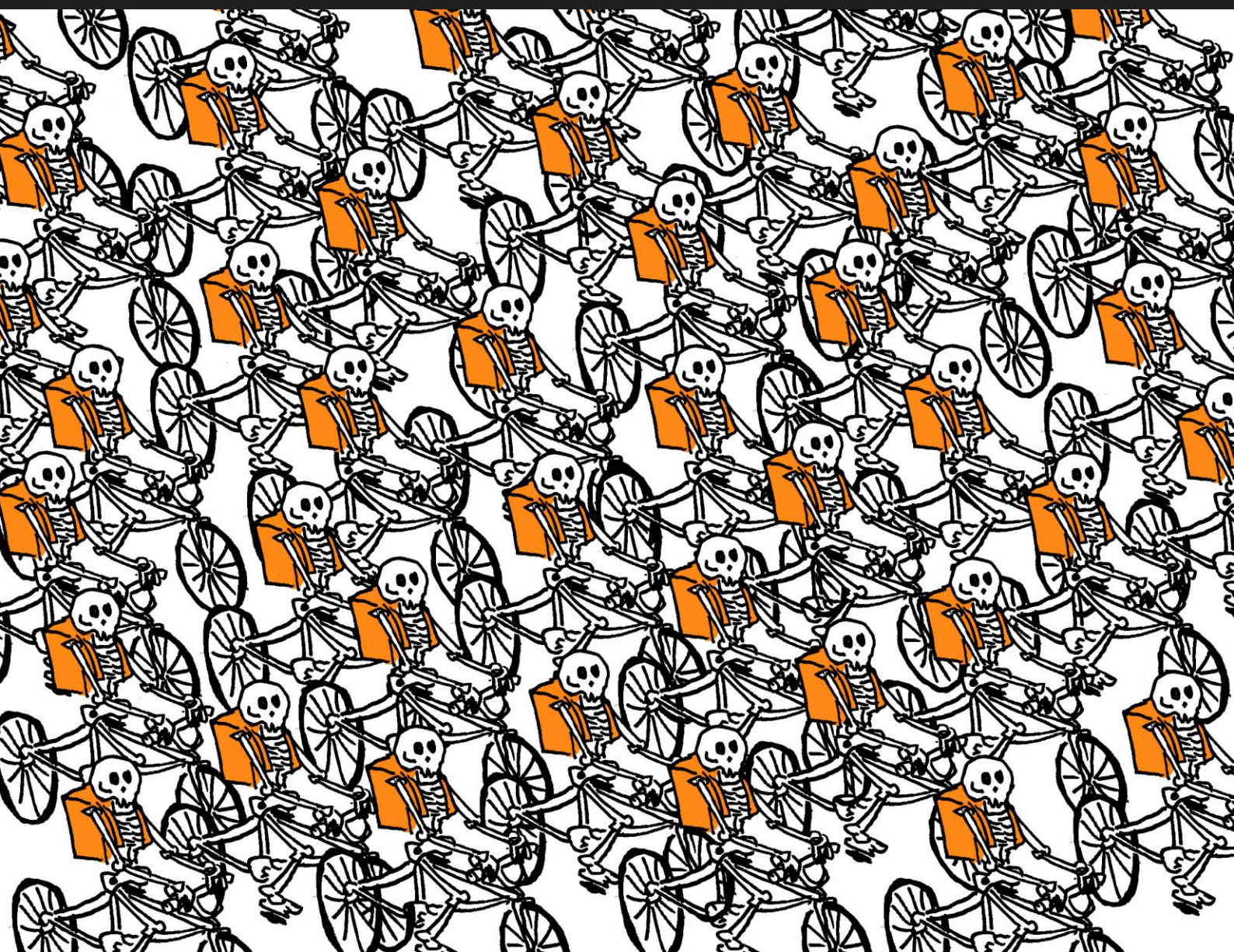


# REGRESSIVE POLICIES AND ATTACKS ON SOCIAL RIGHTS IN BRASIL: current dilemmas in a country of dependent capitalism

Larissa Dahmer Pereira  
Douglas Ribeiro Barboza  
Tatiana Dahmer Pereira  
Organizers



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## PREFACE

*“Time is my matter, the present time, the present men, the present life.” (Andrade, 2012)*

*“Cambiar el mundo, amigo Sancho, que no es locura ni utopía...*

*¡Sino justicia!”. (Cervantes, 2016)*

Since my happy reunion in 2014, in Spain, with the Brazilian Social Work and its current Ethical-Political Project, after two decades working in Granada/Spain as a social worker and, later, as a professor at the University of Granada, I regulated my critical roots born inside the School of Social Work of PUC/BH, which protagonized the “BH Method”, as Academic and Professional Project. I studied in a conjuncture where they settled “[...] the social and political bases of the country, with the reintegration of the classes movement worked in the historical scene”, and I was lucky to enjoy in 1982 the launch of the book “Social Relationships and Social Work in Brazil”,<sup>1</sup> authored by Marilda Villela Iamamoto and Raul de Carvalho, a work that meant for the profession “an influence in the appropriation of Marx’s own legacy” and the “first moment of reconceptualization in Brazil, as expressed in the project of the School of Social Work of Minas Gerais” (Bastistoni, 2019, p. 29)<sup>2</sup>. The Social Work in Brazil for more than four decades has been based in the agencies to promote scientific research, with its internationally recognized post-graduate programs to bring Latin Americans of different nationalities, Iberian and African, to pursue a Masters, PhD and post-graduate degree highly qualified in their Public Universities. Brazil is one of the few countries in which education is still free, and with emphasis on higher education, opposing it with an important movement to defend secular, socially referenced universal, quality higher education, carried out by the organizations of the professional category of social workers CFESS/CRESS, ABEPSS and ENESSO, in articulation with the fronts and social movements of defense of public education. This articulation among the three segments of the professional category – moves – action and strategy unique in the expressions of the profession at the world level – it is a source of strength, resistance and struggle in the many battles that social workers face in their daily work.

In this process of approaches to the intellectual maturation of Social Work in Brazil, I now have the grateful satisfaction of having in hand the current collection that reflects an important collaborative-academic work: “Regressive policies and attacks on social rights in Brazil: current dilemmas in a country of dependent capitalism”, organized by Larissa Dahmer Pereira, Douglas Ribeiro Barboza and Tatiana Dahmer Pereira, through the Post-Graduate Program in Social Work and Regional Development of the Fluminense Federal University (PPGSSDR/UFF).

Its content comes into the understanding of the Brazilian socio-historical reality, its contradictions and determinations, which give concreteness to the daily issues of the professional work of the social worker, from the perspective of the social totality, where in

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<sup>1</sup> IAMAMOTO, M. V. e CARVALHO, R. de. **Relações sociais e Serviço Social no Brasil – esboço** de uma interpretação histórico metodológica. [Social Relationships and Social Work in Brazil – outline of a historical methodological interpretation.] 2a. ed. São Paulo, Cortez, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> BATISTONI, M. R. O projeto da Escola de Serviço Social de Belo Horizonte–1960–1975: uma reconstrução histórica. **Serv. soc. soc.**, 2019, p. 538–558. Available at: [https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0101-66282019000300538](https://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0101-66282019000300538). Access on: Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> 2020.

the analysis the category work has ontological centrality. It is the result of two lines of research intrinsically linked to each other: “Capitalist Development and Brazilian Social Formation” and “Social Work, Public Policy and Vocational Training”, whose chapters are presented in the Introduction.

