

Repercussions of the new public management in education management: a study of Goiás state education network¹

Repercussões da nova gestão pública na gestão da educação: um estudo da rede estadual de Goiás²

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ABSTRACT

The New Public Management (NGP) has become hegemonic in Brazil. Based on goals, results and large-scale assessments, it has been adopted by several states in the country. Its precepts have also been implanted in education. This study seeks to verify the repercussions of NGP in the management of education in the state public network of Goiás, a state that has been highlighted by the good results achieved in large-scale evaluations. Based on the constructs of Discourse Theory proposed by Ernesto Laclau and his followers, the research was conducted from interviews with the leaders of the state's largest and smallest IDEB schools, the union of education professionals and the education secretariat, in addition to analysis of government guidelines. We verify that the New Public Management is hegemonic in the State educational policy, constituting itself as a nodal point. However, democratic management is also central to the interviewees' discourse, and it is also a nodal point.

Keywords: New Public Management. Educational management. Educational policy. Discourse Theory.

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RESUMO

O modelo da Nova Gestão Pública (NGP) tem se tornado hegemônico no Brasil. Calçado em metas, resultados e em avaliações de larga escala, tem sido adotado por vários estados no país. Seus preceitos têm sido implantados também na educação. Este estudo busca verificar quais as repercussões da NGP na gestão da educação na rede pública estadual de Goiás, estado que vem se destacando pelos bons resultados alcançados em avaliações de larga escala. Tomando por base os construtos da Teoria do Discurso, proposta por Ernesto Laclau e seus seguidores, a pesquisa foi realizada a partir de entrevistas com os dirigentes das escolas de maior e menor IDEB do estado, sindicato dos profissionais de educação e secretaria de educação, além da análise das diretrizes governamentais. Verificamos que a Nova Gestão Pública é hegemônica na política educacional do Estado, se constituindo como um ponto nodal. No entanto, a gestão democrática também é fulcral no discurso dos entrevistados, podendo ser considerada também como um ponto nodal.

Palavras-chave: Nova Gestão Pública. Gestão Educacional. Política Educacional. Teoria do Discurso.

Introduction

We have observed, in recent times, the emergence of new models of state regulation, within the spectrum of what has been called the New Public Management (NGP), which can be considered a state reform movement, whose objective was to respond to the economic crisis in 1970s, within the framework of capitalist regulation.

Generally, the New Public Management might be defined as a public sector reform program based on business management instruments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services in modern bureaucracies, as an answer to the two great forces that shaped the last decades of the twentieth century: globalization and democracy. NGP is currently the hegemonic model of Western public administration.

According to Bresser Pereira (2000), the capitalist system has had two major reforms in public administration: bureaucratic reform and managerial reform (or the new public management reform), which can be divided into two “waves”. The first one in the 1980s emphasized the structural adjustment of the crisis economy and the second, from the 1990s, which emphasizes the institutional transformations.

Junquillo (2002) points out the following basic characteristics of NGP that, according to him, can be found even in countries that have not completely dismantled the typical policies of the Welfare State:

- The idea of public spending as unproductive cost as opposed to collective and social investment;
- Identification of civil servants as hostile to society, holders of privileges and defenders of particular interests;
- Criticism of the negative interference of the state in the markets and the election of the supremacy of the latter ones as the most appropriate mechanisms for the distribution of goods and services to society.;
- State definition with the primary role of promoter / entrepreneur rather than provider of social goods and services;
- Importation of management practices common to the private sector of the economy, including in public agendas, such as: efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, evaluation and control of results, customer satisfaction, delegation and participative management, prevention and control of expenses;
- Emphasis is placed on the importance of power and the changing role of so-called public administrators to managers or professionalized public managers, in the sense that a profile towards the notion of advisor/integrator and entrepreneur is desired, distinct from the role of supervisor or administrator;
- Privatization of state productive economic sectors;
- Emphasis on deregulation of trade and labor markets (JUNQUILHO, 2002, p. 2).

