

More an Administrator and less Manager: an analysis of the regulatory framework aimed at the public-school management in Pará¹

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ABSTRACT. This paper deals with the public-school management in Pará state as it has been implemented through the “Pact for Education in Pará”, which is based on the logic of partnerships between the state and the private sector, manifesting a strategy of educational indicators improvement. The question consists of: how the Pact for Education regulatory framework directs the school manager’s action in a public-school setting? The methodology is anchored in bibliographical research, as approached by authors who discuss school management; document analysis, which had an important role regarding the documents from the Pact, such as decrees. Both procedures allowed our analyses, based on a critical and descriptive perspective. Results show that the Pact for Education in Pará regulatory framework drives school managers to have a profile mostly aligned with the figure of an administrator, which demands, surveils and accomplishes goals; in this manner, the job excellence starts with the choice of professionals who work within the managerial logic that has become part of public education in Pará, especially regarding the analyzed legal texts.

Keywords: Education in Pará State, Public-School Management, Managerial Logic.

Mais Gerente e menos Gestor: uma análise do marco regulatório direcionado à gestão da escola pública paraense

RESUMO. Este artigo trata da gestão da escola pública paraense a partir da implementação do “Pacto pela Educação do Pará”, que é balizado na lógica de parcerias entre o Estado e a iniciativa privada como estratégia de melhoria dos índices educacionais. O questionamento consiste em: como o marco regulatório do Pacto pela Educação do Pará direciona a atuação do gestor escolar na escola pública? A metodologia está ancorada na pesquisa bibliográfica, em interlocução com autores que discutem sobre a gestão escolar; na pesquisa documental, que ocupou papel essencial em função dos documentos decorrentes desse Pacto, os quais, em geral, são decretos. Ambos os procedimentos forneceram subsídios às análises, assentadas na perspectiva crítico-descritiva. Os resultados revelaram que o marco regulatório do Pacto pela Educação do Pará induz a um direcionamento para que os gestores escolares possam ter um perfil mais afinado com a figura do gerente que cobra, monitora e cumpre metas, de modo que a excelência de seu trabalho começa pelos critérios de escolha dos profissionais afeitos à lógica gerencialista que adentrou a educação pública paraense no que se refere à legislação analisada.

Palavras-chave: Educação Paraense, Gestão Escolar Pública, Gerencialismo.

Más Administrador y menos Gestor: un análisis del marco regulatorio direccionado a la gestión de la escuela pública paraense

RESUMEN. Este artículo versa sobre la gestión de la escuela pública paraense a partir de la implantación del “Pacto por la Educación de Pará”, señalado en la lógica de asociaciones entre el Estado y la iniciativa privada como estrategia de mejora de los índices educativos. El cuestionamiento consiste en: ¿cómo el marco regulatorio del Pacto por la Educación de Pará orienta la actuación del gestor escolar en la escuela pública? La metodología está anclada: en la investigación bibliográfica; en la interlocución con autores que discuten acerca de la gestión escolar; en la investigación documental, que desempeñó un papel fundamental en la función de los documentos de dicho Pacto, los cuales suelen ser decretos; ambos procedimientos proporcionaron subvenciones a los análisis, asentadas en la perspectiva crítico-descriptiva. Los resultados ponen en relieve que el marco regulatorio del Pacto por la Educación de Pará induce a una orientación de los gestores escolares por tener un perfil más semejante a la figura de un gerente que exige, monitorea y cumple metas, de manera que la excelencia de su trabajo comienza por los criterios de elección de profesionales acostumbrados a la lógica gerencialista que se adentró en la educación pública paraense en cuanto a la legislación examinada.

Palabras clave: Educación Paraense, Gestión de la Escuela Pública, Gerencialismo.

Introduction

As an activity oriented to certain goals, school management is guided by specific legislation as much as by characteristics from each school in which it takes place, especially regarding public schools, the ones analyzed here in greater detail. This remark becomes necessary when having in mind the fact that private schools have their own logic and no obligation to comply with democratic principles defined by the Constitution; also, parents often agree with the school philosophy when they choose to enroll their children and to follow internal regulations.

