

The ownership of the school in the evaluation of educational quality

A titularidade da escola na avaliação da qualidade educacional

La propiedad de la escuela en la evaluación de la calidad educativa

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Abstract: The article analyzes alternative experiences of evaluation of the quality of public schools, developed in two realities (Portugal and Campinas/SP/Brazil), and presents a framework that systematizes categories present in soft regulation models. The ownership of schools in the struggle for quality is corroborated in the two models that refer to social quality, and self-evaluation for dialogue with those responsible for external regulation.
Keywords: School evaluation; Social quality; Self-assessment; Basic education.

Resumo: O artigo analisa experiências alternativas de avaliação da qualidade da escola pública, desenvolvidas em duas realidades (Portugal e Campinas/SP/Brasil) e apresenta um quadro que sistematiza categorias presentes em modelos de regulação *soft*. A titularidade das escolas na luta pela qualidade é corroborada nos dois modelos que se referenciam na qualidade social e na autoavaliação para o diálogo com os responsáveis pela regulação externa.
Palavras-chave: Avaliação das escolas; Qualidade social; Autoavaliação; Educação básica.

Resumen: El artículo analiza experiencias alternativas de evaluación de la calidad de las escuelas públicas, desarrolladas en dos realidades (Portugal y Campinas/SP/Brasil) y presenta un marco que sistematiza categorías presentes en modelos de regulación blanda. La propiedad de las escuelas en la lucha por la calidad se corrobora en los dos modelos que se refieren a la calidad social, y la autoevaluación para el diálogo con los responsables de la regulación externa.
Palabras clave: Evaluación escolar; Calidad social; Autoevaluación; Educación básica.

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Introduction

The importance of school actors in the construction of public education quality cannot be overstated. Quality that aligns with the democratic perspective of inclusion and social justice, contrasting with market-driven logics focused on short-term improvements. Excessive attachment to outcomes discourages destabilizing inquiries about the procedural consequences of these choices, reinforcing narratives advocating for learning defined externally and limiting the full development of new generations to what is measurable.

The preference for assessment as a reference for school curriculum induced by educational policies has weakened the pedagogical political project and undermined the school's social commitment. Unfortunately, many are led to view this as the quickest path to school success, even if such success imposes evident damages, particularly impacting the future of the new generations, which are not always immediately apparent.

Everything seems to contribute to the weakening of the public school's potential, subjecting it to questionable actions that, although potent in their repercussions, are persistently propagated with media support, creating an illusion of progress in the right direction.

Once again, we observe the insidious subtleties of these policies that pursue results, separating them from discussions of their varied factors and causes. Additionally, there is an omission regarding the future consequences of these choices, with no guarantee of repercussions for institutions deviating from established rules and norms considered indicators of quality.

The concept of quality underpinning educational proposals is rooted in performance, competitiveness, hierarchy (thus inequality), and efficiency. Its achievement implies the reduction of processes based on solidarity, reciprocal intersubjective relationships, and participation, also revealing the fragility of the relationship between everyday school life and knowledge-emancipation (ESTEBAN, 2018, p. 13).

A reductionist quality is gradually legitimizing itself, favored by a school management seeking to make the school's complex task more manageable, accelerating the construction of agreements not always resulting from democratic participation (TORRES, 2013). These principles and values are inspired by business models applied to the school reality without considering the distinctions between the two contexts and are conceived without acknowledging the contradictions. Backed by positive indicators of success, the space for

action of business reformers in education has expanded, assertively announcing successful solutions developed without the involvement of those who are supposed to implement them in reality (FREITAS, 2018).

The management of schools takes on a market-oriented tone and is implemented through top-down decisions, adhering to what neoliberal policies dictate as the required quality for society as if it operates without tensions arising from the vast differences that constitute it.