According to Dasso Júnior (2014, p. 14), “defining ‘New Public Management’ as a unique model of ‘public administration theory’ is too simplistic’. The many variants that emerge in different countries, with absolutely different histories and cultures, make the practices different”. To CLAD - Latin American Council for Development (*Conselho Latino-Americano para o Desenvolvimento*) NGP deployment in the region must meet the following requirements:

- High bureaucracy professionalization;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Decentralization in public services execution;
- Organizational devolution in exclusive State activities;
- Results control;
- New forms of control;

- Two forms of autonomous administrative units: agencies that perform state-only activities and decentralized agencies that work in social and scientific services;
- Orientation of services provision to the user citizen;
- Changing on the bureaucracy role regarding public power democratization (CLAD, 1998).

We highlight that NGP movement is not consolidated in the sense of dismantling the state, **but in its reconstruction**. The document by CLAD reinforces “the relevance of management reform for reconstruction of state capacity and identification of limits of neoliberal orientations as a response to the welfare state crisis” (GARCIA; ADRIÃO; BORGHI, 2009, p. 12), opposed to the neoliberal response of state reduction and total market dominance, as a structural change in the state functioning.

For public management rebuilding, the State must define its functions and its way of acting further to increase the state management capacity (governance) through the professionalization of the strategic bureaucracy, its management instruments strengthening and improving their policy-making performance. However, making modifications to the administrative apparatus is not enough. recovering the bases of legitimacy and social effectiveness of government action is essential, in other words, of countries governance (CLAD, 1998, p. 1)³.

NGP follows the logic of the private, which should be a reference for the public sector, making the business model universally valid for thinking public and social action. Its epistemological bases are in the New Institutionalism while its political bases are “in the critique of the welfare state, the centralized planning and the inductive and promoter role of social welfare exercised predominantly by the state” (OLIVEIRA, 2017, p. 710). By promoting attacks on hierarchies, on the centralization of power and decisions, and on the rigidity of government structures, NGP installs itself as a great innovation, even where the Welfare was never experienced.

3 Para reconstruir la gestión pública el Estado debe redefinir sus funciones y su forma de actuación además de incrementar la capacidad de gestión estatal (governance) mediante la profesionalización de la burocracia estratégica, el fortalecimiento de sus instrumentos gerenciales y el mejoramiento de su desempeño en la elaboración de políticas. Sin embargo, la realización de modificaciones en el aparato administrativo no es suficiente. Es imprescindible la recuperación de las bases de legitimidad y de la eficacia social de la acción gubernamental, es decir, de la gobernabilidad de los países (CLAD, 1998, p. 1).

However, “taking inspiration from private management is a serious conceptual error because public management is, by its ends and means, absolutely different from private management” (DASSO JUNIOR, 2014, p. 16). While the logic of the public must be inspired by solidarity, by collective interests, by citizen, the private logic is determined by the commercial logic of consumption, of individual interests, of the customer, then being two antagonistic logics. To Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 313):

The matter is how to know what to say about the “result culture” in justice, in medical field, culture or in education and on which values we may judge it. In fact, the act of judgment, which depends on ethical and political criteria, is replaced by a measure of efficiency that is supposed to be ideologically neutral. Thus, we tend to hide each institution’s own purposes for the benefit of an identical accounting standard, as if each institution had no constitutive values of its own.

In Brazil, from the 1990s, the purposes of NGP started to be consolidated in the state system. Thereunto, “when Fernando Henrique Cardoso takes over the presidency of the republic and establishes the State Reform Ministry, MARE, under the command of economist Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, the state apparatus ‘organic’ reform will be proposed from the management perspective” (GARCIA; ADRIÃO; BORGHI, 2009, p. 17), and its main characteristics were the reduction of the state apparatus, privatization, cuts, reduction of the functionalism, further the implantation of the public-private partnerships in their different formats.

New public management and education

Although with different formats, NGP has been consolidating itself in several countries as an efficient alternative in the search for quality education. In Brazil it has not been different from what happens in other countries. Several experiences have been implemented in different education networks.