The authors assume the “criticism” since Marx (2005, p. 147): “[...] not as an end in itself, but as a means, where its particular way of feeling is indignation and denunciation”<sup>3</sup> in an international context of advancing education as a commodity, reactionary thinking, the logic of instrumental reason, of the imperatives of capital over the labor force in times of crisis of capital, under neoliberal doctrine. They carry out rigorous work of the “social issue”, capturing contradictions and unveiling processes and forces from the movement of reality that cross the demands and particularities of professional work and training in Social Work, with a focus on Education and Social Assistance.

This collective work around dilemmas and challenges faced in the current conjuncture by the Brazilian working class, in view of the “multiple expressions of the social issue” (Iamamoto, 1982), is contextualized in the scenario of implementation of regressive social policies, moved by the neoliberal, fragilizing and expropriating social and labor rights. It contributes to giving “a meaning to the reconstruction of a critical professional project”, to the re-elaboration of “socio-professional responses capable of facing neoliberalism – as a project of big capital, since professional projects are inseparable from the projects of society” (Guerra, 2003, p. 12).

I write this preface during the second “olla” in Spain of the world pandemic provoked by the new SARS–COV–2 and the figures are nothing more than encouraging: 1,381,218 PCR (*Polymerase Chain Reaction*) positive cases with a total of 39,345 people deceased. A harsh health situation that puts on the table the question of social classes in Spain, concealed on the large neoliberal night initiated by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, recalling the existence of a working class, essential for the maintenance and survival of all others, as well as for the economic sustainability in this country (Navarro, 2020).

In this sense, the historian Virginia Fontes warns us that, in reality, the current economic crisis “erupts by this health trigger (the new coronavirus), which means that a strong capitalist crisis was already foreseen since the 1990’s, with capital being the driver of a ‘crisis superposition’, the most responsible; surely there will come a period of intense social struggles, which will enable a great crisis of capital to occur from the capitalist crisis” (conference –*live* held in the virtual house Boitempo on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020).

This publication also contextualizes at a historical moment when Joe Biden is elected as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, becoming the greatest representative of the imperialism of the neoliberal era, at the same time that Donald Trump’s defeat implies a process of weakening the American political and media ultra-right wing. The massive vote was decisive of the working class, the service sector, the black movement – with ethnic/racist identities – and the mobilization of women, enabling the election of Kamala Harris, the first woman in office and vice-president in this country.

In Latin America, in the political scene of recent months, democratic forces seem to gain momentum: the historic vote on the plebiscite in Chile, when the population decides on a new constitution, leaving behind the Constitution of the Age of Augusto Pinochet; the election of the candidate of the Movement for Socialism (MAS) Luis Arce, in Bolivia, a year

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<sup>3</sup> MARX, K. **Criticism of Hegel’s Law philosophy. Introduction.** São Paulo, Boitempo Editorial, 2005.



after the coup d'état and the exile of Evo Morales. An anti-imperialist popular offensive expands as an international response to the drastic deterioration of working class living conditions: international platforms and organizations, among them, the Movement of Landless Rural Workers, the World March of Women, an initiative such as the holding of international weeks of Anti-imperialist fights, with a significant participation of trade unions, rural confederations, popular organizations of indigenous peoples, etc. We could add many other massive mobilizations, strikes, demonstrations and actions on social networks, denouncing from different conjunctures the imperialist aggressions to the working class.

In these hard and singular times with new scenarios and contradictions, I encourage social workers, committed to the human emancipation of working populations, to enter into the inescapable analytical-critical dialog that this book offers. Its reading strengthens the profession in the resistance and struggle to the ultraliberal political of Bolsonaro's far-right government, which denies science, destroys the environment and strengthens the hegemony of agribusiness, intensifies the exploitation of the traditional peoples' lands, criminalizes social movements, attacks public higher education and social assistance policy.

I would like to express my thanks here for the invitation to preface this work and congratulate the organizers and authors for this invaluable contribution, wishing that the book raises new critical debates that strengthen the defense of the ethical-political project of the Social Work profession in Brazil, enabling its interlocution at the international level.

Granada, Spain, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

*Phd. Rosana Matos-Silveira*

*Social worker and Researcher at SEPISE –*

*University of Granada*

## PRESENTATION

The book presented is the result of the research developed under the Post-Graduate Program in Social Work and Regional Development of the Fluminense Federal University (PPGSSDR/UFF), which involve professors who make up their membership of accredited students, graduates, and researchers from institutions such as Osvaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ), Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA), State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCAR) and University of Brasília (UnB), which have articulation with the Research Centers belonging to the Program .

Created in 2012, the PPGSSDR/UFF aims to foster studies on topics necessary for the area of Social Work, whose discussion axes address the critical debate on “development” in capitalism, the particularities of Brazilian social formation, the action of the State in relation to social classes, considering the aspects of class, race/ethnicity and gender, the Brazilian public policies and, finally, the crossing of such dynamics at work and in the form of the Brazilian Social Service.

Although relatively new, the Program has become a reference for Social Work professionals and related areas, who seek a solid intellectual formation, both for the academic career and for the permanent qualification and performance in the various spaces of action of social workers. The social insertion of PPGSSDR in the state of Rio de Janeiro is significant, since the ongoing research – integrated with other institutions and with participation of professors in Research Centers of UFRJ, UERJ, PUC and UNIRIO and, also, outside the state of Rio de Janeiro – they deal with themes that aim to contribute to the critical and positive analysis of public policies and the work of social workers, both at the regional level and also at the national level.

The teaching and student team of the Program disseminates the partial and/or final results of the research through technical activities, such as advice, lectures, courses external to the UFF, technical reports and opinions and, also, bibliographical production. The present book is therefore one of the means of dissemination of Intellectual production of our Program, in intense articulation with researchers from other educational and research institutions.

The collection is organized in two parts: the first is linked to the results of investigations developed under the first research, entitled “Capitalist Development and Brazilian Social Formation”. This line turns to the analysis of the macrosocial transformations arising from the “globalization of capital”, the productive restructuring and the financialization of the economy and its particular incidences in the resizing of the development of Latin American nations and the deepening of regional heterogeneity. In this line studies are concentrated that, in light of the contributions of important authors of Brazilian and Latin-American social thought, seek to analyze the main dilemmas faced by Brazilian society in terms of political culture, dimensions of work, gender, race/ethnicity, different forms of violence, the urban and rural issue, respecting the perspective of the whole analysis.

Opening the first part of the collection, we have the chapter of Professors Ricardo Antunes, Marco Aurélio Santana and Professor Luci Praun, who review the process of

construction and deconstruction of labor rights in Brazil, critically addressing the actions developed from the Lula's and Dilma's governments to the present moment, of ultraliberalism and destruction of the little that had been conquered.

In chapter 2, the researchers Adrianyce A. Silva de Sousa, Letícia Batista da Silva and Ellen Soares Marinho, the Program's egress, entitled "The totality and the historical-social actuality of criticism of post-structuralist and post-modern thoughts," seek, from classical thinkers of the Marxist tradition, to problematize some limitations of the irrational and relativistic thoughts that promote a distortion of social reality and fulfill the function of fragmentation of social struggles.

The third chapter, "Conservative ballast and dependent capitalism: a present filled with past", by Ana Cristina Oliveira de Oliveira and Roberta Traspadini, aims, based on a literature review, to highlight the ultraconservative ballast in Brazil, legitimized by the far-right wing in the country, and the intensification of the hegemonic bloc, that has been strengthening and feeding the conservationist, in confrontation with the Constitutional Charter of 1988.