Notwithstanding this scenario, the need for evaluative processes to promote educational quality cannot be ignored. This intensifies the competition between agendas striving to ensure that victorious conceptions align more closely with social interests. This context involves a willingness to construct and implement a structure that engages different elements, acknowledging a priori that these are inherently contradictory. This underscores the necessity to advocate for a public education guided by the pillar of emancipation and therefore ambitious in the quality indicators it seeks to achieve.

This structure, potentially with more complex yet well-founded and legitimized connections and interfaces, would need to grapple with the specificities of various spheres (micro-professional; meso-organizational or institutional; macro-state; and mega-international or supranational). Regarding evaluation, accountability, and responsibility, there are traditions, representations, suspicions, expectations, availabilities, and varying stages of development (social, cultural, political, moral) that must be taken into consideration (AFONSO, 2009, p. 23).

Considering the dual nature of education and embracing the idea of historical subjects (FREIRE, 2008), we see proactive reactions emerging that call for the unity and collaboration of different social forces present in schools to construct responses conceived from a perspective of social quality, challenging external evaluation policies. These potent stances revalorize schools as centers radiating an alternative quality that should inform the evaluation processes, equally reinvented in light of the assumptions embraced.

As expected, neoliberal policies reinvent themselves equally and procedurally to address criticisms of their *modus operandi*, leading to concerns due to semantic ambiguity. The concept of sharing is viewed more as a technique for managing emotions rather than a process resulting from the democratic participation of actors in their significant spheres of action (TORRES, 2013, p. 70).

It is also worth noting the fewer studies on contexts where evaluation policies are more "reflective" or soft, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon context, as emphasized by Maroy and Pons (2018) regarding France and Quebec (Canada). Additionally, there are

different forms of accountability based on collaborative thinking, involving various types of knowledge and expertise oriented towards the role of schools in relation to the communities they serve, as highlighted by Lingard, Baroutsis, and Sellar (2021) in the Australian context.

Therefore, we aim to discuss the relevance of alternative processes for assessing school quality and the necessity of designing evaluative mechanisms capable of understanding the commitment of schools based on their concrete reality and in harmony with the existing objective conditions. Our goal is to advocate for school self-assessment processes as legitimate triggers for dialogue with those responsible for regulation, aimed at collectively mapping out the social quality aspect of the school to which evaluation as a policy should refer to as becoming.

Institutional assessment as a counter-hegemonic possibility

While educational policies worldwide have succumbed to external evaluation processes as a univocal expression of school quality, we have witnessed the rise of forms valuing the school as a privileged locus where quality can be understood from a relational, contextual, and formative perspective for those involved in the process. It is not a binary logic of either/or. Rather, it is the intentional choice of who governs the dialogue, where the conversation about educational quality begins. The role occupied by the school. And above all, the clarification of the purpose of the journey.

According to Pacheco, Morgado and Sousa (2020), one answer to reducing the bureaucratic presence of the State and vertical regulation over schools in the European Union gave rise to the General Inspection of Education and Science as a key element of alternative educational policies, oriented towards shared accountability and concerned with improving school quality.

One of the most notable proactive responses is found in Portugal, which adopts an evaluation policy not averse to external commitments but redesigns its proposal by engaging in dialogue with schools and conducting inspections in a horizontal and open manner conducive to improvement. It advocates for consensus negotiation between policymakers and school actors through self-assessment and self-regulation. A network governance model is advocated that conceptualizes Education as the result of collective action by a set of interdependent and highly trusted relationships that allows this set of actors to coordinate their work based on relationships of trust and interdependence (EHREN; BAXTER, 2020).