Related to public school management, there is regulatory framework to be followed, an example of which is the Brazilian Federal Constitution; its section 206, subsection 6, on principles that are to guide education, highlights the need for “democratic administration of public education, in the manner prescribed by law”. The subsection has a tone of imposition related to the requirement of democratic management solely in the public field; the understanding here is that the private sector has its own logic, which is in turn influenced by commercial and business interests. On the other hand, the expression “in the manner prescribed by law” opens a path for

misinterpretations for such an assignment within states and cities. Such is the case of the Pará state, analyzed here through its Pact for Education: a local project that had been based in partnerships between the state and the private sector, originating decrees with orientating criteria for one to occupy the office of state school manager.

It is important to remind that:

In our everyday life, administration (or management, which will be taken as synonym) tends to be associated with leadership or control of other's actions. This comes from the fact that we constantly live with the arbitration and domination, almost without realizing it. So it is fair to understand that managing, administrating, might be mistaken with giving orders and bossing around (Paro, 1998, p. 4).

In this text, we build upon the concept of school management as it is defined by authors such as Santos (2012) and Paro (1998), who understand it to be a rational mediation focused on education of autonomous subjects, in which means, and ends are an indivisible whole. In other words, the public-school manager needs to avoid leading the school community work only based in factors that come from his or her decisions. It is advisable for him or her to do it taking into account the factors that directly encompass the product – the

students themselves – and the educational process.

We also point out that, within the school under their responsibility, school managers are in need of having a technical profile, compatible with the office requirements, to which we add sensitivity to decision-making – this one element being important because they will be working with people, especially children and teenagers in various phases of their lives, as much as with different longings capable of interfering with any teaching and learning processes. Such is the reason why it is relevant to avoid extremely administrative, authoritarian, and goal-achieving oriented attitudes, as they are part of the business world, mostly structured for aiming at quantitative results as their only parameter for a team's success.

The specific case herein analyzed is the management of public school in the Pará state. Since 2013, there have been substantial changes in the project named “Pact for Education in Pará”. The Pact represents “an initiative which seeks to improve the quality of elementary education in the Pará state, through actions orientated to quality of education and teachers training, curriculum improvement and school infrastructure” (“Pacto pela

Educação no Pará é lançado com o apoio do BID”, 2013).

The Pact actions are directed by state and regional committees under the presidency of the then governor Simão Robson de Oliveira Jatene (2011-2018). In his term, the project was made public and the regulatory framework was approved, both processes having direct implications for public school managers. Based on this context, we raise the following question: how does the Pact for Education in Pará regulatory framework guide school managers' actions within public school?

Our path questions the relationship between management policy defined by the Pact, quality of results of such policies, and manager's actions. The research has been done through a literature review and a dialogue with authors who discuss school management, and document analysis, which played a main role regarding the documents – especially decrees – released under the Pact. Such research procedures have given us the basis for our analysis through a critical-descriptive perspective, aligned with Marx (2008). In his view, the concrete is a result of synthesis, not its starting point. “The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse”

The guiding question here answers the notion of an education that is built as a

social and historical practice, with a special bond to the way human beings make up their existence in society. In turn, this reveals the ways they conceive the world in which they live. So, there are in play both the social world and a historic manifesting of education as a social and dynamic phenomenon, which then reveal themselves within the human existence and its possibility of legitimization and transformation.

Through this perspective, the analytical reference to which this text adheres is not restricted to the adoption of methods, nor to categorizing data collection tools. Instead, it has a wide scope, marked by a structuring axis due to the problem raised, as it is relevant to understand the phenomenon reality; on the other hand, it also encompasses an intention of amplifying research horizons the researcher may have (Lüdke & André, 1986).

In order to understand the reality and make this process of understand one of amplifying knowledge horizons, the lived experience in educational contexts and in relation to other social actors allows to put in perspective and to signal ways for defining educational policies and programs directed by the state. So it is possible to unveil multiple concretes and their reflections, all being originated from

actions within the realm of educational systems, schools, educational practices developed, subjects and the learning process to which they are being submitted.

For Bogdan and Biklen (1994), qualitative research allows for a researcher's commitment with his or her own reality, as much as it favors and continuing conversation between the subject who researches and the one who is researched, a process that happens in a continuous interaction.

For both authors, the researcher following the qualitative research guidance is one to apprehend the object as it is situated in the history of the organizations to which he or she is attached. In other words, there is relevance to the synthesis of concrete reproduction, both through thought and in relation to historical circumstances and the ones pertaining movements of which the research object particularities are a part. It is also a characteristic of such an approach that the "research interest falls much more into the process than into the product" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 49); in a path of apprehension and understanding of an object multiple determinations it is possible to identify how elements of day to day life, representations, meanings, lived experiences, and subjects' subjectivity are all integrated.