Then, in chapter 4, we have the work of professor Marcela Sores, together with the graduates Bruna Cabral and Samara Franco, with the title "Take refuge to survive: expropriations of rights", which addresses the issue of refuge as a result of imperialism, deepening in the last 30 years. The authors also problematize the responses presented to the conditions of refugees, as well as the social assistance policy.

Chapter 5, "Agribusiness hegemony and acceleration of agrarian counter-form: The policies of the Bolsonaro government for the field", by Dayse Maria da Silva Caciano de Oliveira (program graduate), Douglas Ribeiro Barboza and Paulo Roberto Raposo Alentejano, analyzes the current hegemony of the agribusiness as an enabler of problems historically present in the rural environment. The work questions this model of capitalist development in agriculture and indicates complex challenges to social movements in the struggle for land and agrarian reform within Brazilian society.

Closing the works related to the research line "Capitalist Development and Brazilian Social Formation", we have the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter entitled "Urban issue and public security in Maré slum", authored by the Professors Eblin Farage, Francine Helfreich, Miriam Guindani and the graduate Camila Barros. The chapter discusses the debate on the urban issue, with emphasis on how state violence manifests itself on the population living in the slums, from the study on the reality of Maré slum, one of the largest slums in Brazil, located in Rio de Janeiro.

The second part of the collection brings results of investigations that are included in the research line "Social Work, Public Policies and Professional Training", which turns to the study of the relationship between Public Policies and Social Services. To this end, it deals with the deepening of the movement of refunctionalization of the role and the classical functions of the State and its developments in the field of public, economic and social policies, whose repercussions directly affect the enhancement of the issue of poverty and social inequality in Brazil, considering the appropriate regional particularities. In this line, studies are nucleated on the empirical results of these transformations in professional intervention, focusing on the multiple expressions of the "social issue" and their respective forms of confrontation, with special attention to the contradictions in the field of Education

and Social Assistance, from the changes imposed by the last governments that elected themselves in the country.

In chapter 7, we were saluted with the study of Professor Valdemar Sguissardi, invited to participate in the present collection and that, with his studies, was very much involved in the research developed under the Program. Professor Valdemar's text problematizes the profound Brazilian inequality which is expressed in the field of Education, especially considering the ultra-liberal times experienced in the country in the present time.

The 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, "Heritage Fund and precariousness of the public university: the capital agenda for Brazilian higher education", written by the students Janaína Duarte and Kátia Lima and graduates of the Program, Livia Prestes and Viviane de Queiroz, problematizes the main structuring elements of higher education in a country marked by its dependent capitalist insertion in the world economy. Then, they analyze the post-2016 Brazilian higher education, focusing on the precariousness of training and working conditions in the Federal Higher Education Institutions.

In the next chapter, Professor Larissa Dahmer Pereira, co-authored with two graduates, Andreza Telles dos Santos Ferreira and Vanessa Martins Oliveira, analyzes the correlation between expansion of Brazilian higher education, change in the student profile of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education and, finally, they present a study related to Student Assistance in the particularity of UFF.

Chapter 10, authored by the professor Kênia Miranda and the graduate Arlene Trindade, entitled "Student assistance and professional education in Brazil: the training for the market and the National Student Assistance Program in the governments of PT", presents a critical reflection on the expansion project of the Federal Network of Professional and Technological Education (RFEPCT) and the implementation of the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES).

Closing the collection, we have the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, "Social assistance and conservatism: dilemmas and resistance of the professional exercise of social workers before the COVID-19 pandemic", by Ana Paula Cardoso (graduate), Ana Paula Mauriel and Mossicleia Mendes da Silva. The text provides an initial assessment of the professional exercise of social workers of social assistance policy in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We appreciate the participation of all involved, particularly to our graduates, who have contributed their research to the development of the Program. To researchers outside the UFF, who maintain rich dialog with our Program.

A special thanks to professors Ricardo Antunes, Marco Aurélio Santana and to professor Luci Praun, who, when addressing the "construction and deconstruction of work in Brazil", contributed with a text that brings them fundamental to a more accurate analysis of the limits and possibilities of advancement and construction of a minimally democratic society, in a dependent capitalist country like ours, in the current (and barbaric) phase of the capitalism. To Professor Valdemar Sguissardi, who gave us a sophisticated text on Brazilian educational inequality and that allows us, in the following texts, a greater understanding of how Brazilian structural inequality reverses to the different educational levels.

To the social worker and researcher of the University of Granada/Spain, Rosana Matos – Silveira, who wrote us a careful preface for the current collection.

To André Dahmer, for his kindness in giving us the cartoon of the cover and that tells us a lot about the regressive rights and times of barbarism.

To the Postgraduate Support Program (PROAP), linked to the Foundation for the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), for the support that made the translation of this book possible.

To the Carlos Chagas Filho Foundation for Research Support in the State of Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ), which, through support for the Program, made the book possible.

Finally, we would like to thank Professor Tatiana Dahmer Pereira, who participated in organizing the book, helping us with the careful reading of the English version.

We would like to record the collective effort for the production of the collection, especially considering the gloomy period experienced by all, the COVID-19 pandemic, the deep health crisis and in all aspects of social life, with death, in Brazil, until December 2020. of almost 200 (two hundred) thousand people, whom we honor in this work<sup>4</sup>.

To a context of deep negationism related to Science and of and front attack to the critical knowledge produced in the field of Applied Social and Human Sciences, we respond with the accumulation of resistances, both through daily struggles in various spaces, as for the production of knowledge and training of professionals – social workers, professors and researchers – critical, qualified and committed to a profound and real democratization of society, which is equivalent to questioning the order and the country of capitalist development and sociability in force.

Niterói, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

*Larissa Dahmer Pereira and Douglas Ribeiro Barboza*  
(Organizers of the Collection).

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<sup>4</sup> We maintained the presentation with the date of 2020. However, it is worth noting that, by March 2023, there had been a count of more than 700 thousand deaths, due to the Coronavirus.

# **PART 1**

CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT, LABOR AND BRAZILIAN  
SOCIAL FORMATION



# I

## CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF WORK IN BRAZIL: FROM CONCILIATION TO COUP<sup>1</sup>

*Ricardo Antunes*

*Marco Aurélio Santana*

*Luci Praun*

### Introduction

After a period of stability and growth in the first decade of the 2000's, Brazil entered a cycle of profound economic, social, political and institutional crisis. Just as its period of bonanza was largely due to international conditions, the deeper causes of the current Brazilian crisis have strong global components. They are part of the movement made by capitalism in the last decades of the twentieth century, seeking to boost its cycles of accumulation and deviate, even if temporarily, from its own limits, expressed in crises with profound global repercussions. In the era when the globalization and financialization of capital has reached its high point, these crises have become, around the globe, warmer and deeper.

The advent of the 2008 crisis and its impact on the different countries of the globe is part of this process. Initially, it reached the central capitalist countries, such as the United States, Japan, Germany, England, France, Italy, among others. But, given its global, unequal and combined conformation, it was designed for the various nations of the Asian world, also reaching intermediate development countries, such as those that make up the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and, more sharply, the whole periphery of the system.

The repercussions of the crisis in Brazil, considered at first as “small wave” by the government, were little by little undermining the project of the Workers’ Party (PT), in force since 2003, with the inauguration of Luiz Inácio da Silva, Lula. Implemented throughout Lula’s two consecutive presidential mandates and, from 2011, by his successor, Dilma Rousseff, the project began to show clear signs of collapse in 2013, when street rebellions reached its peak in June.