This evaluation model can be seen as an example of a polycentric approach, where school actors cooperate in a network to collect data and also engage in processes of reflection that underlie decision-making subsequently translated into improvement plans and actions (COSTA; ALMEIDA; CAMPOS, 2022). The complementarity of self-assessment with external evaluation is evident, where self-assessment is mandatory and continuously developed, even being one of the domains analyzed in external evaluation. Schools have started to develop systematic self-assessment processes due to external evaluation pressure (TRISTÃO, 2020), serving purposes of accountability and promoting self-awareness, based on the explicit assumption that schools must use it to trigger improvement, monitoring, and decision-making processes. Furthermore, it is seen as an important tool for accountability within the school and externally, and for the dissemination of work done (CAMPOS; COSTA, 2023). In contrast to external evaluation, which is based on a single national reference framework, schools have the freedom to choose and create their own self-assessment model. In this sense, Tristão (2020) highlights the variety of devices implemented, which change over the years and sometimes occur simultaneously within the same school grouping.

The self-assessment report, produced by the school, is considered central throughout the process and is the starting point for interaction by the team of external evaluators with various school actors participating in interview panels (management, parents, students, teachers, coordinators *etc.*).

Even with differences in scale, the experience of the municipal network in Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil is also based on a logic that relocates evaluation to the school level and embraces Participatory Institutional Evaluation (PIE) as a governmental policy that emerges as a proactive response to responsibly counteract the federally regulated processes driven by their well-known outcomes (SORDI and SOUZA, 2009; SORDI, 2021). In this context, Inspection is replaced by School Supervision in collaboration with professionals assigned to the Participatory Institutional Evaluation (PIE) who are responsible for coordinating the school quality evaluation process in this education network.

Drawing on previous studies conducted by the authors in their local realities (AFONSO; COSTA, 2011; 2012; 2015; COSTA; ALMEIDA, 2020; CAMPOS; COSTA, 2023; CARVALHO; COSTA, 2017; COSTA; ALMEIDA; CAMPOS, 2022); SORDI (2009, 2012, 2017, 2020, 2022; SORDI; BERTAGNA; SILVA, 2014; SORDI; FREITAS, 2013), we have developed a comparative framework between both models aimed at making visible the efforts to build an alternative assessment culture, at a time when assessment has been stripped of its

true formative responsibilities and has become the cornerstone of educational policies, overwhelmingly focused on outcomes.

Board 1 – Similarities and peculiarities between the assessment models of Portugal and Campinas/SP/Brasil

Categories	Portugal regulation model	Campinas/SP/Brasil evaluation model
Form of regulation	Institutional evaluation as state policy State-Evaluator	Institutional evaluation as government policy State-Evaluator
Responsible entities	Services of the Ministry of Education (General Inspection of Education and Scienc)	Municipal Education Secretariat, Pedagogical Department, and Evaluation Unit
Responsible agent for external evaluation	Inspector Evaluation team: 2 inspectors + 2 external experts	Supervisor and pedagogical coordinator of the Participative Institutional Evaluation Unit
Hiring process for evaluators for the role	Contest (inspectors) Invitation (peritos externos)	Contest
Specific training for school evaluation	Yes	No
Formative assessment prevalent in the model	Formative	Formative
Key ideas of the model	Negotiated quality; Participatory accountability	Negotiated quality (Bondioli, 2004); Participatory accountability (Sordi; Freitas, 2013)
Model structuring	Emphasis on self-assessment carried out by the school; On-site visit by the inspection team; Dialogue with different segments of school groupings and the community (local government, parents); Production of a final report; Development of a school improvement plan; Meta-assessment; Longitudinal character	The school as a reference for evaluation; Formation of Self Evaluation Comission with representatives from all segments including families; Procedural Institutional Evaluation meetings, regulated by resolutions; Proposal of evaluation plans with goal setting by the school, annually reviewed; Negotiation meetings with central managers and at the Self Evaluation Comission level
Alignment of external evaluation with self-evaluation	Yes Sequential model: external evaluation focuses on self-evaluation (Alvik, 1996)	Yes Cooperative model: external and internal evaluation cooperate in developing a common approach (Alvik, 1996)