Seeking not only the immediate appearance of the public-school management phenomenon in the Pará state, but also concreteness in itself, this work focuses on causes and sociopolitical context (Triviños, 1987). So it highlights the phenomenon development in its most inner structure in order to identify decisive forces responsible for its implementation.

Thus, the paper encompasses the sociopolitical context that fundamentals both the creation and adoption of the Pact for Education in Pará, as well as its influence in developing a role for school managers and the policy itself. All of this being considered is based on laws, decrees and speeches that lead to understanding the political and ideological dynamics developed by the government.

We also carry out a literature review and document analysis for building a theoretical framework that supports the problem and analyses being configured here, in all the study sections and as a continuous process.

The enterprise of document analysis made us prioritize certain remarks on the sociopolitical and educational context of when the Pact is implemented, in national and local levels. The idea is to work on a description and an explanation of reality as it presents itself as an unveiling of non-explicit determinants, even though they are

relevant for defining the management shape inscribed in the studied context.

Public school management as a mediator in the educational process

As a process to enrich citizen formation, education is an act present in various forms of civilization. Its arrangement varies with time, and nowadays it can be understood as a way of appropriating knowledge produced by humankind for human societies as a social practice, meaning to always update such civilizations. This happens because passing on what has been already learned to new generations is a way changing a previous situation (Paro, 1998). Hence, a civilization without education is faded to backwardness, that being the reason why the social value of education is indisputable and requires continuous investment for it to grow.

Paro (1998) highlights that education, especially public-school education in contemporary society, is a fertile place for mitigating social inequalities – although its goal may be the humanized formation of subjects who are to be worried with one another, as much as they are to be protagonists of their own stories, not being submitted to capitalist interests and their abuses. We agree with this position and add that such a human

formation might include study, commitment with collective causes, understanding and a constant fight for better life conditions, as well as the defense of the public good as a space for all; such an endeavor requires one to not be subordinated to a private and market-driven logic neither in content nor in the management, because those are ways to weaken the public good through the market own ideas.

Still according to the author, there are two question the public school has to deal with as a priority for it organizational process to reach the meaning the human formation: i) school cannot be understood as a place strictly for prepping for job market, even if this is one of its roles – the main goal is to provide stimulus to students' critical thinking in order for them to live well and not only to survive, making them enjoy various goods socially created by humankind; ii) school has also to be enjoyable for students, and education is to be focused on a logic of continuous dialogue capable to provide allowing conditions both for the educator and the student. These two points need to be highlighted as cornerstones for the school manager's work, since he or she is a mediator in the educational process.

Affirming the importance of school in contemporary society, Hora (2010, p. 39) point out that

Various social institutions contribute to the widening of thought, knowledge, and collective action. School stands out among them for being a privileged space in developing a systematized education, which is to be recognized in a globalized society with and economy focused on knowledge as a substantial strategic value for social growing and as an important factor for people's quality of life. The goal of school education in contemporary society, made clear by propositions and practices of school universalization, is characterized by the action of working on the subject's formation for social life.

As a synonym of engine for social and economic development within neoliberal logic, school stands out in government actions due to the wide public assisted, which represents an important part of society with access to updated information outside of media; they also may form new opinions on social dilemmas through policies and projects proposed by governments and materialized in public schools.

As products of government educational policies, students are a target of constant reforms within schools, some of which are motivated by each institution particularities, mostly due to propositions regarding school education being organized vertically, only for them to be

accomplished. In such a process, the school manager must act as a someone who drives the educational processes forward and must have some essential characteristics to favor a successful pedagogical development.

Hora (2010) also emphasizes school managers must adopt practices oriented to transforming and transforming themselves in various regards of their personal, professional and social characteristics. This has to do with the commitment being aligned with working class interests, the one they represent, in order to strengthen their work on the school as management to democratize relations, as well as to include a collective construction of community acts under their responsibility, among other aspects.

