

## **The ‘New High School’ and the Technical Education of Federal Institutes**

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**ABSTRACT – The ‘New High School’ and the Technical Education of Federal Institutes.** This paper analyzes the contradictions arising from the “New High School” and the integrative approach of Technological Education within it, as well as their relation to the world of labor, unveiling their influence on the educational process of young adults enrolled in Brazilian Federal Institutes. To this end, the analysis relies on a diagnostic and descriptive examination of scholarly works — articles and research findings — grounded in the critical-dialectical method and official documents. The study demonstrates that the challenges related to Secondary Education and Integrated Technological Education may contribute to school dropout, the persistent decline of education, and the intensification of the “social question.”

**Keywords:** New High School. Technological Education. Work. Neoliberalism.

**RESUMO – O ‘Novo Ensino Médio’ e a Educação Tecnológica dos Institutos Federais.** Objetivamos, no presente artigo, realizar uma análise acerca das contradições postuladas pelo “Novo Ensino Médio” e a integralidade ofertada pela Educação Tecnológica e sua relação com a categoria trabalho, desvelando a influência no processo formativo dos estudantes inseridos nos Institutos Federais brasileiros. Para isso, partimos da análise diagnóstica e descritiva de produções acadêmico-científicas – artigos e resultados de pesquisas, baseadas no método crítico-dialético, e documentos oficiais -. O estudo infere que as dificuldades em torno do Ensino Médio e da Educação Tecnológica Integrada, podem contribuir para a evasão escolar, o contínuo desmantelamento do ensino e para a ampliação das expressões da “questão social”.

**Palavras-chave:** Novo Ensino Médio. Educação Tecnológica. Trabalho. Neoliberalismo.

## Introduction

The capital crisis context has influenced the daily social processes and relations of young learners, with this influence being greater in countries located in the Global South, such as Brazil. Therefore, the offer of Technological Education is put as an alternative for the schooling of the work force in training.

When lensing through the aforementioned crisis, it is perceivable that the insertion of new workers in the job market is negatively influenced, as the work precarization and its role in the restructuring of labor conditions and productivity plays a huge role in young adults' aiming to enter the job market.

Despite Brazil's 2017's Labor Laws Reform, which brought modifications in the work relations and also more flexibility in the work conditions and contracts, the data available on the employment rate of young adults signals that "the unemployment condition more than doubled, going from 905,000 in the fourth quarter of 2014 to 2 million people in the same period of 2018" (Corseuil; Franca; Poloponsky, 2020, p. 507).

In addition, the data has also demonstrated that, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, between 2019 and 2022 "the contingent of individuals that were out of the work force due to discouragement (discouraged workers) reached 3.57 million, the highest number since August of 2016" (Brasil, 2023). However, due to the changes in work relations and in the job market happening in the past years, there is an increasing demand for skilled labor, and an expansion in the promotion of Technological Education becomes an alternative to alleviate the job market's demands.

The implementation of the Federal Institutes (FIs) during Lula's term in 2008 worked as a dual strategy: from one side, there was the strengthening of an inclusive policy; from another, guidelines of the neoliberal agenda were fulfilled (Gattermann and Possa, 2018). Allowing for the capture of young adults is, at the same time, a risk management and mitigation policy, as well as a population government one (Gattermann; Possa, 2018).

It is undeniable that, with the implementation of the FIs, not only the aforementioned inclusive policy took place, but also the Regional Development was favored, mainly in the Northeastern Brazil, through the insertion, in the High School curriculum, of the so-called Integrated Technical Education, which modified the former to meet demands of the job market and created the "New High School Standard" (NHSS).

It is important to underline that the contradictions between the terms of former presidents Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer, along with the neoliberal perspectives of the former, promoted a complete deterioration of public policies by the promulgation of the Constitutional Amendment 95/2016. Therefore, with the aims of meeting the demands of the capital market, the policies in Education suffered the

expropriation of rights that were previously established in normative and regulatory acts.

The implementation of the New High School Standard, on the other hand, is a reform misguided as development, promoting the mischaracterization between a serious, policy-driven debate that had exhaustively taken place by political actors and society and the arbitrary decisions of lobbyists from the private sector. A few questions can then be asked: (i) what are the configurations of the NHSS?; (ii) What are the inflection points of the Federal Institutes?; (iii) Regarding the learning process, does it adequate itself to the territorial nuances or to mercadological aspects?

With this short introduction and the questions raised above, this paper works in two fronts: firstly, a historically-driven analysis of the Educational Policies of Lula's and Dilma's terms is made, with focus in the mercadological and contradictory prerogatives of the capitalist system; secondly, we highlight: the impact of the spoliation of the Educational Policy during Temer's term, the implementation of the NHSS integrated with Technological Education, and the determinants that made their application happen in the entirety of the country's territory.