Use of guiding scripts for evaluative action	Yes	No Open construction, based on the school's experience and with the support of researchers from the local public university
Evidences of longitudinal advancements in the model	5-year cycles Introduction of new nuances post-meta-evaluation: improvement plan, classroom observation <i>etc.</i> ; Revival of evaluative domains of the instruments; Valorization of pedagogical innovation projects	Maintenance of the AIP proposal and expansion of the principles' reach within schools and across different teaching modalities; Innovative school actions fostered by the alliance with the local public university and public education improvement programs (FAPESP funding, for example); Active resistance of collectives against neoliberal attacks on package offerings through educational foundations
Management form of regulatory process	Democratic	Democratic
Regulation mode	Soft and knowledge-based	Soft and knowledge-based
Program sustainability	High	High (although dependent on political decisions and susceptible to discontinuities caused by governments that slow down the pace of improvements)
Counter-regulation perspective	Yes	Yes
Level of autonomy of groupings and/or schools	High and procedural	Significant, but exercised differently by schools
Empowerment of actors	High	Good and increasing
Local clarity of the action model's logic	High, with differentiated appropriations in schools	High, with differentiated appropriations in schools
Political legitimacy	Present Based on knowledge	Present Based on knowledge
Adherence of the model to a concept of quality referenced in Social Quality	Yes	Yes
Enhancement of institutional collective spaces	Yes	Yes
Inclusion of actors	High	High
Trust of actors in the evaluation model	High	Medium

Source: developed by the authors (2023).

We are interested in fostering a dialogue between these models, emphasizing their similarities and particularities. An initial similarity lies in the issue of sustainability present in both models. The Campinas model officially began in 2008, although the political movement that enabled it emerged in 2002, in partnership with the local public university. Its main contribution was the formulation of a Principles Charter, collaboratively developed involving school managers, university researchers, and key decision-makers. The aim was to establish starting points and non-negotiable principles to assert formative evaluation concepts not aligned with vertically accountable policies increasingly prevalent in educational policies. This agreement influenced and brought transparency to the process, ensuring its sustainability despite changes in political party leadership. The improvement of schools evolved in synergy with the actions (official and informal) of the Laboratory of Observations and Descriptive Studies (LOED), a research group from the local public university that has been following the process from model conception to AIP policy implementation.

In Portugal, since 1993, experimental and sporadic auditing and evaluation projects have been developed. Between 1999 and 2002, the Inspection services implemented their first external evaluation system called "Integrated Evaluation of Schools" which was suspended in 2002 due to a change in political orientation. It was in that same year, 2002, when the law approving the evaluation system for education and non-higher education (Law n. 31/2002, December 20, Article 3) was published, advocating evaluation as a "central instrument for defining educational policies" and specifying that evaluation results should be contextualized and lead to the formulation of specific improvement proposals (Article 16). Four years after the law was published, in 2006, the 'External Evaluation Program of Schools' (EEP) began, now in its third cycle, remaining successful and highly sustainable even through changing political cycles. The first cycle took place between 2006 and 2010; the second cycle between 2011 and 2017. The third cycle started in 2018 and is currently ongoing.

Its strength lies in being a state policy in line with European Community agreements recommending school improvement, which was stressed by the European Parliament and Council in 2001 within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy ³(COSTA; ALMEIDA, 2016). Its longitudinal perspective enhances legitimacy among School Groupings, supported by the emphasis on self-assessment as a key instance preceding dialogue with inspectors and external experts.

³ Check it out on: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32001H0166:PT:HTML>.

The evaluation model has shown openness to improvement and has been reconfigured in response to the needs and challenges that arise at the end of each cycle, introducing changes in response to its meta-evaluation.

This model goes beyond comparative formulas of knowledge based on indicators, as it values the knowledge of an organizational nature recorded in key school documents: of a propositional nature (e.g., Educational Project); evaluative (e.g., Self-assessment Reports); normative (e.g., Internal Regulations); and interventionist (e.g., Action Plans, Innovation Plans). Thus, the specific direct causality of bureaucracy gives way to the importance placed on interactions that occur in schools among the various actors who play the role of intermediaries in the regulation process (CAMPOS; COSTA, 2023).