The same author highlights education as a political action. Thus, educational managers need to work within a perspective of always listening to the school community participants, as so to make relations in the school more democratic; the consequence being democratization of society, because school should not be regarded in an isolated context. This attitude helps to achieve solutions for everyday problems with consensual approaches, for a democratic management is not the same as constant pacifism; also, it is not very likely to occur

in the reality of a capitalist society. In these terms, school managers may prioritize directing actions in the school under their responsibility, always articulating education as possibility for social and intellectual uplift for students and as a formulation of critical thought and stimulus to interpreting reality. Such a process occurs because education

Prepares citizens resilient to submitting to projects imposed from outside and above, and who will not allow themselves to be instrumentalized by the market. On the contrary, they make themselves to be the carriers of a new conception of democracy, as active political subjects capable of social responsibilities, of reinventing the world, and recreating a state that is truly public (Hora, 2010, p. 21).

Insofar as mediator in an educational process, public-school management as analyzed here needs to allow for tools in order to the students to have a whole development. This path needs to happen when there is an understanding of submission processes inside and outside the school, based in rational arguments in the fight against abuses enacted by the ruling class, as Karl Marx presents. Many government projects and programs guided by the state and materialized in public schools have no take on reducing social inequalities, at least in public speech; that is reason for concern because the modern

state in a capitalist society is influenced by decisions carried out by private groups which wish for spreading their own domains and maintaining the status quo.

In order to the management to conduct a collective work – capable of allowing the blossoming of subjects’ spirits more autonomous and active in a fairer and more equal society – it is relevant for some technical and pedagogical characteristics to exist.

To this end, it is necessary for the manager to have some specific skills and abilities, realizing that reconstruction of knowledge happens within pedagogical action; there is the need to keep a communicative interlocution with the team and the school users. Such are the conditions that go beyond being a professional administrator, for school shapes and builds citizens through values, principles, feelings, not through palpable goods, commodities, getting solely restricted to intangible wealth (Santos, 2007, p. 13).

For Santos (2007), school management needs to comply with some requirements for it to be considered a bridge to democratizing human relations in defense of the public good, which is a possibility of changing the scenario of social inequality so typical in a capitalist society. Among the requirements, there are: teamwork with collective decisions made by the school community subjects; creation of collegiate boards with autonomy; processes of choosing managers

that are to be as much democratic as possible; also, the construction of a political-pedagogical project by the school community, from which other projects allowing political action might emerge, especially regarding students and improvements in that specific community. Yet “all measures do not mean democracy to be assured, although it favors considerably more humane and solidary relationships, which may contribute for perfecting mankind” (Santos, 2007, p. 16).

Thus, elementary school democratization cannot be restricted to state boundaries – promoting collective participation only for those who act within it –, instead it needs to include mainly users and the community as a whole, making it possible for the population to produce a real possibility of democratic state control when providing school education with quantity and quality compatible with the obligations of public authorities and accordingly with societal interests (Paro, 1998, p. 7).

Hence, the school manager occupation requires one to go beyond technical activities of his or her responsibility, due to bureaucratic matters being important and needing resolution when necessary, at the same time they do not have to overlap with pedagogical matters in a scale of priorities. The latter must prime for a critical education for citizenship, in which students perceive themselves as subjects coming from public

school and defend permanently the space against the abuses of private and market-driven groups; those groups aim at submitting public school to competitive ideals of the business worlds, exclusionary and advocator of meritocracy, as if all had the same conditions, which is not possible in a capitalist society, especially one like the Brazilian reality where there is order for many, but progress for a few.

Public school management oriented by administrative principles

Neoliberalism consists of a class project to first emerge in the 70s crisis and is constituted by a proposal to overcome a chaotic economic scenario. Its propositions were more refined than the traditional liberal ones; defenders of the latter had other ambitions than limiting a state role in decisions related to buying and selling, and market disputes. A current economic philosophy, “masked by much rhetoric about freedom, autonomy, personal responsibility and the virtues of privatizing, free-market and free-commerce, has legitimized draconian policies destined to restoring and consolidating the power of a capitalist class” (Harvey, 2011, p. 16).

This new liberalism feature is made of the clearest of ambitions surrounding economic centralization in the

bourgeoisie’s hands, for it is a class that has lost dominance since the democratization of social relations in a global scale. That is why we say neoliberalism presents more refined aspects, once it highlights business world characteristics, such as rigor with goals as an excellency pattern, spreading them to social fields, such as education. All of this happens through market-driven processes, as well as with traditional commercial activity, which has its own logic, one that must not be applied to students’ education, for they deserve to go beyond quantitative parameters and closed forms used as commodities.