## Methodology

This study is based on the Critical-Dialectical Method, which uses the praxis, totality and contradiction categories to comprehend the object being studied, by means of a connection that is "inclusive and macroscopic, of maximum complexity, built by smaller parts" (Paulo Netto, 2009, p. 690). The categories are in constant mutation and utilize the dialectical relationship for the understanding of the studied object in the social context.

Regarding the methodology itself, a diagnostic and descriptive analysis from qualitative approach, based on Bibliographic and Documentary Research, is used. The markers used during the data collection phase were "New High School Standard", "Technological Education", "Education", "Neoliberalism", "Labor World" and "Federal Institutes". With the necessity of further deepening of the theoretical-critical path that allows for the comprehension of the transformations in the Educational Policies up until the institutionalization of the NHSS and its relation with the integralization<sup>1</sup> of the Federal Institutes, the research considers the title, abstract and key-words of the documents that coadunated with the object of study, between the years 2005 and 2021. Materials that diverged from the object of study or with any contrary specificity to it were disregarded.

## **Education Policy and the historical correlation of its implementation in Brazil's Federal Institutes: brief, contradictory, capital considerations during the terms of presidents Lula and Dilma**

Debating over the educational policies of president Lula's terms, directed both to the High School and to the Technological School, al-

lows for the brief analysis of the governmental perspective that is correlated with the expansion of social policies and highlights the relation between the two main forces driving such policies: on one hand, the democratization process of public education; on another, meeting the demands of capital, commodifying the educational processes.

That being said, we kick off from two analyses defended by Eduardo Fagnani (2011). The first is directed towards (i) the criticism aimed at the maintenance of the economic orthodoxy under the current neoliberal perspectives and (ii) the continuity of the problems caused by budgetary restrictions in the social policies, which affects the Brazilian population. The second addresses the developmentalist projects that took place between 2006 and 2010, years of the Brazilian economic expansion, increase in the number of social policies and modifications in the job market, from a social-developmental perspective<sup>1</sup>.

Lula's government has been practicing an economic policy that is undoubtedly neoliberal, confirming with many already expected, some with tension, others with relief. Arguments and thoughts relentlessly defended during the 8 years of FHC's (*Fernando Henrique Cardoso*) term, which were always criticized by the Labors' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* - PT), are now assured by a government of this very party with a bewildering naturalness (Paulani, 2003, p. 564).

Contradictorily, Lula's government implemented, in its first term, a societal plan that harmonized with the world-wide monetization of capital, with many profit-directed biases that focused on exportation, industry and agriculture (Melo, 2007), severely harming the working class. This becomes clear when spotting the defense, by the very Labor's Party, of the maintenance of the basic interest rate - SELIC -, which reached 26.5% per year in 2003; "the voluntary increase in primary surplus from 3.75% to 4.25% of the GDP was enough to show that the process of globalized finance would be guaranteed in Lula's government with broad support" (Melo, 2007, p. 189), demonstrating that there was indeed proximity with the neoliberal ideas from the Washington Consensus, which were intrinsic to the State Reform Master Plan (*SRMP*) highlighted in Fernando Henrique Cardoso's term.

However, Marcelo Pochmann (2011, p. 16) reaffirms that

the fact that Lula's administration did not "distanced itself from the macroeconomic policy's tripod introduced during the 1999 exchange rate crisis, through inflation targets, floating exchange rates and maintenance of the primary surpluses in public accounting" did not imply in the reproduction of the neoliberal thinking disseminated during Cardoso's government (1995 - 2002) (Pochmann, 2011, p. 16).

Rafael Oliveira (2015) explains that Lula's rise to power needed a thorough comprehension of the dynamics of the capital and of Brazil itself, taking into consideration its position as a Global South, de-

pendent country, whose needs for the refinancing of the State was an alternative to change the path trailed so far by the country's economy.

The national economy presented, as one of the government's prerogatives, the intensification of social spending, favouring not only the decrease in social vulnerability affecting an exponential parcel of Brazil's population, but also the production of goods and services in the private sector. This relation aims to "distribute to amplify the horizons of the economy, make the income grow in a faster pace and to redistribute it in a less unequal manner, configuring a singular experience in leadership around the world [...]" (Pochmann, 2011, p. 18-19).

The combination of many different factors, such as the maintenance of a macroeconomic orthodoxy of neoliberal breed, and the actions of public banks in lending money to the national market, would form a positive articulation, for the social progress, between the State and the market, capable of being indexed as neo-developmental (Melo, 2015, p. 230).

Within this context, Lula's Government determines a certain continuity in the monetization processes of social rights, specially those that are seen by the capital as means of appropriation of public funds, such as the Education policies like the expansion of private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Public Health Policy, where the supplementary category and/or health insurers put themselves as holders of the private health coverage.

The privatization policy is an element of the neoliberal model that has increased the wealth and profits of large private capital, to the detriment of the medium-sized capital and harming the interests of the national State bourgeoisie (Boito Jr, 2006, p. 242).