This clear fatigue of the project, accentuated by the persistence and deepening of the global economic crisis, would lead to the streets a large sector of working youth. Subject to the growing precariousness of the labor market, unable to access quality education, left at the mercy of a public health system scrapped, and without any security over the future, the increase in public transport tariffs has become a kind of catalyst for the discontent of this layer of young people.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a version, with some changes, of *Chronicle of a Defeat Foretold: The PT Administrations from Compromise to the Coup, Latin American Perspectives*, V.1, p. 85–104, January 1, 2019. ISSN 0094–582X.

In essence, the movement of these young people and the strong wave that the country experienced in the same year reflected the failure of a project that, just as it sprang from the hopes and desires of many for change, was not able to carry them out, quickly showing their limits and contradictions. The Brazilian reality was then beginning to be naked in depth and, with it, regardless of what would be the poor advances, the social and political failure of the PT governments.

What were the main components of the policies developed by the PT, with an impact on social and labor rights, between 2003 and 2016? Did they have prevalent positive and forward or negative elements and limitations? Did they ultimately result in a victory by the social forces of labor or a failure that amplified the deep crisis that struck the PT governments? The purpose of this chapter is to provide a critical balance of this experience, in order to present some answers to these questions.

## **From confrontation to conciliation**

Brazil played a prominent role in the labor and trade union struggles in the 1980, managing to slow down the implantation of neoliberalism, which has already been expanded by several countries in Latin America, such as Chile, Argentina, Mexico, among others. While in the North countries, neoliberalism broke out, in Brazil, in that decade, we walked in the opposite direction of these regressive tendencies.

Thus, if for the capital this was considered a “lost decade”, for the trade union and popular movements, this was a “victorious decade.”

After the historic strikes of ABC Paulista, in the late 1970’s, with the emergence of the so-called “new syndicalism”, strikes spread across the country, reaching broad contingents of the working class. The class unions and countless social movements were widely used, which meant a period of dissemination of large-scale social and political struggles (Santana, 1999; Antunes, 2004, 2006b, 2015; Praun, 2005, 2006, 2012; Antunes, Santana, 2014).

In a short period of time, indicating the organizational and mobility strength of the working class, the 1980 would also boost, as part of the intense social mobilization in the country, the foundation and growth of a working and union extraction party, the PT and the Single Workers' Center (CUT). It would also gradually produce the increasing insertion of an important part of its militants and union activists in the structures of the Brazilian state.

The electoral victories achieved by the PT, if on the one hand reflected the consolidation of a social base largely forged in the social mobilizations of the 1980’s, also became a point of important support for the strengthening of a political practice that began to characterize, in the 1990’s, due to the concern to formulate proposals considered to be viable institutionally, more “propositive”, as it was said then.

The evaluations of the PT’s majority leadership on the reasons for the defeat of Lula’s candidacy in the 1989 presidential elections would accentuate this tendency, expressed in the following years, among other initiatives, in the participation of CUT in 1992 and 1993, in the chambers of the Automotive Sector (Galvão, 1996; Praun, 2012). This participation made evident the search not only for demonstrating active posture in “[...] Elaboration of an industrial policy on democratic bases [...]”, as defended at the time the Metalworkers Union of the ABC (1992, p. 5), but the willingness to reach the central power, by institutional

means, and without endangering the established social order and structure. This provision could be observed more clearly ten years later, during the 2002 election, which resulted in Lula's first presidential term. During the electoral dispute, the PT published the "Letter to the Brazilian People" (Silva, 2002), signed by Lula, in which guarantees were given to the financial market of a future policy of controlling the economy and of respecting the "contracts and obligations of the country".

During the years that separated the experiences with the Sector Chambers and the 2002 elections, measures for flexibilization of production and work (establishment of the time and day banks; adoption of mechanisms aimed at multipurpose and multifunctional work; reduction of the entry floor of professional categories; flexibilization of remuneration through the policy of participation in results, among others) began to be defended and incorporated with respect to collective agreements signed by unions affiliated to CUT, having as the starting point of this practice the metallurgical syndicalism of ABC Paulista (Praun, 2005, 2006, 2012).

During the 1990's, amid the strengthening of neo-liberalism and the measures aimed at restructuring production and work, which would devastate the world of Brazilian labor, a trade union practice centered on the presentation of "viable" proposals would be consolidated within the CUT, to avoid the confrontation between capital and labor, privileging negotiation in detriment of mobilization. Consequently, it sought the viability of electoral victory through the construction of a pact, articulating the different factions of the ruling class, for the management of Brazilian capitalism.

## **Lula governments: PT in power**

On the occasion of the electoral victory of Lula's candidacy, in 2002, after two consecutive mandates of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994–2002), Brazil had become a very diverse country, now inserted in a national and international context distinct from that observed in the previous decades. This is because Lula's election occurred when transformism (Gramsci, 1989) was already impregnating the political practice of the PT, which gradually transformed it into a variant of Party of Order (Marx, 1974), increasingly moderate and institutionalized in its methods, practices and actions.

When his first candidacy in 1989, Lula and the PT seated in a sharp and upward movement, had an acute program of change that was defeated at the polls. In 2002, in the midst of a world of labor and movement of workers devastated, and in alliance with conservative sectors, Lula and the PT emerged victorious from the polls.

Neoliberalism, which developed in the 1990's with Fernando Collor (1990–1992) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), had largely deserted the country, and the PT it was no longer a party centrally aimed at the interests of the working class. It has increasingly oscillated between resistance to neoliberalism and the acceptance and defense of a new, more polyclassist pragmatics<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> We take back here several ideas that are presented especially in Antunes (2004, 2006b, 2015).

The first Lula government, beginning in January 2003, was characterized, then, more by continuity than by the rupture with neoliberalism, since it also developed policies with clear similarities to those proposed by social liberalism, which flourished from the experiment carried out by *Tony Blair's New Labour*<sup>3</sup>.

It is worth noting that, during the first term, the economic policy developed by Lula never questioned the hegemony of financial capital. Far from this, it followed strictly the pillars indicated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), thus maintaining the structural elements that preserved capitalism and which blamed our bourgeois social formation.

As Lula himself indicated at a rally held in Fortaleza, during the 2012 municipal elections, “I sometimes wonder why people criticize Lula so much. You see, if it depended on making money, the entrepreneurs of this country every day had to light a candle for God because they never made as much money as they did in my government” (Cabral, 2012). Lula adds to his speech that this would have been the path that made progress possible in terms of increasing the number of formal jobs in the country.

What were the guiding policies of the PT governments? Let us now look more closely at some of them. We will take into account, in terms of limits, possibilities and contradictions, policies on employment, trade unions and the fight against poverty. In the final part, we will analyze the outcome of the PT governments with the parliamentary-legal-media coup that put an end to their fourteen years of experience in the federal executive.

## Employment policy

Lula's victory, despite the broad alliance that supported him, opened up a number of expectations about the structural changes he promised long ago. However, the electoral process took place amid the foreshadowings of one economic crisis. Faced with the possibility of Lula's victory, part of the investment focused on financial speculation threatened to leave the country. With the “Letter to Brazilians” (Silva, 2016), as we have already indicated, Lula sought to reassure the market indicating that the bases of stabilization would be maintained.