According to Verger (2015), in the last years, NGP has been strongly penetrating the global educational agenda in both industrialized and developing countries. NGP’s first records in education are from the 1980s in the British education reform, which had direct repercussions on school management. Its international dissemination took place from the 1990s on.

NGP principles transposed to education crystallize into a wide range of policies, systematized by Verger (2015) in the following table.

TABLE 1 – NPG PRINCIPLES AND EDUCATION POLICIES

NPG PRINCIPLES	EDUCATION POLICIES
Public services professional management	Professionalization and empowerment of school managers
More explicit standards and performance measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of quality indicators and benchmarks on educational success - Common Curriculum Patterns
Emphasis on results control	External assessment of achievement and school performance
Disaggregate the public sector into small management units	School autonomy, school-based management
More competition in the public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public subsidies for private schools - Financing <i>per capita</i> - Publication of results obtained by schools in standardized tests
Adopting the managerial style from the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility of hiring and dismissal by the school - Managerial style for school management
Restriction on the use of public resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results-based school funding - Teacher remuneration based on merit and productivity criteria

SOURCE: Verger (2015, p. 602).

NPG has changed the way in which the management of educational institutions is conceived, since principles such as school autonomy, accountability and results-based management have guided the way in which public education is regulated, provided and financed. However, NGP is not monolithic educational reform model, nor adopt the same format in all countries, and well-differentiated management approaches and educational policy designs are observed. Nevertheless, according to Oliveira (2015, p. 631),

[...] Some of its principles can be observed in the reforms that have taken place over the last decades in different national contexts, namely: dissociation of executing and control functions; fragmentation of

bureaucracies and their openness to the demands and requirements of users; competition among public actors and the private sector and outsourcing of services; reinforcement of responsibilities and autonomy of public action execution levels; results-based management and hiring (so-called management contracts) based on achievement of objectives and performance appraisal; normalization, via standardization, of evidence-based professional practices and exemplary experiments.

New Public Management has been constituted as a new policy paradigm that endows policy makers with categories and models of interpretative frameworks in educational policy decisions, aiming at the quality of education. Some of its policies may still be considered a fluctuating significant⁴ (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 1985). According to Verger (2015), NPG solutions are not adopted because they work, but because there is a widespread perception that they are policies which could solve the most important problems of contemporary education systems. The author still highlights that NPG has been adopted by both conservative and progressive governments⁵. To Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 311),

The new government model has conquered many countries. Themes and terms of “good governance” and “good practice” became the mantra of government action [...] the World Bank in the 1997 World Development Report proposed replacing the term “minimum state” by “better state”. [...] This state generic reform, according to the principles of the private sector, is presented as ideologically neutral: it aims only at efficiency.

As an effort to synthesize the different possible configurations of NPG in education, Verger helps us with the table below (Table 2), highlighting that NGP is traduced in multiple policy options and interventions, with widely varying designs and even antagonistic. It makes difficult to draw generalizable conclusions from the impact of NGP on education, especially in terms of educational justice, commodification of public services, teacher professionalization and school democracy.

4 When a signifier slides between different processes of signification, being identified in different ways, catalyzing meanings of specific groups of the social heterogeneity set, but simultaneously not assuming the condition of representative of the whole, it is conceived as a floating signifier, being linked to several specific senses.

5 To Dardot and Laval (2016), this reinvention of government is often presented as an invention of leftist politics, expressing the domination of the new neoliberal reason.