The process of financialization of education presents itself as a structural element of business management, embodied in the denationalization of certain companies that focus in education, whose foreign capital, or the consolidation of internal capital blocks, contribute to "the formation of business conglomerates" that have, in the Education Policy, the bias of expansion and profitability, as pointed out by Fábio Luciano Costa (2011, p. 03).

One can perceive the applicability of a "reverse hegemony", as stated by Francisco de Oliveira, Rui Braga e Cibele Rizek (2010, p. 07), in view of the expressive *sui generis* political-economic and sociocultural construction around the capitalist social domination "marked by the economic crisis, war and environmental. In addition, there is a lack of political representation or prestigious opposition policies that do not meet the demands of the capital market and the needs of the population".

Luana Passos and Dyeggo Guedes (2015) emphasize that the directives in Lula's first term were not aligned with the necessities of the population, but that the interest in establishing social advancements was requested, on a daily basis, by the government's base and by the leftist social movements, and these were addressed on his second term. However, despite the advancements in certain social areas, there was no overall strengthening of social policies.

Starting from his second term, some results became perceptible, since the country's economy started growing again due to the intensification in tax collection and also to the income distribution policies, which stimulated this growth mainly in extreme poverty and public calamity regions. The inclusion policies, such as the income transfer program Bolsa Família (BF) and the ProUni, were essential elements in the social transformation of the country (Passos; Guedes, 2015).

**Table 1 – Receivers of BF and PROUNI – between 2005-2010**

| YEAR | BF <sup>1</sup> | PROUNI <sup>2</sup> |
|------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 2005 | 8.942.172       | 95.629              |
| 2006 | 11.229.864      | 109.025             |
| 2007 | 11.294.824      | 105.574             |
| 2008 | 11.353.445      | 124.621             |
| 2009 | 12.370.000      | 161.369             |
| 2010 | 12.780.000      | 152.733             |

Source: ANFIP (2011)<sup>1</sup>. Dados Abertos – MEC – PROUNI<sup>2</sup> (2005-2010). Adapted (2025).

Table 1 shows the number of beneficiaries of the income transfer programs - Bolsa Família and PROUNI. In the BF case, between the first and second terms of President Lula there was an expressive increase in the number of people/families that benefited from the program: 30.02% between 2005-2010.

It is important to understand that the advancement of the BF program became a populist strategy that met two emergent necessities in the country: firstly, to minimize the number of people in poverty and extreme poverty; secondly, to boost the economy, injecting funds into the internal market of goods and services, and also returning a percentage of this money back to the Treasury via taxation.

Regarding the PROUNI program, an oscillation in the number of scholarships in Higher Education is observed in Table 01. Between the years of 2005 and 2006 there is a 12.28% increase in the access of students to private higher education institutions, complying with the demands of the institutions and conglomerates of the educational private sector in the country.

However, between 2006 and 2007 the number of scholarships suffered a 3.16% reduction. In 2008, this number increased by 15.28% due to the following normative acts: Ordinance n° 345, from the 14th of March (Brasil, 2008a), which allows for new students to access the remaining funded positions; Normative Ordinance n° 01, from the 31st of March (Brasil, 2008b), which institutes the complimentary scholarship in the PROUNI program; and Ordinance MEC n° 478, from April 15th, which institutes the procedures for Higher Education Institutions to adhere to the PROUNI program.

Starting from these premises, Lula's Government revisited one of the roots of the social and economic development problems in the country: the educational gap, which was configured as a circumstantial and historical debt, given the supply and demand signaled to only one social class – the bourgeoisie. As will be seen later, the government prioritized this expansion of the country's higher education system due to a game of interests of the demands from the financial system - World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Fagnani, 2011).

Based on the Education Bases and Aims Act (*EBAA*) from 1996, and on the National Education Plan (NEP) from the 2003-2005 period, there is priority in the modifications of the educational system taking place in the country. The Ministry of Education is then made responsible, by the promulgation of the document "Strategical Alignment - MEC", for the normalization of the directives and fundamentals of the Multi-year Education Plan (2004-2007), as pointed out by Fagnani (2011).

As per the Multi-year Education Plan (2004-2007),

The general picture of educational exclusion in the country can also be measured by the fact that, on average, people aged 15 and over have only 6.3 years of schooling, when they would be expected to have at least 9 years. This result is different from one region to another. The average schooling of young people from the Northeast aged 15 to 24 is 5.9 years, significantly lower than that of young people in the South and Southeast, who achieve 8.1 and 8.3 years, respectively, for the same age group. Education is also unequal by race: black and mixed-race people account for 67% of the illiterate population. Only 3% of high school graduates are black, and the proportion of black people among people with 12 years of schooling or more is no more than 2.8%. In higher education, the situation can be considered less dramatic, despite the limited supply of places in public universities, which reinforces the exclusion of a large portion of candidates for free, quality education: in 2000, of the approximately 3.2 million high school graduates, 1.2 million entered universities, with only 274,000 attending public universities (Brasil, 2004).