The Lula government, in its two terms (2003–2006 and 2007–2010), has very closely followed the economic policy of the previous government, even though it is nuanced by a social-liberal perspective. Among other measures, he preserved the financial capital institutions through the maintenance of the primary surplus. With regard to labor legislation, in addition to the introduction of the recovery of pension contributions of retirees – which generated him a great deal of dissension in the trade unionism of public workers, one of the constitutive pillars of the CUT at its origin – tried, at the end of the first term, to enable a broad trade union and labor reform, despite the strong opposition of both employers' syndicates and union centers and those entities linked to workers (Antunes, 2006b, 2014; Galvão, 2007).

Given the international conjuncture, it was accumulating positive economic indexes. In general, the Lula government was characterized by low inflation and reduced unemployment. Although it is necessary to discuss the type and quality of jobs created, in

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<sup>3</sup> See the rich and comprehensive critical balance of neoliberalism and its distinct variants in Pradella and Marois (2015).

this regard they are data that draw attention. In the period between 1998 and 2007, a rate of employment rate of 56% was obtained. In 1998, the Brazilian formal market had 24.5 million jobs. This total rose, in 2002, to the level of 28.7 million, reaching 37.6 million in 2007. The best results obtained in this field were obtained between 2003 and 2007, when the majority of these jobs were created and the unemployment level registered a very sensitive drop, from a rate of 12% in 2003 to 9% in 2007 (Santana, 2012). When the world crisis hit the central capitalist countries, the Lula government has taken measures to encourage, through this action, the resumption of economic growth through the expansion of the international market. To this end, among other measures, the government reduced taxes in the automotive, domestic and construction sectors, all of which had a strong incorporation of labor force.

If, as Pochmann points out (2012), in the 1990's we are going through a period of strong reduction in formalized jobs,<sup>4</sup> in the next decade under the governments of Lula and the beginning of Dilma's first term, 21 million jobs were created, which attests to the wide incorporation of workers into the labor market.

The expansion of the jobs, however, kept particularities. It should be noted that 94.8% of workers incorporated into the formal market perceived a low remuneration (1.5 minimum wage per month). The activities that grew most over this period were: services, with 6.1 million new jobs; followed by trade workers, with 2.1 million; construction, with 2 million; clerks, with 1.6 million; of the textile and clothing industry, with 1.3 million, and of the public sector, with 1.3 million (Pochmann, 2012; Antunes, 2014).

As Pochmann states (2012, p. 32), these professions totaled "[...] 14.4 million new jobs, equivalent to 72.4% of all occupations with remuneration of up to 1.5 minimum monthly salary". It is also worth adding that the expansion of female work was significant, reaching almost 60% of occupations, with concentration among women in the 25 to 34 years old.

The precariousness and the level of labor degradation could also be evidenced from other indicators that provide a panoramic view of the Brazilian labor market. Throughout the Lula government, as Braga (2015) highlights,

[...] the number of accidents and deaths at work has increased and the rate of employment turnover has increased [...]. And how would it be different if the main drivers of the current post-Fordist *and* financialized *accumulation regime* are the heavy and civil construction industry, the agro-industry and the service sector? Moreover, despite recent economic growth, the Brazilian social structure did not exceed its semi-peripheral condition, which implies the combination of a large number of cheap jobs with a low investment rate in science and technology, strengthening business development.

In view of this whole context, it should be said that the PT governments managed to increase the number of workers and formalization, and thus reduce the unemployment rates, however, failed to eliminate the conditions of vulnerability that accentuate the

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<sup>4</sup> According to Pochmann, "[...] 11 million jobs were created, of which 53.6% did not foresee remuneration. In the income range of up to 1.5 minimum wage there was a net reduction of almost 300 thousand jobs" (idem, p. 27)

precarious labor force in Brazil, exemplified in the high indices of informality and in the growing outsourcing quotas. Thus, deregulation and the enlargement of subcontracting forms remained, even if at lower levels than those in force in the 1990.

From this contradictory process, perhaps the most significant was the enormous expansion of the new service proletariat, which has developed in terms of both the productive restructuring and the significant privatization process of state-owned enterprises and public services. The enormous expansion of work in *call centers* and *telemarketing*, information and communication technology (ICT) companies, hypermarkets, hotel industry, etc., increasingly inserted in the process of capital appreciation, generated the birth - the birth of a new service proletariat, the info proletariat or *the cybertariat* (Antunes; Braga, 2009; Huws, 2003).

If, during the 1980, the number of outsourced workers (subcontractors) was relatively small, in the following decades this number grew, constituting an expressive contingent of workers without employment and without formal registration, suffering from high turnover rates, sometimes on the margins of labor legislation, redesigning the morphology of labor in Brazil (Antunes, 2006b, 2014, 2015; Druck, 1999, 2011; Druck; Franco, 2007).<sup>5</sup>

It was with this program (social, trade union and jobs) that Lula implemented a policy of very successful conciliation for a long period, having strong support from the different sectors of the company, greatly benefiting the various fractions of the large capital, specifically, the financial and industrial that, as we know, hold strong symbiosis among themselves, although sometimes they have disputed spaces in the conduct of government economic policy, along with the agribusiness sector and the bourgeois fractions, all participants of the Lula's supporters' project.

In the industrial sector, considering only two examples, we see that the automotive sector has reached successive production records, and the almost extinct naval industry has consistently reappeared in the scenario, assuming a prominent position among the largest in the world in the sector (Santana, 2012).

At the top, the big capitals have benefited as few times in the recent history of the country, in almost all its segments. At the base of the social pyramid, the PT government (and its broad coalition) implemented a much broader social policy than its predecessors, although predominantly of a welfare profile, aiming to minimize to some extent the Brazilian misery. Portions of the most impoverished base of our public social pyramid have risen some steps, especially in the sphere of wage-based consumer goods, at the expense, however, as we can see later, of its enormous indebtedness.

As far as the minimum wage is concerned, it has experienced its greatest real growth. The real wage mass growth of the worker was observed from 2003. This mass remained at stagnation levels in the period 1998/2002, with a value of approximately R\$ 36 billion. From 2003 onwards, the annual growth of the same was stable, for example, to R\$ 52 billion in 2007. Such a situation had clear impacts on the recovery of the purchasing power of the

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<sup>5</sup> In a study conducted by Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE), the sectors considered "typically outsourced" corresponded to 25.5% of formal jobs in Brazil, and their remuneration 27.1% lower than that of the other formalized employees. As far as the working day is concerned, outsourced workers work on average 3 hours longer and their length of stay at work is 55.5% shorter than that of the other employees. Its turnover rate is 44.9%, while in the other companies is 22.0% (DIEESE-CUT, 2011). See also *Wealth and Poverty of Work*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*



popular classes. In numbers, in eight years, the minimum wage increased from R\$ 200 to R\$ 510, thus presenting an increase of about 150% (although it is a very low minimum wage, when compared to the values indicated by DIEESE) (Santana, 2012).

Thus, the policy of preserving and expanding the minimum wage also allowed his second government to overcome the deep crisis at the end of his first term and advance intensively in his popularity levels. But it is necessary to emphasize that none of the structuring pillars of Brazilian misery was effectively faced. And this background was accentuated at the end of the first Dilma government and the beginning of her second, when the Brazilian crisis intensified.

It is also important to demarcate the mediations of this process. On the one hand, the PT government, predominantly from 2006, boosted assistance policies, as well as the real increase in the minimum wage and, supported by these initiatives, built its support base with the most impoverished segments of society. On the other hand, since his first term, he advanced in the reform of the pension system and instituted two laws that have reached labor rights (Krein; Biavaschi, 2015).

