines, vectors or tensors that follow directions and are always out of balance (approaches and distances), undergoing bifurcations, breaking. “Any line can be broken — it is subject to variations in direction [...] it is individual to derivations [...]” —, in other words, they can be updated in a new device. These lines can also be sedimented, making it difficult to create lines of escape and probable derivations in new devices.

It is important to consider that, even in the face of stratifications, the lines do not maintain stability or immobility in their configurations. Rather, they are configured as games of force — where there is power, there is resistance — and, however timid the actions of these vectors may be, it is always possible to diagram their exercises and glimpse new paths —, “[...] the most intense point of lives, the one where their energy is concentrated, is right there where they collide with power, struggle with it, try to use its forces or escape from its traps” (Foucault, 2003, p. 2013).

For Foucault, the clash produced between the lines of force and the lines of sedimentation (forces and forms) produces a bending, a widening, of the knowledge and powers that constitute us into the individuals we are. In these movements, what ensues, then, “[...] is a relationship of force with oneself, a power to affect the self, an affection of him/herself for him/herself” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 85).

To end the text: some signposts along the way

In this article, I seek to map the Life Project as a pedagogical device that became part of the curriculum architecture of the New High School, when Law No. 13,415 of February 16, 2017 (Brazil, 2017) institutionalized a

new educational policy for High School throughout the country. Inscribed in this discursive soil, I made a cut to delimit, as a field of analysis, the discourses/practices that shape the curriculum of the New High School in Bahia and, within it, the Life Project.

Taking the notion of a device from a Foucauldian perspective as a theoretical/analytical tool proved to be no easy task, as pulling threads from this skein means is, first and foremost, to be predisposed to following movements that do not obey constant rhythms. On the contrary, there are different variations, frequencies, and intensities to be observed when the challenge is to pay attention to the variations in direction and the derivations present in a device.

In this sense, the analysis showed that the pedagogical device Life Project is concerned with establishing norms on the ways of contemporary youth life, which it discursively constructs. The emergence of the contemporary young person, who is in charge of themselves and their future, has the strategic objective of responding to the demands of neoliberalism and its bets on the manufacture of entrepreneurial subjectivity.

To form the individual for the full exercise of citizenship — a legacy since now pursued by educational discourses/practices — begins to give way to the formation of contemporary youth, committed to their time, protagonists of their choices, responsible for their own development and personal and professional fulfillment. This self-entrepreneur no longer values the right to education guaranteed by public policies, while, at the same time, relativizes the State's obligation to promote quality public education for all.

Thus, the subjectivity manufactured by capital — capitalist subjectivity — has favored the entry of neoliberal rationality as a type of public management. As a result, the school, as a social institution, is now managed according to the principles of business management. And, as a "school-company", its strategic function is to form for the market and, in a related way, to produce young people with a moral duty to become a self-entrepreneur.

The current relations established between capital and subjectivities obviously go beyond the domain of institutionalized education, its pedagogical rituals, and its normative devices. They circulate in the equipment of collective enunciation (social networks, mass media, the marketing industry, among others) that agency desires. Capital, "[...] not only penetrates the most infinitesimal spheres of existence, but also mobilizes them, puts them to work,

exploits and expands them, producing an unprecedented subjective plasticity, which at the same time escapes it from all sides [...]” (Pál Pelbart, 2002, p. 39), demanding individual action that is willing to live dangerously, to move through the instabilities of the market confident in self-overcoming.

Following Deleuze (1996), a device, always singular, has its own regimes and its processes operate in becoming. In this heterogeneous multiplicity, despite the lines of stratification, sometimes, when they produce certain sedimentations in the devices, they break, bifurcate, open gaps, produce updates in direction, engender new domains, modify the devices. And to the extent that

[...] freed itself from the dimensions of knowledge and power, the lines of subjectivation seem to be particularly capable of tracing paths of creation, which never cease to fail, but which are also, to the same extent, taken up again, modified, until the old device breaks down (Deleuze, 1996, p. 21).

Although we cannot escape the devices — we belong to them and act in them — there are always possibilities for us to bet on creativity, on the new, on the transformation of what we are. This means that we are enclosed in the devices — “[...] a little is possible, otherwise I suffocate [...]” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 131) — but it also does not guarantee that the emergence of other devices will be more tolerable. This means to bet on the strength and the creative power of becoming.

Thinking about these games of force from the perspective of the pedagogical device Life Project in the face of the national movement in favor of repealing the New High School does not guarantee that the school will stop being administered by business rationality and that capitalist subjectivities will stop being produced, but it can open passages, produce other circuits, constitute other devices in which the power of life is expanded.

We can only wonder whether it will be possible, based on other devices, to invent more plural, more creative forms of production (and self-production) of a new aesthetic of existing in schools.

Notas

1. Here I follow the understanding of Guerreiro and Abrantes (2007, p.13), when they state that youth is a category that emerged in the first half of the 20th century, and that the divisions between the ages of the stages of life are cultural constructions and therefore arbitrary.
2. I use here the form the Bahia State Department of Education expression as the header of the activities proposed in the Life Project curriculum component, sent to students in the 2021 school year.

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