TABLE 2 – POSSIBLE NGP CONFIGURATIONS IN EDUCATION

NGP EDUCATION POLICIES	POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS
Professionalization / empowerment of school principals	Hierarchical Direction Style vs shared leadership
Definition of common curriculum standards and quality indicators and benchmarks on educational achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different standardization levels and prescription of teaching content and methodologies - Presence or absence of equity as a condition of education quality
External assessment of results and school performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summative evaluation vs Formative evaluation - Presence of material, formative or symbolic incentives linked to assessment results - Publication or non-publication of results obtained by schools in standardized tests
School autonomy: <i>school-based management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy focus on resource management, school organization and/or pedagogical matters - Autonomy <i>Locus</i>: Principal vs. School Community
Empowerment of families / utility customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different levels and scope of families' participation (management, budget, educational matters, peripheral services) - Giving more voice to families in schools (so that they can convey their demands and concerns to teachers), and encourage them to opt for elections / exit from schools (market dynamics)
Public subsidies to private schools: per capita or competitive funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type of competition between schools (resulting from per capita funding) will be conditioned by the levels of regulation and control of free education, access to schools and school election
Schools funding and/or teachers based on merit/productivity criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual or schoolteacher's assessments - Teacher assessment based on curriculum mastery, student achievement, or teaching processes

SOURCE: Verger (2015, p. 617).

In Brazil, NGP oriented reforms began to be implemented in the 1990s, based on the pursuit of efficient public services. Then, in 1995, Ministry of State

Reform published the State Apparatus Reform Master Plan, which demonstrated its intention to make the Brazilian state more regulator and administrator than provider of services and goods. However, it was a period of great political effervescence due to the end of the military dictatorship. Contradictorily, these reforms were justified as a result of the social movements demands, which were fighting for the broadening of the right to public education and criticizing the rigid, bureaucratic and centralized structure of reforms. Then,

expansion of rights was accompanied by change in the forms of organization and management of education, justified by governments at different levels (local, state and federal) by the need for modernization of public administration in response to demands for greater transparency, more democratic and flexible structures and higher efficiency (OLIVEIRA, 2015, p. 632).

This public management model has become hegemonic and from then on, its preponderance is observed even in governments that place themselves in the popular progressive field (at different levels). With assessment as key element, NGP implantation in education policies is justified by the pursuit of quality in education.

Assessment became a central regulatory mechanism. It provided indicators that are used in management goal setting, influencing school unit funding and in some cases even teacher payment. Further, of course, ultimately determining the curricula (OLIVEIRA, 2015, p. 640).

The central argument used has been the need to provide society with an indicator of the quality of education, in order to enable the mobilization of school agents to adjust their practices to improve their results. We must not lose sight, however, that this quest for efficiency through good results in large-scale assessments neglects the historical process of building education as a public good, a social right that cannot be regulated as a commodity, failing to consider, also, the deep internal inequalities of the Brazilian educational system, besides depoliticizing the relations between the State and the citizens.

Based on the idea that NGP is configured in different formats, we seek to understand its repercussions on the educational and school management of Goiás. To Verger (2015, apud TOLOFARI, 2005), wherever NGP has been applied, the

way in which the management of educational institutions is conceived has been significantly changed, as principles such as school autonomy, accountability, results-based management or school election have penetrated deeply into the form of regulation, provision and financing of educational services. It should not be overlooked, however, that global educational policies, such as those that conform to NPG doctrine, are actively reinterpreted and modified by both local policy makers and those who ultimately materialize politics, teachers, managers and school staff. Thereunto, understanding the hegemony of solutions proposed by the NGP from a discursive point of view is important.

Discourse theory as a way of apprehending reality

Seeking to understand how the rationality of NGP has been incorporated by educational actors, we chose to use Laclauian discourse theory.

In this research, speech was taken while a social practice, in other words, as a way of social construction, whose ontological condition is politics, which implies considering it as a form of action of people in the world and upon others, expressing the social relations in the society. Therefore, actions, selections, choices, languages are constituted, in short, in all the social productions of which it is an expression and may be a way to understand the meanings produced in the “daily life”.

The focus of the work was discursive practices (a particular form of social practice that manifests itself linguistically - spoken or written) that correspond to the active moments in the use of language, moments of re-signification, ruptures, meaning production and, therefore, language in action.

According to Fairclough (2001, p. 66), in his analysis of Foucault’s work,

What is most significant here for discourse analysis is the view of discourse as constitutive – contributing for production, changing and reproduction of objects of social life. This implies that discourse has an active relationship with reality, that language means reality in the sense of meaning making for it.