The first of them, Law 11.101, of 2/9/2005, establishes, in the words of Souto Maior (2014, p. 5), the “labor debt”. With the new rules, in situations of judicial, extrajudicial recovery, and bankruptcy of companies, the labor credit is no longer a priority over the others. Only credits at the limit of 150 minimum wages remain priority over the others. The Law thus reflects the logic of distribution between the employer and the worker of business risks (Souto Maior, 2014).

The second, Law 10.820, of 12/17/2003, started the process of regulating the paycheck loan. Such legislation, in addition to protecting financial institutions, giving them the security of receiving loans and direct debit financing on payroll, provided support to a government program that, over many years, has enabled itself to be anchored in the incentive to consumption associated with the indebtedness of workers (Krein; Biavaschi, 2015).

## **The trade union question**

It is not by chance, therefore, under the leadership of Lula and his planners, during the first PT government, at the end of 2004 and early 2005, that the proposal for union reform was strengthened. Lula’s electoral victory brought to power a generation of forged union militants, like him, in the so-called “new syndicalism” and in the criticism of the legacy of the so-called “union subservience”. Promise of campaign, the reform of trade union legislation entered the agenda. The Ministry of Labor, based on the organization of the National Labour Forum (FNT), integrated, tripartite, by representatives of workers, patronage and government, sought to develop a new union project for the country.<sup>6</sup>

There was a certain demand on such changes by the trade union sectors since the governments of FHC, who wanted, along with the employer, to carry out a labor reform without providing the unions with new possibilities of restructuring and mobilization to liberate them from the controls laid down in the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT).

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<sup>6</sup> For details on the assembly and operation of the FNT, see, among others, Bargas and Oliveira (2005), Druck (2006) and Santana (2009).

In the view of its proponents in government, reform would be a step toward a broader change, designed not only as “mere legislative amendment”, but as “[...] a broad legal-institutional reorganization of a systemic character that, from the normative point of view”, aimed to “[...] involve the right to trade union, labor law, labor public administration bodies and labor justice” (MTE, 2005, s/d).

The set of reforms in this area, intended by the government, as expressed in its documents (MTE, 2003; MTE, 2005), came in the sense of o make laws and institutions of work more compatible with what would be the new social, political and economic conjuncture experienced by the country. In line with these objectives, the project’s “Explanatory Statement” indicated that:

The reform of the Trade Union legislation is one of the most expensive commitments to change this management, due to the structural delay in the current standards. Allowing a truly free and autonomous trade union organization in relation to the State, in addition to fostering collective bargaining as a fundamental instrument for conflict resolution, are essential objectives for strengthening democracy and stimulating authentic representativeness (MTE, 2005, s/d).

However, the draft law that dealt with the issue, despite some points of consensus, generated more dissent and many doubts. It has come to legislation exactly at a critical moment in national political life, marked by scandals carried out by exponential figures of the government and the party of the president.

Obviously used by the media and the opposition, it produced, from the denunciations of corruption of the so-called “Mensalão” [Political Bribe Scheme] case, a certain paralysis of legislative life as such, carrying energies to the Parliament Commissions of Inquiry (CPIs). The government, also severely impacted by the dispositions, with narrow margin of action, chose to slice the bill of labor reform, following up, in retail, only a few points such as, for example, the recognition of the union centers (Santana, 2009).

Although this proposal for labor reform has been hindered by the political crisis, as well as by the strong opposition by various trade union actors, both to the right, to the center and to the left wings, it was emblematic of the deeper sense of conciliation present in the first Lula government.

The proposals that emerged from the FNT negotiations went against the principles that guided the creation of CUT, aimed at an independent trade unionism, detached from the State which, to a great extent, was at the basis of the constitution of the so-called “new syndicalism”. In addition to a set of proposals aimed at flexibilization of labor rights, it was also aimed at benefiting the union summits to the detriment of the operational bases, to transfer the exercise of negotiation to the central and its directions, restricting the action of the unions and the basic assemblies.

Moreover, the central units would be measured and defined by their representation, hindering the organizational life of more autonomous entities, since the proposal came to contemplate minimum limits for the recognition of the representation of the unions. Finally, it established that the collection of the Trade Tax and other contributions or assistance fees would be replaced by the so-called “Collective Negotiation Contribution” (up to 1% of the worker’s net income in the previous year), directly impeding the desire for autonomous co-

operation, Free and voluntary workers for the maintenance of unions (Antunes, 2006b; Santana, 2009).

It is worth mentioning about this process, which marks the beginning of the first Lula government, that the trade union verticalism, summit practices and excessive bureaucratism, which the CUT criticized so much during its first years of existence, were impregnated in this proposal of union reform both through an attempt to significantly reduce what was still preserved from basic union organization, as by the abandonment of the tripod freedom, autonomy and union dependency, guiding principles of the so-called “new syndicalism” and, therefore, considered vital and non-negotiable in its origin (Antunes; Silva, 2015; Antunes; Santana, 2014).

As a result of the controversy and resistance generated within the trade unions movement, no progress was made in the attempt to restrict the participation of the unions and the basic general meetings in the negotiation processes. But part of the measures ended up being contemplated by Law 11.648, of 2008, which legalized the Brazilian trade union centers, establishing the requirements for official recognition. The Law also established, by amending the CLT, new criteria for the distribution of the Trade Union Tax in order to contemplate the centers.

It is also important to demarcate the context in which the new policy of control of syndicalism and its twofold meaning has developed. On the one hand, the union summit began to occupy, during the Lula’s administration, important positions in the high state bureaucracy (in the ministries, in the councils of state companies and also of privatized companies). On the other hand, the incorporation of the centrals into the official trade union structure enabled both the integration of these entities to the Deliberative Board of the Worker Support Fund (CODEFAT), a tripartite body responsible for the management of the Worker Support Fund (FAT), such as receiving funds directly linked to FAT or other state funds. These mechanisms, in view of a scenario marked by union oneness at the base and union pluralism at the domes, strengthened and brought even closer the main union centers of the Lula’s government.

The union universe also changed significantly between the first and second Lula’s government, suffering a strong reconfiguration. In addition to CUT, the CTB (Central of Workers of Brazil),<sup>7</sup> of the Trade Union Force, founded in 1991, with an ideological profile on the right, but part of the union support base of the Lula government, the trade union spectrum also included small centrals that sought to expand their space, such as the CGTB (General Central of Workers of Brazil), the UGT (General Union of Workers), the New Central, some of them with small level of union representation, heirs of those which were from the “old syndicalism” linked to the State and that saw in the approximation with the government the possibility of expanding resources and state funds.

Subsequently, in open opposition to the Lula’s and Dilma’s governments, was CONLUTAS (National Coordination of Struggles), an entity founded in 2004 that, in 2010, became CSP-Conlutas (Central and Popular Trade Union). It was part of the same process the birth of the so-called INTERSINDICAL movement, originating in 2006, and which then was divided into two strands. These trade unions, unlike all the others mentioned above, refused any kind of appeal from the “old trade unionism” of the state.

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<sup>7</sup> Formed in its origin by the Syndical Classicist Chain, which disjoined CUT in 2007 to create its own central.

Not for nothing, they are becoming established in the first years of the Lula's government, based on trade union entities that break with the CUT and stand in opposition to the PT government. It is part of this process the accession to the new centrals, especially the CSP-Conlutas, of a significant number of unions linked to the federal public functionalism, whose base was heavily hit by the pension reform and the so-called university reform, forwarded by Lula at the beginning of his first presidential term.