This array of ideas has been become more intense since the Washington Consensus, held in 1989, when economists from all over the world created strategies aligned with business-driven propositions. The goal being that developing countries, such as Brazil, could draw up public policy based on those strategies, most of them associated with benefitting groups already social and economically privileged, who themselves have historically influenced government decisions. Thus, neoliberalism and public-private partnerships have become stronger in Brazil, the latter being one of the main fronts. Such a change was first made possible by a document named Master Plan for the State Apparatus

Reform (Plano Diretor de Reforma do Aparelho do Estado - PDRAE), in 1995, a manifesto from which emerged a new bond between state and society when dealing with the public good. With the arrival of neoliberal politics in the 90s, as well as with a redefinition in state role, education started to follow the same rational and acquired new features in face of contradictions between public and private (Kato, 2013).

This document represents a process of the state role being weakened and defends administrative principles originated in private companies, ones that should not only be reference for public management, but also spread to social domains as a way of improving efficiency and of presenting satisfying number-driven results.

The Brazilian public sphere has adapted to administrative principles, idolizing educational rankings and indexes as reference for work, because public management would have greater possibilities of measuring control and results, since “it is not based in processes, instead it focuses on results, and not in a rigorous professionalization for public management” (“Plano Diretor de Reforma do Aparelho do Estado”, 1995, p. 16). Thus, the official rhetoric at the time emphasized that all public organisms

needed to adopt in their work what administrative logic dictates, which should be reference for school management and action. It started significant change, due to the document to criticizing the Federal Constitution from 1988, identified by the Master Plan to be a setback for dealing with the public good, which were to be more efficient and modern, a thing only an administrative logic could make possible, once taken up by the state.

The PDRAE made incisive critiques to Brazilian public management, labeling it as inefficient and origin of all social deficits; in thesis, there were enough resources for successful action, however there was not a competent management to deal with them in a coherent manner. Due to this, social problems were to be recurring in Brazilian history, according to those who defended this proposition of a state reform.

Public-school managers needed to have a new profile, different from the democratic proposal assured by the Constitution. They needed to adopt features more closely related to multinational administrator, being controlling, tough, one to know what to do for the product (students) to be valued at the market; such a perspective was aligned with this administrative logic,

“understood as a system of describing and interpreting the world through private administration categories” (Di Giovanni & Nogueira, 2015, p. 2).

Thus, for the public-school manager to be deemed as competent he or she would have to take up such private administration categories in their actions; they would result in teacher’s work control, student’s profile being standardized similarly to commodities, planning focused on goals and not the pedagogical process, rigor when aiming at statical results, that would be treated as something to fulfill in agreeance with a guide, and so many more that would make the school similar to a factory.

School starts resembling the market, as a business which needs to show satisfying results for compensating the investments made. To this end, regarding school, it is the manager who needs to direct the process through an administrative gaze (Dublante, 2009, p. 13).

The administrative strand in public-school management has become more prevalent in the official speeches guided by the PDRAE, as well as represents a liberal stance adopted by the Brazilian state; the latter compares students’ education with products being made, in defense of a fallacy of narrowly oriented guidelines and orientations formulated by strategic experts; such

guidelines suggest as a solution the elevated educational numbers in large-scale evaluations. Also, this perspective advocates that the pedagogical aspect of a manager’s work is detrimental to reaching those results. For those who defend the document, incorporating the private logic into elementary school would be indispensable for social advancements, without considering problems in the local reality; for example, unsuitable school conditions, inexistence of school meals, material and other aspects that directly impact any evaluation results, yet they are not the criteria in predefined and standardized tests.

Moreover, the manifesto blames the school manager for not reaching the proposed goals, as if all work depended on one single person, which is not true. The manager is in a vital position for assuring the school success under his or her responsibility, but there is the need for instruments and technical, pedagogical, and structural conditions for the work to be fully materialized; the consequence being reflected upon numbers that represent indexes, which by themselves are also not enough to represent school reality.

These numbers are quite important for the creation of educational public policies, as they give directions, exactly as exemplified by the international scenario

and locally, with the “Pact for Education in Pará”, which we are going to analyze in the following section.

School management under the private sector direction in the Pact for Education in Pará

The pacts in education are part of the Brazilian historical context at different times and situations, being more evident as a departing point from the 1930s, under Getúlio Vargas’ government (1930-1945). They were refined during posterior governments and terms, having different interests and propositions, always in the name of the public good, as Bresser-Pereira (2016) pointed out.