It is pertinent to highlight that the 1996's EBAA had its text altered by Decree No. 5.154/2004, which reaffirmed the provision of professional and technical education at the high school level, as well as the professional and technological education in both undergraduate and graduate levels, such as courses and/or educational programs.

Despite the first actions taken by Lula's government, it is important to comprehend the dynamics of the Educational policy in two fronts - internal and external -, since that

the external analysis takes a more global perspective, addressing social, economic, cultural, and institutional aspects, including educational policies, curricular guidelines, legislation, and the management of education systems. It can be said that it analyzes educational issues from the outside in. Internal analysis addresses objectives, content, teaching methodologies, organizational and curricular actions, and learning assessment—that is,



it refers to the internal functioning of the school, of course, without losing sight of the context (Libâneo, 2008, p. 169).

José Carlos Libâneo (2008, p. 169) makes fierce criticism to the Lula Administration due to inefficiencies of some educational policies stipulated in his first term, stating that external analyses overcame the internal matters on education and, with that, these “are failing because they do not start from the reality of the Brazilian school, nor from policies entirely devoted to these schools, to the teachers’ needs or to the learning conditions of the students”.

During Lula's second term, from 2008 to 2010, these measures were significantly intensified, with high school education becoming integrated with vocational education. Gaudêncio Frigotto, Maria Ciavatta, and Marise Ramos (2005) emphasize that, with regard to vocational education, it is necessary to understand the existence of a correlation of forces between the progressive and conservative government bases, since the dispute for hegemony in this field of activity poses a significant barrier to its implementation and effectiveness in the national territory.

This dual dispute must be understood under the perspective of the bourgeoisie, be it the industrial or the educational services one. The disputes that occur in the “bourgeoisie of educational services, which owns private higher education institutions and others, such as the Centers for Technological Education (CTEs) or the Faculties of Technology (FATECs), are to meet demands of the financial capital” (Brandão, 2010, p. 64).

Therefore, the governmental treatment of professional Education in the High School context had, as an end goal, the reconstruction of this very education, not only via a normative text, but also as a public policy. With that, distortions implemented during the Collor and FHC Administrations started to be corrected (Frigotto; Ciavatta; Ramos, 2005).

While the Ministry of Education was handling the professional and technical education without a consistent policy that addressed the social demands of workers of all ages taking young and adult education courses at the elementary level, the Ministry of Labor developed its plan of educational training without taking the recovery of schooling and the development and organization of syllabi. Many sectors of society understood, then, the necessity of implementing a public policy for professional education, which should be integrated to the public network for jobs and to the basic education (Frigotto; Ciavatta; Ramos, 2005, p. 1096).

The urgency of this reconstruction is justified by the identification of the distortions that contributed to the “dissociation of professional education from basic education, hastened the modularization of technical training [...], giving a superficial [...] character to the professional and technological training of [...] workers” (Brasil, 2005, p. 2). To this end, the Ministry of Education (*Ministério da Educação - MEC*) directed the proposal for curricular change in which



The curricula of technical professional education of secondary-level will be organized observing the integration between scientific, technological, social and humanistic knowledge, which should compose the common core of general and universal knowledge, in addition to the specific core of knowledge and skills that will be based on the transformations of the work and production activities themselves. [...] They should consist of training plans that are structured in syllabi corresponding to the different specialties, articulated with a certification system that favors mobility and professional development linked to basic education (Brasil, 2005, p. 07).

From this process, the MEC implemented the Program for the Integration of Professional Education into Secondary Education in the Youth and Adult Education Modality (PROEJA) which, in turn, obliged Federal Institutes to offer, in 2005, 10% of vacancies to students coming from this program. In 2006, vacancies were also reserved in the secondary and professional education programmes for students over 18 years old that had only attended Elementary Education (Frigotto; Ciavatta; Ramos, 2005).

Paulo Roberto Germann (2011) explains that the ongoing educational policies in the Lula Administration go against the necessities of States and Municipalities in the country, as well as against the market relations, as they precarize the work relations. Despite market circumstances, the process of decentralization in public administration and the educational policies allows for territorial autonomy of the States and City Halls without infringing the hegemony of the Federal Government.

Within this perspective, it is mandatory for the State to offer all levels of education to its citizens, giving adequate and structured conditions for the effectuation of such offering. With that, it is possible to establish “the creation of a national education system that is articulated in such a way that it can guarantee local autonomy and, at the same time, unity on a federal level” (Germann, 2011, p. 92).

With that, in 2007 the “More Education” Program, whose objective is the eradication of poverty and the suppression of marginalizing actions leading to poverty, was implemented, aiming to

contribute to the comprehensive education of children, teenagers and young adults, through the articulation of actions, projects and programs of the Federal Government and their contributions to the proposals, visions and curricular practices of the public education networks and schools, changing the school environment and expanding the offer of knowledge, methods, processes and educational content (Brasil, 2007, p. 2).