In addition to the opposition to the PT government and the rescue of the independence of the union entities against the State, other characteristics of these centrals deserve attention. The first, the CSP-Conlutas, defends, from its origin, the establishment of a central that brings together not only the traditional trade unions, but also the trade union oppositions, youth organizations, popular movements, as well as those set up around the struggle against the oppression of women, black men and women, LGBT, etc. Thus, it is sought an instrument of struggle capable of agglutinating and representing a portion of the working class increasingly complex and heterogeneous the result of the impact of neoliberalism and the process of productive restructuring on the world of work.

The second variant, INTERSINDICAL, with a more sharply trade union profile, sought to rescue the principles of a "trade union by base", however, finding itself clearly divided between the creation or not of a new central.

Throughout this reconfiguration framework, the CUT's trajectory and its transformation as a critical and independent trade union center in an entity strongly attuned to the actions and policies of the Lula's government deserves to be noted.<sup>8</sup> Such repositioning only served once again to disorient the trade union movement in the fight and opposition to neoliberalism, then in its new social-liberal variant.

Carrying out a significant shift from the historical interests of the working class to the defense of a more negotiating action and agreement, the CUT has distanced itself from its original union and political project, which has progressively disregarded the proposals and actions of the Central. Even more complicated was the fact that, by acting this way, it ended up weakening the syndical struggle and unpreparing the workers for trade union actions of resistance and confrontation.

Despite being fought by the CUT for years, the state trade unionism gave signs of strong revitalization, added to a pro-positive component. The negotiating world, state dependence (political, ideological and financial) and class conciliation policy under Lula's command became even more intense, distancing the trade union movement from what, in recent times, had been positively designated as "new trade unionism", bringing it closer to a kind of state trade unionism (Antunes; Silva, 2015).

As Braga points out (2015), "[...] the Lula's syndicalism has transformed itself not only into an asset administrator of the bourgeois state, but into a key actor in the arbitration of capitalist investment in the country itself." Preoccupied with the profitability of the funds that he began to administer, as well pointed out Francisco de Oliveira (2008), and with its members occupying various positions in the structure of the Brazilian State, the high trade union bureaucracy "was financialized", that is, associated his interests, as a privileged social

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<sup>8</sup> The fact that its former President Luiz Marinho, component of the Syndical Articulation, is raised to the position of Minister of Labour of the Lula government between June 2005 and March 2007, is symptomatic of this new political stance adopted by CUT, leaving the position to take over the Ministry of Social Security until June 2008.

layer, to the accumulation cycle of financial capital that was developed. Thus, the militant PT of the strikes and social movements of the 1980 and part of the 1990, moved away from its origins, becoming a smaller partner of the capitalist power block in Brazil (Braga, 2015).

## **Social policies and the new social base of support**

The action of the PT governments maintained a certain centrality in terms of actions of social programs that could have effective impacts on poverty reduction. And this has been felt over time.

The work of young people served as one of the beacons of the government's action at its beginning. Launched in 2003, the First Employment Program, however did not meet the expected targets, suffering deactivation in 2006. As for the eradication of labor in conditions similar to that of slave, the Lula government continued with the measures already undertaken in the previous government, achieving some positive advances. On the other hand, programs such as Zero Hunger and Bolsa Família<sup>9</sup> were important brands of PT governments, with significant effects, especially in the second case.

At the end of his first term, Lula made important changes in his social policies in the search for regaining support that was being eroded, mainly due to the profound open political crisis with the so-called “Mensalão”, which could pose risks to his re-election in 2006 (Antunes, 2006a).

One of the most expressive changes occurred with the expansion of the Bolsa – Família. Harsh and distinct criticisms were directed to the PBF, especially by the latter, in the sense that it presented a merely assistance axis, without providing an alternative that changed the structure of Brazilian misery, which could be done, for example, through a deep agrarian reform, or by the taxation of financial capital and large fortunes, etc.

If the most conservative criticisms justified that, by receiving assistance from the government, the assisted workers would no longer seek employment, the advocates of the project pointed out that, in addition to removing many from the poverty situation, the Bolsa Família indirectly guaranteed that they could also bargain entry into the market in a less precarious situation.

The origin of the Program at national level dates back to the unification and improvement of “income transfer actions” already developed under the FHC government.<sup>10</sup> This is a Program that, throughout the Lula administration, has had high repercussions among the poorest sections of the Brazilian population, with a very low cost to the Brazilian public budget when compared to the volume destined to the payment of public debt interest to the banks. As demonstrated by the data from 2008, as determined by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), “[...] The cost of the PBF represents only 0.38% of

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<sup>9</sup> This program is based on the transfer of income from the fulfillment of certain conditions. Aiming at the integration and unification of programs already in force in the previous government, the Bolsa Família consists of financial assistance from the government to low-income families. These are defined upon having a per *capita* income from R\$ 10,00 to R\$1.520,00. To live up to the stipend, the families need to keep their children and/or dependents with school attendance and up-to-date in terms of vaccination.

<sup>10</sup> This program, created in 2003, replaced the Community Solidarity Program, established by the FHC government in 1995, to combat hunger and poverty, in what would be its structural basis. According to official data, at the time of the program's creation, there were about 44 million people facing hunger.

GDP and about only 3% of the total expenditure on social security and welfare benefits of the country” (Pochmann, 2010, p. 8).

The Program aimed to reach the poorest 20% of the Brazilian population, electing the 10% range as a priority. It aimed, in this way, to impact the indicators of inequality through the elimination of the so-called “excessive inequality.” This “excessive inequality”, in turn, was identified from the comparison between income appropriation indicators of countries considered with a level of development similar to the Brazilian one (Barros; Carvalho; Mendonça, 2010).

In 2006, the year that marks the end of Lula’s first presidential term, the PBF expanded its scope, from the 3.6 million of families<sup>11</sup> directly affected by the Program in January 2004 to 11 million families. The number of families served remained stable in the years 2007 and 2008, being again expanded throughout 2009, when it began to encompass 13.7 million families (Soares; Sátyro, 2010). However, data on the number of people served by the Program provide a better dimension of its repercussion. Accordingly, the study carried out by Costanzi and Fagundes (2010, p. 264),

In March 2010, the number of people who were in Bolsa Família reached 48,680 million. Taking into account the population estimate, in 2009, of 191.480 million, it means that the PBF served about a quarter of the country’s total population (25.4%). This percentage varied from 14.9% in the Southeast (the lowest value) to 45.6% in the Northeast (the highest value). [...] The greatest coverage of the program in relation to the total population is, in particular, in the municipalities of the North and Northeast regions, although there are cities with high coverage in the other regions.

This welfare court social policy, which was the main flag of the PT government, was considered exemplary by the World Bank. Focused less on the organized working class, the social base of Lula’s origin, the Program began to reach the most impoverished sectors, usually more dependent on State aid to survive.

The data from 2010, obtained through the Unified Registry, control system and cross-checking of beneficiaries of social programs of the federal government, show that the profile of the beneficiaries of the PBF meets the general profile of the Brazilian social inequality, which reserves the areas of greatest poverty for the afro-descendant population, women and young people. In all regions of the country, female participation among beneficiaries was, in April 2010, 54.2%. This index becomes even more preponderant if considered the legal responsible of the family. In this case, 92.5% are women. These responsible, in turn, concentrate on the age group from 25 to 34 years (35.5%) and the age group from 35 to 44 years (29.5%) (Costanzi; Fagundes, 2010).