The analysis of a discursive practice focuses on the processes of production, consumption and textual change, which requires reference to the specific economic, political and institutional environments in which the discourse is generated. Thereupon,

[...] There is no way to dissociate the process of grasping the real from processes of meaning, which in turn imply both argumentative networks and concrete practices and the institutions through which such representations can become meaningful, shared, or imposed (as do so democratically or autocratically). Finally, it means admitting a meaning of the term that indicates its dynamicity, the game of differences in a system that alters the limits of its own configuration: **discourse** (BURITY, 1994, p. 149; highlighted by author).

In this perspective, discourse includes both linguistic and extralinguistic insights, as all social configurations are meaningful, and thus the meanings of words and practices depend on the discursive space in which they are placed on, constructed by articulatory practices. From the Laclauian perspective, therefore, politics is the dispute for meaning.

According to Fairclough (2001, p. 91),

discourse contributes to the constitution of all dimensions of the social structure that directly or indirectly shape and constrain: its own norms and conventions as well as its underlying relationships, identities and institutions. Discourse is a practice, not only of world representation, but of world significance, constituting and constructing the world in meaning.

The author identifies three language functions and dimensions of meaning that coexist in all discourses. The first one is the identity function, which relates to the ways in which social identities are established in discourse. The second function, relational one, refers to the way social relations between participants in discursive processes are represented and negotiated. And finally, the ideational function refers to the ways in which texts mean the world and its processes, entities, and relationships.

As a social practice, discourse is taken as political practice, which transforms, maintains and establishes the power relations and the collective entities in which such relations are placed, therefore there is a competition to fix senses⁶ to particular meaningful configurations. Thereunto, hegemony is contingently fixed.

According to Laclau and Mouffe (1989, p. 113),

6 Senses which are fixed by contingent form, in other words, they are provisional.

discourses are decentralized structures where the senses are constantly negotiated and constructed. This decentralized structure, or structured ‘totality’ or discourse, is the result of articulatory practices establishing relationships among elements with discursively unarticulated differences.

This perspective of discourse analysis opens possibility for reactivation of the contingent political origin of what is fixed and objectively presented, making room for new antagonisms and the fixation of new contents and forms that were not placed before, thus making possible the articulation of a multiplicity of competing discourses and, consequently, of the transformation of social agents and practices. Then, the practice of articulation, such as dislocation/fixation of a system of differences, penetrates the entire material density of the multiplicity of institutions, rituals and practices, through which a discursive structure is structured (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 1985). Therefore, discursive practice can contribute to the reproduction of society, as well as to its transformation.

NGP and education management in the state of Goiás

In order to understand NPG repercussions on the Goiás state system, we conducted interviews with the superintendent of educational management of the SEC, the president of the Union of Workers in Education (SINTEGO) and the managers of the school of higher and lower IDEB of the state⁷. In addition, research was conducted on the programs of the State Department of Education, which were analyzed considering the assumptions of the Discourse Theory, based on Laclau. Due to the limits of this text, we focus on the analysis of the interviews, using SEC data for contextual purposes only.

Education is inserted in Goiás More Competitive and Innovative Program (*Programa Goiás Mais Competitivo e Inovador*) which “is a program of competitiveness development and improvement of public management in the state of Goiás, which covers all areas of government activity and focuses on improving social indicators that positively impact citizens’ quality of life” (GOIÁS, 2018). The program presents three (03) axes: economic competitiveness, quality of life, and efficient public management. We point out “the challenges”⁸; “the challenges”

⁷ In this research, militarized schools of the state network were not considered due to their peculiar characteristics.

⁸ Each axis contains challenges that are transformed into action programs, with objectives, justification and goals to be achieved, to which specific projects are linked.

linked to education are on the economic competitiveness axis. They are raising the quality of public network learning; promote access to early childhood education and promote the expansion and qualification of the provision of technical-level education. To achieve these challenges there are projects, such school management by results; learning more; ITEGO – OS network; ITEGO innovative; Goiás partnership of childhood education, among others.