The purpose of the “More Education” Program is to strengthen the fight against poverty through the development of redistributive policies, holding educational institutions accountable for fulfilling their role of protecting and educating all individuals within them, beyond the family context. Furthermore, the program addresses the policy of comprehensive education, directing “consistent professional development, to be

guaranteed by public administrators, in order to allow exclusive and qualified dedication to education" (Brasil, 2009, p. 39).

In view of the above, taking into account the educational programs offered during the first term of the Lula Government, the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP) announced that, for the year of 2007, throughout the national territory, approximately 8,372,175 million enrollments were offered for Secondary Education; 1,007,237 million for Professional Education and 5,034,606 million for Youth and Adult Education.

The data mentioned above demonstrate that a significant return of young adults to the classroom took place, following the confirmation of the effective number of enrollments, deconstructing the systematization of illiteracy in the country, enabling the population to complete their educational training and enter the job market.

It is important, however, to state that the data made available by INEP do not necessarily translate into retention of students in the network nor in completion of the educational program by the students. Nevertheless, the insertion of these students into the educational circle allows for the realization of social, economic, political and cultural changes, given that many opportunities arise from having a formal education, even if it is not completed in the regular period.

We can consider that the Lula Administration brought essential changes and elements for the active promotion of citizenship, integrality and equity to those who were somehow in a social vulnerability situation and that did not have any perspectives for changes in their daily, social and economic status.

The process of education, then, has advances and setbacks, but this fact is not related only to the government base during the Collor, FHC and Lula Administrations. Instead, this reality has been passed from one Administration to another, presenting, in each of them, progression or decline, depending on the kinds of policies being promoted.

That being considered, one can observe the educational problems in the Dilma Vanna Rousseff Government (2011-2016), particularly on the topic of Professional Education, considering that the strategies used within this educational scope fell short of the perspectives stipulated by the former Lula Government that preceded it, and also from the perspectives that the government base had, i.e. understanding Technological Education as a mechanism for "restructuring the State towards the consolidation of the right to quality social education for young Brazilians during secondary schooling" (Lima, 2012, p. 74-75).

In 2011, President Dilma Rousseff established the National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (PRONATEC), through Law No. 12,513, of October 26, 2011, which then became a government landmark. The aforementioned law indicates that PRONATEC must be implemented by the Union, aiming to "expand the supply of professional and technological education, through programs, projects and actions of technological and financial assistance" (Brasil, 2011).

PRONATEC aims at high school students, including those enrolled in EJA; workers; beneficiaries of federal income transfer programs and "students who have completed high school in a public school or in private institutions on a full scholarship, in accordance with the regulations" (Brasil, 2011).

Néri Emílio Soares Júnior (2020, p. 65) points out that, during the Dilma Administration, "there was continuity of the popular democratic government and the manifestation of the correlation of the forces acting in the political field". As such, a "new aesthetics" was given to the National Curricular Guidelines (NCG), taking into account a variety of levels and modalities of education in the country.

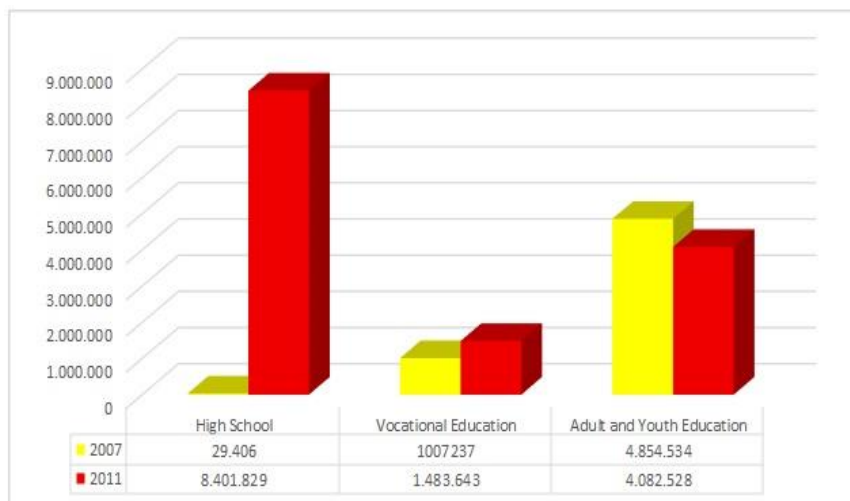
The reforms in the NCG aimed to correlate the ongoing social transformations with the changes in the job conditions, tying and equating the market perspectives to the general interests of the population (Soares Júnior, 2020).

For the implementation of the DCN adapted to Professional Education, the argument was that, with the recent changes in the process of production of the workforce and the applicability of flexible accumulation, which resulted from the transformations caused in the world of work, requiring increasingly qualified labor, the working class needed to be adaptable when it comes to the offer of services (Soares Júnior, 2020).