The evaluations carried out under this program value the voices of those involved and the explicit expression of possible contradictions. The analysis of the reports is a richly explored source that allows the identification of biases linked to the attitudes of the school groupings, sometimes revealing the autonomy built and exercised in dialogue with the inspection, while at other times showing adaptive trends indicating a low capacity to make use of the autonomy implicit in the model.

Campos (2023) demonstrates in a study how the perceptions of school actors regarding the evaluation process are closely associated with the interactions established with the evaluators. The Inspection services act as hierarchical superiors of the schools, creating a vertical dependency. However, this relationship is perceived differently by the schools; there are feelings of apprehension, but also a desire for validation of organizational practices and the interpretation by schools that it is an important learning experience that prompts reflection and redirection of their practices.

The Campinas experience is considered important as it reintroduces the possibility of a proactive response from educational networks to external influences in the field of educational policies. Unlike certain federative states strongly enforcing educational policies based on regulations that endorse rankings and bonuses for well-ranked schools, this municipal network reacted by creating an alternative evaluation policy. This not only shifted the balance of power but also led to social experiments illuminated by a body of research supporting more collaborative ways to achieve educational quality for all.

One intriguing aspect in comparing comprehensive models is their shared aim to innovate towards a softer regulation, offering a proactive alternative to vertical accountability models. In the Campinas experience, this movement is termed as "counter-regulation" (Freitas *et al.*, 2009) as it challenges the orthodox nature of educational development indexes (IDEB) as the ultimate expression of Brazilian school quality. Proactively, it aims to go beyond merely

pointing out the inadequacy of these indexes, by internally constructing broader and politically endorsed evaluative possibilities. This trend can also be observed in the Portuguese model of quality regulation.

The regulation it embodies is essentially soft, knowledge-centered, shaping a regulation tool based on knowledge (KbRT). Actors' actions are guided more by the circulation of knowledge rather than by coercion or normative constraints. Hence, in terms of governance, it represents a regulation type focusing on actors' initiatives rather than solely on issued norms (AFONSO; COSTA, 2011, p. 165).

In both propositions, the focus is on strengthening school collectives to develop a solid, scientifically supported argumentative rhetoric that steers them away from defensive stances or building escape routes to avoid dialogue with those responsible for inspecting or supervising the remaining or unidentified advancements and setbacks. The central issue is to enable schools/school clusters to reclaim their authority in evaluation, and this possibility only materializes through dialogue.

The State gains legitimacy to assess schools and inquire about their choices not specifically through hierarchy, but based on the knowledge mobilized by these school actors, ultimately guiding them towards new options (AFONSO, 2020). This argumentative activity that takes place during panel interviews, school visits, and classroom observations is a result of the cognitive composition of the actors involved in the evaluation process. The knowledge possessed by schools is a demonstration of power by those who conceive and mobilize it, consequently reinforcing the legitimacy of the policy itself (CAMPOS, 2022).

Regulation centered on knowledge involves circulating possibilities among all actors to familiarize them with the debate on educational quality and its impact on future generations, engaging them in this cause. Conditions involving equal participation, equal speech, and equal listening, as emphasized by Leite (1995). It may seem unusual to advocate for regulation through knowledge if there is not a robust investment in sharing information among actors and providing continuous training for all involved in the work.

There is no denying that this learning of participation competes with the organizational form of schools under pressure from managerial and performative policies that, through the usurpation of collective times and spaces, weaken the organization of the actors and drive them to live in an individualistic manner, an educational project that requires collective authorship and involvement.