When we questioned the Pedagogical Management Superintendent about this relationship, the answer was: “*we fully believe that*”. He justifies that training is linked to the economic development of the state. “*A state that invests in education creates opportunities*”. He still highlights that a consultant was hired, who explained that

territories have these characteristics, that you see territories that you have very large economic development, economic strength, but it does not train professionals. What will happen? As it does not train, it will be a state always attracting, bringing people there, because he has more difficulty doing this development, because there are no professionals.

Assessment, education policy that express the NGP principle that emphasizes results control, is central to all speeches, whether from the secretariat, managers and even the teachers’ union. Let us see:

“*Professors like it, they are happy to know that Goiás is champion in the IDEB result*” (Teacher’s Union).

“*Parents today choose the school for good references. [In] 2017 we worked like crazy to improve results*” (Lower IDEB school).

“*We have developed a formative assessment*” (Secretary of Education).

The Secretary of Education’s speech on formative assessment draws attention. According to the testimony, the assessment, performed every two months, has the purpose of identifying difficulties and working on them. “*Bimonthly the secretary applies a test, we analyze this test, we feedback the network about the result, in 7 days*”. Such discourse is corroborated by the director of the smaller IDEB school, who says she uses the assessment to reinforce individual students’ learning gaps.

However, the Union says there is a scam in these results, given that there is a ban on failing students in the state network and registering dropout, which is treated as transfer. Despite this Reading, the union does not speak out denouncing.

There is a silence from us. Why a silence from us? Because we know the truth. And then why don't you report it? Because I would hurt my professionals, education professionals. I was going to buy an unnecessary fight, so to speak. What would I get from it? Who is interested in my report? The teachers like it, they are happy to know that the state of Goiás is the champion in this IDEB result.

The union's leader speech shows how introjected the evaluation process is in public networks. The union verifies distortions but does not report them under penalty of losing support from the category. This stance demonstrates teachers' support for large-scale assessment processes, whether national or local. In Goiás it is so strong that each school has a plaque at the entrance where the IDEB results are placed, each edition, showing the evolution of the school in the evaluation process. This publication, in our view, encourages competition and comparison among schools. The surprise reaction of the principal caught our attention when we clarified that "her" school had the lowest IDEB score in the last assessment. There was a negative reaction and a constant attempt to justify the note, often in comparative tone: "*we do it this way, we know that other schools don't do it that way, but it's the correct one*". The director did not even authorize the recording of her interview.

All respondents' speeches, as well as the educational policy documents, point towards the improvement of IDEB and SAEGO⁹ and the achievement of predefined goals. There would be several passages from the interviews to be highlighted that go beyond the limits of this text. There is a clear hegemony in the discourse of the importance of large-scale assessment and pride in the results achieved in the state. Even with critical positioning, as is the case with the union, the discourse of assessment and the good results achieved in the network stands as hegemonic. Thereunto, we can state that there is a clear alignment with the NGP assumptions in the speech about evaluation in Goiás state network.

However, the achievement of these results involves practices in tune with a progressive education project, especially regarding democratic management, with emphasis on the election of principals and the performance of school councils. There is a consensus among respondents that there is a democratic management implemented in the network and that this contributes decisively to the results obtained.

It's a positive thing within schools, right. Because then everyone is choosing, there are discussions. Even with problems, with the election has

9 Educational Assessment System of State of Goiás.

reduced the problems too [...] One of the things, one of the very important premises in this program that we observed here in Goiás, is the matter of co-responsibility. So, this is one, to tell you the truth, is one of the main premises (Higher IDEB school).

So, it is a very active Council, it participates a lot in school decisions. In decisions and everything, especially financial, administrative-financial (Lower IDEB school).

Democratically elected directors are “professionalized” in a training offered by the Unibanco Institute, whose goal is to return managers to the pedagogical front in order to achieve the expected results. “*Because if we wanted to improve our performance, we need to improve our managers, qualify those managers*” (Secretary of Education). Thereunto, there is an understanding of the pedagogical front as good results in the assessments.

Managers professionalization, as well as the emphasis on controlling the results of large-scale evaluations are NPG principles in education, as Verger (2015) points out. In Goiás state network, these principles are based on the discourse of respondents, allied, however, with a perspective of democratic management, with broad participation of the school community and sharing of decisions.