Thus, in this new scenario, a change in basic and vocational education is necessary to develop a new worker profile. The demands placed on workers are reasoning ability, intellectual autonomy, critical thinking, self-initiative, and an entrepreneurial spirit. The perspective is to advocate for the training of more versatile professionals, capable of interacting with new and constantly changing situations [...] (Soares Júnior, 2020, p. 66).

Vocational Education has become the foundation of economic transformation processes, responding to neoliberal demands in a different fashion. The purpose of Vocational Education is, in fact, to qualify the workforce for permanent employment through the provision of short- and long-term technical and technological courses (Waldow, 2014).

**Figure 1 – Enrollment Number – by educational levels, totals from – 2007 - 2011\***



Source: INEPData (2023). \*Beginning of Dilma Rousseff's Administration.

Analyzing the data available in Figure 1, it is clear that the provision of Professional, Technical and Technological Education has become the "flagship" of the Dilma Administration, given that there was a 47.29% increase (1,483,643 million) in the number of people enrolled in this type of education, compared to 2007, when approximately 1,007,237 million enrollments were offered. Regarding High School, the number of places offered reached only +0.35% (29,406 thousand) in 2011, compared to 2007.

Other educational levels experienced significant losses, particularly in Youth and Adult Education, which, in 2007, offered approximately 4,854,534 million enrollments. However, in 2011, there was a significant loss of -18.91%, totaling approximately 772,006 people out of this type of education. This relationship may be due to both a lack of interest of the individuals and the overcoming of educational fragility.

This scenario does not differ from that observed in 2015, the last year of President Dilma Rousseff's term in office, in which Professional Education was highlighted, increasing the number of enrollments throughout the country and reaching the mark of 1,917,192 million enrolled students, representing an increase of +29.61% compared to 2011 (1,483,643 million), the beginning of the term, as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Number of Enrollments – by educational stage, in total – Between 2011 - 2015\***

|                                  | 2011 (A)  | 2015 (B)  | B-A (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| <b>High School</b>               | 8.401.829 | 8.076.150 | -3,87   |
| <b>Professional Education</b>    | 1.483.643 | 1.917.192 | +22,61  |
| <b>Youth and Adult Education</b> | 4.082.528 | 3.491.869 | -14,46  |

Note: \*Last year of Dilma Rousseff's government due to the impeachment process. Source: INEPData (2023).

Table 2 compares the number of enrollments between the years of 2011 and 2015. The reduction in the number of enrollments made in 2015, in all educational levels, is noticeable: High School (-3.87%), Youth and Adult Education (-14.46%). These data could signal that EJA has been fragmented over the years, despite the understanding that investments in Education are directly related to the hegemonic and political power in progress in that period.

Paradoxically, political relations became tense, enabling several agreements between the political bases with the justification that the country's economic and financial crisis was deepening, plaguing President Dilma Rousseff's governability. Faced with this, the conservative politicians in Parliament, on the light of the country's conservative wave and with the interest in dismantling public policies through intensified fiscal adjustment, orchestrated what Plinio Arruda Sampaio Júnior (2017) calls a "model of colonial reversion," which ended with the success of the impeachment process against President Dilma Rousseff.

On August 31, 2016, Vice-President Michel Temer was inaugurated as President of Brazil, enabling the greatest attack on social policies, especially in the areas of Health and Education policy, by implementing Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016. Alves (2021) points out that Temer's governability was based on the document "A Bridge to the Future," in which the guidelines sought exclusively to meet the demands of the capital, which were implemented by neoliberal measures and policies. With this,

[...] for the attacks to be carried out, social legislation was changed. Despite having already been significantly modified by previous governments, it was still the target of further attacks. In this "destruction package," we can highlight Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016, which instituted the New Fiscal Regime, freezing primary spending for 20 years; Constitutional Amendment No. 93/2016, which provides for an increase in the percentage of the Unlinking of Federal Revenues (DRU) from 20% to 30% and its expansion to States and Municipalities; and the Labor Reform, expressed in Law No. 13,467 of 2017 (Alves, 2021, p. 74).

Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016 brought a setback to education policy at all levels, as, in each subsequent year, the amount of resources allocated for its implementation was based on the previ-

ous year's inflation rate. Thus, resources allocated to education began to be subject to contingencies, affecting the provision of the teaching-learning process in all Brazilian states and municipalities.

### **The Plundering of the Education Policy and the Implementation of the 'New High School Standard' and Comprehensive Technological Education: the *Draconianism of the Temer Government***

Discussing the plundering of the education policy under the Temer government highlights the intensification of neoliberalizing and agonizing perspectives within an oscillating economic, social, and political system that directly impacts the working class and the population as a whole.

The plundering of Education comes from a variety of processes, such as: the intensification and expansion of Distance Learning in Higher Education; the budget contingency as per specifications of the EC No. 95/2016; and the enactment of Law No. 13,145/2017. The latter denotes the Reform of Secondary Education and the gradual expansion of the syllabi's annual workload, increasing it from 800h to 1400h and extending the school day (Santos, Pereira and Mello, 2019).