According to this author, political and social-related pacts reinforce interests between different sectors, which come together to carry out activities oriented to the public good. Thus, such pacts represent the reality of different moments in Brazil, a merging of different groups and their interests, and a strengthening of private sectors performance in the public sphere, which directly interferes with the state role when the pacts are signed.

One of the most recent pacts at the federal level was the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age (Pacto Nacional pela Alfabetização na Idade Certa - PNAIC), launched under Dilma Rousseff’s term (2011-2016), on November 8, 2012;

the project would make an investment of R\$ 2.7 billion in the two following years, so that Brazilian children could be become literate in Portuguese and Mathematics, up to age 8. At that time, the 27 Brazilian states had already joined, counting with an unprecedented participation of all secretaries of education at the level of federative units (“Governo investe R\$ 2,7 bilhões para alfabetizar crianças até oito anos”, 2012).

In Pará state, approached here in great detail, the government launched the “Pact for Education of Pará”, aiming at increasing statistical results originated from the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB); the Pact itself is based on the logic of public-private partnerships, which are signed between the government and private companies, guiding actions to be implemented in the state public schools.

The Pact was organized by a state committee and regional committees created through the Decree n. 694, of March 26, 2013, shortly after the project being launched. This piece of legislation characterizes the members that would make part of the Committees, at the same time emphasizing that the presidency of the State Committee was to be exerted by the then governor Simão Jatene, and that the regional ones were to be presided over

by someone linked to the Secretary of Education in Pará.

The management of such committees was mostly done by people directly linked to the government. So the state committee amounts to a total of 13 people, which are distributed as follows: 5 seats are directly linked to the government through its secretaries; 1 (one) is representative of an international organization, appointed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which has been a partner in the Pact since the proposal creation; 2 (two) are representatives of companies that have autonomy when appointing their representatives; 1 (one) is civil society representative with no autonomy in choosing, because it is indicated by the governor. In other words, there are 9 possible votes aligned with both private companies' purposes and state public management; this goes to show some type of symmetry in the public-private relationship. In addition to these, the following entities have vote in the committee: 1 (one) representative of the State Legislative Assembly; 1 (one) president of the Federation of Municipalities of the State of Pará (FAMEP); 1 (one) president of the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (UNDIME/PA); and 1 (one)

representative of the State University of Pará (UEPA).

If the Pact had a democratic proposal when it comes to deliberation and decisions, the state committee would be better balanced regarding the social groups, allowing the participation of public-school managers, who could help implementing actions; also, there is a need for representatives of parents and students at the proper age. The substantial number of secretaries may favor decision-making from the government itself, with little to no possibility of contradictions, which is desirable in a democracy.

The regional committees have representatives from other social segments, however they obey the same logic of seat distribution and the relationship between public and private spheres. This composition has undergone some changes through the Decree No 792, of July 1, 2013, which increased the number of seats to 18, strengthening the number of municipal associations, such as the Integrated Consortium of Municipalities of Pará (COIMP) and Association of Municipalities of Northeastern Pará (AMUNEP).

In the same year, another decree was enacted in relation to the "Pact for Education of Pará" regulatory framework; this one directly impacted public-school

management. Similarly to the PDRAE logic at federal level, in 1995, when management was considered to be the cause of social problems with education, the Pará state legislation has made school management to be the target of administrative actions, which should be taken as parameter for those who wished to occupy any school management office.

Decree No. 695, of March 26, 2013, “establishes criteria for the exercise of functions as school principal and vice-principal within the State Education Network, which are to be adopted by the State Secretary of Education, and other measures that are provided”. The purpose here is standardizing patterns of management in Pará state.

Section 2 foresees that managers will be chosen according to criteria formulated by the school network of the State Secretary of Education (SEDUC); however, it does not mention what those criteria would be or at least any parameters to be adopted by the schools or the Secretary, which makes unclear the rules necessary for possible candidates to prepare for the position. In theory, such criteria should include elements focused on the pedagogical perspective and the political education of students; such an endeavor is proposed by Paro (1998), who defends school management to be a

mediation tool in citizen education in its various aspects, a position with which we agree.

There is also a proposition that candidates need to have adequate training, in accord to Resolution No. 001/2010 by the Pará State Educational Board; in its subsection VI, it proposes criteria such as a requirement for one to be a pedagogue or a holder of a teaching degree with a graduate degree in the field of education, with at least two years of experience. At this point, regarding the years of experience, there is a deviation from the Resolution, because the Decree, in its subsection IV, establishes as a minimum requirement at least five years of experience in state schools, which leaves little room for those who are newcomers in the public career. Thus, the Pact regulatory framework adheres to the idea of “administrationalism” presented by Di Giovanni and Nogueira (2015), for whom it uses categories of private management, such as exclusion, competition and production in a market-driven logic, without taking into account pedagogical aspects or a candidate’s commitment to the reality of the school he or she aims to manage.