A policy pointed by Verger (2015) to achieve the principle of more explicit norms and performance measures is curriculum standardization. Goiás has a network-wide reference curriculum since 2011.

This curriculum, for example, allowed us to develop an evaluation system, not only the external evaluation system, which is with CAED, along the lines of IDEB, but it is annual. But building, which in my assessment has a very strong impact, is a formative diagnostic assessment. Bimonthly the secretary applies a test, we analyze this test, we feedback the network about the result, in 7 days. This was only possible because of this curriculum. The construction of complete structured material itself was something that we saw there in Pernambuco and brought here, in 2012 we started working with structured material, we work with it until today. Today, of course, we have been adjusting. We have a monitoring structure of schools and this follow-up is through a specific methodology, which is tutoring (Secretary of Education).

As we can unveil from the secretariat’s speech, the unique curriculum is closely related to the assessment and it was an important element for the successful

results that the network has been achieving. The manager of the smaller IDEB school also points out that the curriculum is the same throughout the network, which facilitated pedagogical development, especially in cases of transference, since all schools work on the same content. However, students coming from another network find it difficult to keep up with the content. Finally, the adoption of private sector parameters in school management is clear, as are the partnerships that are developed with various institutes in this sector. Almost all programs adopted in the network are developed in partnership with the private sector: Itaú Social, Unibanco Institute, All for Education, ICE, Ayrton Senna Institute, CAED.

School management by results is the partnership we have with Unibanco Institute, including this management point. We have a perception that successful schools, as a rule, they have a successful management. The manager of a company, this person ... you come to a school you realize that it is well managed, it gives good results. We, here in Goiás we have a model of democratic management, so the teacher applies from a course, and such. But he/she applies for, and he/she is elected to run that school for a period, and that professional does not always have a management background. So, the idea of the project was to train this manager (Secretary of Education).

Look, this is the style of a private school! The student will always take a test, there is a test 2, 3 times a week. The student has to have a moment of study, otherwise he/she can't keep up! (Higher IDEB school).

As the speech extracts point out, the success model is the one from the private school, both in terms of school management and daily activities, which suggests the alignment of the Goiás education network with the NGP. As stated at the beginning of this text, NGP basis is the adoption of business management practices in the public sector, which seems to be happening in the state education of Goiás.

Finishing...

Study of educational policy of Goiás demonstrated its alignment with NGP precepts. Then, we may state that the New Public Management is constituted as a nodal point¹⁰ in Goiás education from the perspective of Discourse Theory.

10 Contingent fixation of universalizing meanings.

Centrality of assessments, management by goals and results, management professionalization, competitiveness, curriculum standardization, partnership with private sector institutions constitute the defining elements of Goiás education policy. Hence, NGP principles are hegemonic in the state network. The tripod goals-assessment-sanction (or reward) (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016) is consolidated in Goiás state network. Then, one of the NGP objectives would be settled, to transform traditional public management into performance-oriented organizations.

However, there is an alignment of NGP-based management with democratic management, characteristic of another educational project. There is a consensus that the network implemented has consolidated the democratic management and its importance for the achievement of the results obtained in assessments, which have placed Goiás in the Brazilian education scenario. Therefore, we assert that, like NGP principles, democratic management might be considered a nodal point in Goiás education policy.

This contradiction reinforces the understanding that the institution of NGP in education cannot be considered as a monolithic, single-format model. It also opens possibility of implementing transformative practices that are not in line with its basic precepts. There is a clear sedimentation of the NGP in schools and in the Goiás network, especially regarding the achievement of goals and results in assessments. But there is also a clear sedimentation of the importance of democratic management.

Then, hegemonic discourse presents elements of different theoretical perspectives, which do not stand as antagonistic on the work in a school, as expressed in the literature, but in a complementary way. Therefore, it points to the need for further studies of this nature that might, even from the empirical reality, make a review on the theoretical contributions on the theme, without abandoning, however, an NGP critical view.

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