Law No. 13,145/2017, known as the "New High School Standard" Law, anchored in the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), states the five axes of the "ideal", newly reorganized curriculum: "I – languages and their technologies; II – mathematics and their technologies; III – natural sciences and their technologies; IV – applied human and social sciences; and V – *technical and professional training*" (Brasil, Art. 36, 2017).

The question now, considering that the "technical and professional training" cited in the law in question reinforces the development and exploitation of peripheral labor—socially vulnerable students, demographically located in regions undergoing constant social and economic development, such as the North and Northeast regions, is: for whom would this "ideal" curriculum be "ideal"? The incentive for the creation of vocational education units is seen as a tool for exploiting surplus value and increasing profits by large capital markets and the state.

The Temer Administration established, in 2016, the Program to Promote Full-Time Secondary Schools (EMTI), through MEC Ordinance No. 1,145, of October 10, 2016, with the purpose of promoting the expansion of the number of schools offering full-time education in the first 10 years of its promulgation (Santos, Pereira and Mello, 2019). Along with this program comes the perspective of technical and vocational training, in which students can take a technical course of interest outside regular school hours, aiming for a better position at the job market.

The influence of international organizations on the country's educational processes has been grotesquely evident, leading the Federal Government to take out another loan from the World Bank to im-

plement it. This demonstrates that Constitutional Amendment No. 95/2016 is nothing more than a way for the capitalist system to suppress public funds and that the education policy is one of the most legally "accessible" targets for this to occur (Alves, 2021).

In early 2018, through an agreement with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the World Bank, Brazil obtained a US\$250 million loan to support the implementation of the New High School Program and, primarily, the Program to Promote Full-Time High Schools in the states. This resource can be used by education departments to invest in the physical and pedagogical infrastructure of schools, in addition to hiring private consultants to guide the implementation of the program in line with the provisions of the High School Reform. The installments of this loan are only granted upon the achievement of targets established by the World Bank, and, starting in 2019, an impact assessment will determine the success or failure of the program's implementation in schools (Santos; Pereira; Mello, 2019, p. 119).

The EMTI Program is based on the principles of the BNCC, and therefore requires adaptation to educational curricula, offering a "New High School Standard" and allowing for changes in the assessment of the students. Such Standard increases the minimum workload for Portuguese Language and Mathematics to 300 (three hundred) hours per week each, aiming to "improve" assessment rates (Santos; Pereira; Mello, 2019).

**Table 3 – Number of EMTI and Professional Education Enrollments – 2018 and 2019**

| Year | Total     | High School  |                             | Professional Education |
|------|-----------|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|      |           | Propaedeutic | Integrated Technical Course | Total                  |
| 2018 | 7.930.384 | 7.376.065    | 459.526                     | 1.831.003              |
| 2019 | 7.709.929 | 7.125.365    | 505.791                     | 1.903.230              |

Source: Adapted by author from INEPData (2023).

From Table 3, in view of the formulation of the "New High School Standard", the data made available by INEP Data indicate a significant change in the number of enrollments in the High School Integrated with Technological Education, since an increase of +9.15% is shown, compared to the year 2018. However, the data also indicate that, in 2019, Technical Professional Education offered approximately 1,868,917 million enrollments nationally, resulting in an expansion of 4.12%.

Returning to the normative act - Law No. 11,892/2008 - the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (*Rede Federal de Educação Profissional, Científica e Tecnológica* - RFEPCT), as well as the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and



Technology, - the object of the study in question, were created. The referred act conceptualizes the FIs as institutions of “higher, basic and professional education, multicurricular and multicampi, specialized in the provision of professional and technological education in different teaching modalities, [...]” (Brasil, 2008).

With that, the Federal Institutes were created with the goal of

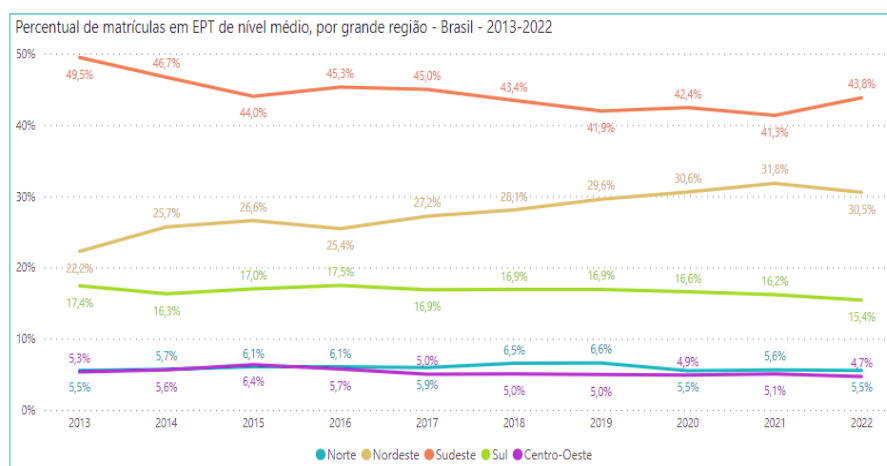
I - offer professional and technological education, at all levels and modalities, training and qualifying citizens aiming at professional activity in the various sectors of the economy, with an emphasis on local, regional and national socioeconomic development; [...] (Brasil, 2008).