Hence the relevance of building negotiated quality pacts (Bondioli, 2004; Freitas, 2005) present in the Campinas model and kept alive by technical and political legitimacy, carefully constructed since the proposal's conception. The aim is to make understandable to the different school actors (and the network) the reasons why one should learn and advocate for a horizontal and dialogical quality proposal referenced in the multiple dimensions of social quality. It involves betting on the organized action of the actors towards the Common Good, consensually responsibly agreed upon and admitting that this stance challenges the status quo.

It should always be emphasized that questioning the official evaluation policy is not synonymous with disregarding the possibilities of dialogue with the data generated and publicized by external evaluation. Using them as one more of the elements that make up the necessary whole view for understanding the school's quality is a positive stance. What is rejected is only the imposition of an impenetrable regime of truth that cannot be questioned by the school actors, who are in a position of greater technical and political legitimacy to contextualize this data in the face of objective reality.

In his study, Guerreiro (2020) analyzed the sustainable and ephemeral practices of self-assessment, identifying actions and strategies that promote the sustainability of self-assessment. These include its institutionalization by school management, commitment to continuity, its utilitarian sense, consensus-building, and temporal alignment with the mandate of the school's leadership.

The evaluation model of Portuguese schools involves official regulatory responsibilities and shows a noticeable concern for adopting incremental measures that aim for successive approaches towards a culture of evaluation that is formative, horizontal, and inclusive.

The political-educational regulation in the field of public school evaluation is based on weakening the logic of normative imposition and emphasizes the voluntary involvement of stakeholders in collaborative work. Legal sanctions of conventional instruments (hard regulation) are being replaced by indirect modes of regulation based on other types of sanctions (social) and socialization processes that end up serving as powerful mechanisms for rule compliance. The analysis highlights the importance of understanding collective action processes through reciprocities, and the horizontal and vertical relationships established among the diverse set of individuals involved in the design, development, and implementation of the instrument; regulation ultimately stems, in part, from a convergence of negotiated regulations (AFONSO; COSTA, 2011, p. 181).

In Campinas' regulation model, the AIP policy emerges as a possibility for political agenda disputes involving successive negotiations with each change in the central power of the network and its respective political-ideological affiliations. This situation requires constant monitoring of the actors already sensitized and engaged in the struggle for QS to invest in expanding the proposal's reach across different school segments (seen by some as peripheral) to equip them, ethically and epistemologically, for the confrontation between historical projects and their intersections in evaluation models, often portrayed as neutral.

While school organizations may reflect, to varying degrees, the dominant traits of school culture, everyday dynamics follow a socio-organizational bricolage process that combines reproduced elements of the structural order and elements arising from social interaction and lived experiences in work contexts. The way each institution interprets, recontextualizes, and locally implements central guidelines theoretically shapes the notion of school organizational culture (TORRES, 2013, p. 57).

Both models, in their own way, reveal insurgent efforts to destabilize the logic of policies pushed by business reformers that currently dominate the school quality evaluation processes. They play a crucial role in officially or subliminally introducing alternative approaches capable of affecting schools' operational methods, freeing them from blindly following legal-bureaucratic norms. Hence, there is a possibility to pursue an alternative and intentional path, viewing education as a human right rather than a commodity.

Another element that deserves attention in the analysis of the models involves the relational trust between the actors evaluating and those being assessed. Beyond the authority derived from the evaluator's hierarchical position, it advocates for legitimacy based on trust among the actors, which develops horizontally in a network. This multidirectionality of interactions that occurs among a variety of actors takes place between a center (the evaluator – inspection services) and the periphery (schools and their communities) (Carvalho; Costa; Afonso, 2013). It is a multidirectionality "induced" by the center, but aimed at producing commitments, open to the hybridization of knowledge, of ideas (CARVALHO; COSTA; AFONSO, 2013). This network regulation is based on trust as it helps reduce uncertainty and promotes horizontal exchange of information and cooperation (KLIJN, 2010, p. 315).