There are still other criteria that manager and vice-manager office candidates in state schools must fulfill,

mostly laid out in a system based on an administrative logic, filled with tests and technical courses, which must be partly present in those professionals' career. We also highlight contradictions of the aforementioned decree; while expressing that schools are to adopt their individual criteria, it also determines requirements for those competing for positions.

Regarding democratic principles for public education as defined by the Constitution, we identified the absence, for example, of direct election to be held by the school community or similar instruments; those, according to Santos (2007), would point out to a democratization of relationships. Also, according to this author, democratic management is not something given, to be proposed in guidelines, as it can only be materialized in day-to-day school life, where there are contradictions; therefore, it is always an ongoing process.

Thus, the Pact regulatory framework brings forth consequences for Pará state public education, especially for management in state schools; one of them is the directing of actions under the strong influence of the authorities themselves, and an intense participation of private sector representatives; this sector being one which has its own logic regarding management processes, which should not

be simply transposed in its entirety to a space dedicated to educating people, such as the school.

Final remarks

The “Pact for Education in Pará” is based on a partnership system between the state and certain sectors of society – among which, there are private companies –; its goal is for them to come together so they can develop actions for public schools. These actions should result in the increase of statistical indicators of IDEB, which are synonymous with and the main parameter of quality for the official rhetoric.

The regulatory framework herein analyzed consists of three decrees that present how are configured the committees capable of deciding on educational actions in Pará state. Thus, we identified an intense private sector participation, with autonomy to choose their own representatives; this process is widely different when it comes to civil society representatives, whose number is much lower, in addition to those being appointed by the committee's president (the governor); all of this points to a possible submission of the public to the private sphere.

It is known how many decrees may save lives, such as those resulting from emergency situations, as catastrophes are – which all require decision-making by

government authorities so that the chaos does not become greater –; yet in its essence this attitude might contains an authoritarian posture, because it often does not result from dialogue within deliberative instances, as usually occurs in law. Both in our analyzes and in the literature review, we could not identify emergency-related content in the three decrees enacted; such possibility could contain greater social participation in its own formulation or in that of a complementary legislation.

In the specific case herein analyzed, the decrees should have more transparent and detailed criteria oriented to a fair selection of those applying for management positions in state public schools; such a remark is important due to there being conditions in the documents, at the same time when there are few elements to favor democratic processes in order to create an office that will contribute to a wide citizen formation.

Moreover, there is an orientation towards the school managers having a profile closely related to the figure of an administrator from the private sector, one who demands, monitors and fulfills goals; therefore, their work excellence begins to be understood through the criteria for choosing professionals who are aligned to an administrative logic, exactly the one

to enter public education in Pará, at least regarding the analyzed legislation.

The school manager then has a relevant role in the school under his or her responsibility. However, he or she is not the protagonist and does not deserve to be blamed for all successes or failures the institution has; this reminds us that they are professionals committed to the local reality and need to share the work with a team also committed, so as not to incur the error of authoritarian and traditional practices.

We restate here that school managers must have some technical characteristics relevant to carrying out work within the school. Yet they do not need to overlap with the pedagogical interests. Some of such characteristics are: constant dialogue with the school community; closeness to students, so they are not afraid of the manager's figure and are able to see him or her as someone willing to contribute to their progress; an open attitude regarding the school community; as there are many other that can assure conditions for doing a harmonious and pleasant work. This attitude needs to distance itself from any company managers profile, whose logic is different from that of schools, even though defenders of neoliberalism want to assimilate schools into companies. It is still possible, after all of this, to find tools of resistance when it comes to a constant fight

for the public good as a space which forms for life, and not only for high education entrance exams.

Pará state public school has been constantly challenged, as it is the case with the infiltration of administrative principles that aim to turn it into a factory for manufacturing goods, in an attempt to mimic private companies. This is a reason why it is necessary to have a permanent defense of democratic management as an instrument to resist the abuses of capital; so, to not forget that school and company have different logics, and it is the school duty to denounce when there are intentions to make it answer a demand for profit above all things.

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