Section I emphasizes this articulation between technological educational teaching and the relationship with the job market, as the former provides qualified professionals to the latter, “pointing out ways in the possibility of guaranteeing comprehensive training, not restricted to technical and operational aspects, but involving knowledge of a political, cultural, economic and social nature” (Cruz, Souza and Carneiro; 2016, p. 86).

Eliezer Pacheco, Luiz Augusto Pereira and Moisés Domingos Sobrinho (2010, p. 17) indicate that Federal Institutes permeate social relations, positioning themselves as “strategic agents in the structuring of public policies for the region they polarize, establishing a more direct interaction with public authorities and local communities”.

Thus, when we statistically analyze the enrollment of youth and adults in courses offered by Federal Institutes, we observe a gradual expansion between 2013 and 2022, with the number of enrollments rising from 1,602,846 to 2,069,771, representing a total increase of 466,925 (Brasil, 2023). These data reflect advances in Brazilian macroregions, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Percentage of enrollments in secondary level EPT, by major region – Brazil – 2013-2022**



Source: InepData. Censo Escolar (2022).

Figure 1 shows that the Southeast and Northeast regions were the largest urban regions covered by the Federal Institutes, reflecting the highest number of enrollments in Technological Education Integrated with High School. Despite this, there is a fluctuation in the number of enrollments. In the Southeast region this number was 49.5% in 2013, while in 2022 there was a decrease of 5.25% (43.8%). In the Northeast region, there was an increase of 8.3% from 22.2% in 2013 to 30.5% in 2022 (Brasil, 2023).

It is well known that Federal Institutes position themselves as instruments attuned to social demands and regional and economic development, directly impacting the daily lives of individuals. The educational, technical, and scientific relationships offered by these institutions enable the elimination of poverty, rebuilding territorial culturalization, strengthening citizenship, and allowing for the articulation of public education policies (Pacheco; Pereira; Sobrinho, 2010).

Given the above, the transformations brought in the Education Policy within the context of Brazilian education are evident, as is the impact this has had on ongoing educational processes. The strong correlations between the hegemony of capital and the appropriation of public funds through neoliberal measures show us that strategies for improving the policy in question must be put into practice, aiming for quality education on a daily basis.

It is known that the transformations in the world of work, the modifications in the labor laws and rights and other obstacles are emerging problems that require the Executive Branch to develop strategies to promote Education and, therefore, adapt to situations that may occur in everyday school life.

## **Final Considerations**

The "New High School Standard" can be considered a neoliberal project that treats education as an interventionist and technocratic mechanism for the exploitation of the working class. Thus, FIs are no exception to this process, given that they permeate social relations, positioning themselves as "strategic agents in the structuring of public policies for the region they polarize, establishing a more direct interaction with public authorities and local communities" (Brasil, 2024).

Based on this understanding, it is pertinent to understand that FIs, on the one hand, comply with neoliberal dictates and government-established guidelines, both with a single purpose: to meet market needs, linking vocational education with industrial development and perceiving individuals as mere instruments for capital accumulation. On the other hand, they contribute substantially to local and regional development, given the economic and social propositions that relate to the educational process and the lives of individuals.

Technological Education, under the umbrella of the labor category, positions itself as an educational formulation consistent with the development of the social being, inserted into the production and

reproduction of the workforce. From this perspective, it contributes to objective and subjective changes in professional training.

The "New High School Standard" can be considered a backwardness in the teaching and learning process for students, by reconfiguring education to a defined modality and stages/pathways without considering the social relationships and contexts in which each student is inserted. The difficulties surrounding high school and integrated technological education, in some cases, can contribute to a certain level of school dropout, resulting in the continued worsening and dismantling of education and the expansion of the "social issue", such as structural unemployment and the reduction of families' survival conditions.

Therefore, the Guidelines and Curricular Organization that stipulate the "New High School Standard" must be updated, encompassing the economic, cultural, historical and political aspects of students' educational process. They must also offer a teaching system that goes beyond itineraries and/or electives that gradually fragment the flow of continuous learning. Regarding Integrated Technological Education, there is an urgent need to establish student policies that contribute to student access and retention throughout the teaching and learning process.

Received on October 13, 2024  
Approved on September 26, 2025

## Note

- 1 The total workload in the technical education implemented into High School can have a total workload of 3.000, 3.100 or 3.200 hours, depending on the technical emphasis chosen.

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Availability of research data: the dataset supporting the results of this study is published in this article.

Editor in charge: Iris Verena Oliveira