This subjective aspect is affected by multiple variables, including the responsibility of the evaluators (inspectors and/or supervisors) in how they engage in dialogue with schools/groups. Training processes play an important role in discussing

evaluation beyond the technical components, including its inevitable political dimension. Therefore, it is not just about applying instruments and discussing them based on the appearance of data without progressing in observing reality and dialoguing with school actors. Dialogues that use language as a source of understanding and not as a form of power (SORDI, 2022).

Schools and teachers are co-constructors of policies, legitimizing them, and relegating the traditional mechanisms of normative and inspection pressure (Afonso; Costa, 2012).

Regarding assessment tools, there are some differences in the models. The Portuguese experience has a vast repertoire in this regard, which has involved improving the instruments used through listening to school groups, their representatives, and the exploration of assessment reports.

Campinas' experience has been without the formal use of an assessment tool, opting for evaluative conversation circles, formal because they are scheduled (CPA meetings, RPAI), but carried out in a lighter and more dialogical manner. This decision has consequences. Initially, the choice was made to reinforce the understanding that instruments are means and not ends in themselves for proper assessment. This stems from formative moments where historical assessment concepts are destabilized and confronted with the logic of the school system that uses assessment as a mechanism for control and classification. Hence, effective assessment practices depend on critical and innovative ways of understanding their purposes, which evidently influence the development of instruments, shaping them beforehand. Nevertheless, without guiding instruments, there is a significant loss of data, and perhaps it would be necessary to structure the process a bit more to provide more robust support for subsequent assessment rounds, justification, and accountability.

It is not meant to imply that once the training is completed and the tools are reconfigured, school evaluation will not be influenced by the participation of inspectors/supervisors who feel more comfortable practicing control-based evaluation. There are larger issues related to conceptions of the World, Man, and Education that influence and linger in evaluation conceptions, despite formative processes. Careful selection and training of evaluators are vital to mitigate the mismatches between the evaluative principles of the regulatory model and the profile of evaluators implementing the model in the field, in order to avoid performative contradictions that affect relational trust as a value for good evaluation practices. This is a point highlighted by Campos (2023) concerning the schools' need for inspectors to act as evaluators and not just as inspectors within the institutional evaluation processes.

Lastly, we emphasize that the dialogue between quantitative and qualitative data in school evaluation is highly fertile and allows for the objectification and enrichment of evaluative analyses that permeate evaluation processes. This reminds us that both models acknowledge the scores obtained by schools on national or international tests as inputs for schools' decision-making regarding their improvement projects. Similarly, in both models, the relational aspect that integrates different dimensions and domains is observed. In addition, both models highlight the inadequacy of solely focusing on what is measurable while neglecting the more subjective dimensions of the school's social quality by asserting that these aspects are more resistant to existing metrics.

Final remarks with the certainty of new dialogues...

Without claiming to present definitive conclusions, we observe, based on experiences and studies conducted, the power of proactive reactions to the evaluative policies being developed on a global scale.

This movement seeking an alternative form of educational quality regulation has been growing, and the empirical evidence it produces confirms that the great hope for the construction and consolidation of an educational project attentive to the demands of a society where asymmetries cannot be ignored resides in schools and their communities. Such asymmetries not only affect student learning but also their concrete possibilities of social inclusion and democratic participation.

The contrast between experiences favors the creative capacity of communities in situations of great social complexity where it is important to resist, but more importantly, it is necessary to act on the circumstances to materialize the viable novelty, as expressed in the words of Freire (2008). It is crucial to emphasize once again that this is not about comparing realities or models to identify the most advanced among them. What is at stake is to celebrate the processes of creating alternatives in different contexts and under various pressures, highlighting that there is another way to assess school quality. It emerges from within the schools, initiated by processes of self-evaluation and institutional self-awareness, nurtured by deep engagement with the rights of new generations to education in its broadest sense, which should not merely be training for good responses to standardized tests.

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