When the look turns to the ethnic-racial cut-off, the data point to a population attended mainly composed of afro-descendants with 65.3% of self-declared brown and another 7.5% of black, totaling 72.8%. Data from April 2010 also point to the low number

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<sup>11</sup> Another 4.2 million families, in January 2004, were still beneficiaries of remaining programs from the previous government, such as the *Bolsa Escola*, *Bolsa Alimentação* or *Cartão Alimentação*. The PBF was over the years, through a single register, grouping different benefits according to the family profile, which resulted in the elimination of these other programs. In 2008, only about 15 thousand families benefited from the old programs.



of beneficiaries of the Program, with 81.1% without complete elementary school, among them, 15.8% illiterate (*idem*).

The values received by the families benefited by the PBF vary. The minimum, called “basic benefit”, updated in July 2016, corresponds to R\$85.00. Other benefits, considered variable, may be added to this value, in the value of R\$39.00 each. However, despite the low cost, by covering  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Brazilian population below the poverty line, the Program has important importance both from the economic point of view, providing little for those who have practically nothing, as a politician, forming for years a fundamental social base from the electoral point of view.

Acting in the same direction, as we have already indicated above, the governmental action of real increase in the minimum wage, although the readjustments kept it far below the levels provided for in the Constitution and defended by DIEESE, focused on the poorest segments of the population, reaching broader and more extreme ramifications in the world of work.

It is evident that such actions consolidated an important migration in part of the social base of the second Lula government, the most organized working class, the original basis of the PT, toward the poorest wage earners, with lower level or even without trade union and political organization, and that are in less industrialized areas of the country (Antunes, 2006a).<sup>12</sup>

## **Dilma governments: from the rise to the crisis**

The Dilma’s government, taken office in 2011, basically maintained the economic receipt of the second Lula’s government: economic growth directed to the domestic market; encouragement to the production of *commodities* for export; reduction of taxes aimed at meeting the demands of different fractions of the capital, such as industrial, construction, etc. It has also preserved the financial policy based on high interest rates, thus ensuring, in much of its first government, the support of financial capital. It was only when the repercussions of the international crisis were accentuated in Brazil, being felt no longer as “a little ripple”, that the Dilma’s government rehearsed an interest reduction policy through state banks. This whole set constituted the so-called New Economic Matrix.

However, the worsening of the international economic crisis, which was no longer restricted to the countries of the North, but which also began to directly affect the so-called BRICS, was slowly undermining the bourgeois social base that supported the governments of Lula and Dilma. In addition to this central point, another proponent increased the divisions and fractures in relation to the Dilma government: 1) In the political scene, the lawsuit called “*Lava Jato* Operation” directly involved the PT and its main ally, the old PMDB, in new corruption scandals; 2) in the social universe, discontent increased with regard to the government’s project and its ever-increasing distance from the social movements of the government. Social Mentions and unions that originally constituted the social base of PT (Antunes, 2015).

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<sup>12</sup> An analysis of the municipal elections of 2016, from this perspective, indicates that, despite the massive defeat of the PT (national fall of 60% of its municipalities), had a greater possibility of resistance exactly in the spaces of greater penetration of the PBF (fall of 28%) (Mello; Carriello; Grillo, 2016).

These fissures of the project that structured the PT governments would not lead to the streets the segments of the most precarious working youth. Despite the expansion of jobs, these positions, mainly reserved for women, young and black people, further accentuated the perverse logic that has long been the Brazilian labor market: low wages and their incidence among those traditionally more discriminated segments in the labor market (Braga, 2013, 2015).

It was in this political context that, in 2013, the rebellions of June broke out. What were, then, their main causal elements?

We know that the June rebellions originated from the prepared actions, in a long period and in several capitals of the country, by the Free Fare Movement (MPL). These actions, which had as initial motivation the defense of the student free fare, gradually began to encompass the fight against the increase of the fares of public transport and in defense of urban mobility. In 2013, among them, these manifestations were expanded exponentially, starting to incorporate a varied range of flags and claims.

Perhaps we can stress that the rebellions found their root causes in a special juncture, in which broader structural elements converged and the outcrop of a latent political crisis. The interlocking among these points generated the combustion that led to the mobilizations that made the exhaustion of the PT project noticeable.

The young working population that was present and dominant in public squares denounced private and chaotic transport; degraded public health, and abandoned public education. It was in some way belated against the marketing of its everyday life.

The demonstrations also took place in a special conjuncture, marked by the organization of the Confederations Cup, when the use of public resources for private interests linked to the construction of stadiums (the so-called arenas), the whole transnational complex and the great corporations involved with football *entertainment*, allowed to emerge a profound symbiosis among FIFA, the Dilma's government, transnational corporations and the various bourgeois factions articulated with the government, in a moment of crisis.

This scenario was even more explosive, since we experienced an international context also characterized by rebellions, in which the popular masses appropriated the public space, exercising plebiscite, horizontal practices, contrary to traditional organizations, manifesting frontal opposition as to the forms of representation and invalidity in force, both in the capitalist countries of the West and in the dictatorships that were perpetuated in the Middle East.

These manifestations, which have lasted for a long period, were polymorphs and polyclassist. They began with a strong popular presence, in particular the students—who-work or the workers—who-study, along with more politicized sections of youth, urban social movements or peripheries, with left-wing parties, unions, and other social and political groups.

They also reached broad contingents of the low, middle and high classes, as well as support of dominant fractions, as the demonstrations were going to have a strong presence of more conservative, apparently apolitical sectors, with an ideological accent more to the right wing. However, if these contingencies did not lead the 2013 demonstrations<sup>13</sup>, they quickly developed systematic campaigns against the left wings and the social movements, and

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<sup>13</sup> See the significant set of articles on the June rebellions in Sampaio Jr. (2014).

particularly against Dilma, Lula and the PT. All this created the constraints that indicated that this new critical phase would be the one of greater depth until now experienced by the Dilma government and the previous PT governments.

## **A wave of strikes and rebellions**

The year 2013 was not only marked by major street mobilizations. Throughout this year, the Brazilian working class has starred in an unprecedented strike wave in the history of the country. In all, according to a study carried out by DIEESE (2015), 2,050 strikes were recorded, which meant a 134% increase compared to the previous year, when 877 strikes occurred.

Another relevant data identified by the study relates to the incidence of strikes triggered in private companies. In 2013, paralysations in this sector outweighed deflated in the public sector, equivalent to 54% of the total. These strikes, with important participation of workers in the service sector, were characterized to a great extent by their defensive nature, that is, with guidelines related to “[...] defense of current working conditions, [...] respect for minimum working conditions, health and safety or against non-compliance with rights established in agreement, collective bargaining or legislation” (DIEESE, 2015, p. 8).

According to data from DIEESE (2015, p. 10), in terms of the number of suspensions, as well as, the main causes that were responsible for the outbreak of this expressive strike movement in 2012 and 2013, of about 2,900 strikes, we see that demands related to the readjustment of wages (41% in 2012 and 36% in 2013), food (2% in 2012 and 27% in 2013) and working conditions (15% in 2012 and 21% in 2013), are among the first three.

The importance assumed by demands related to working conditions, the third most present claim among the strikes of 2013, is indicative of the advance of the mechanisms of precariousness among the Brazilian working class. In the specific case of public functionalism and state-owned workers, demands of this nature appear alongside claims relating to the hiring of more employees or even those related to the employment or institution of the Plan of Positions and Wages (DIEESE, 2015).

In this sense, the year 2013 was configured as the moment that, amid the open social crisis, a wide strike movement expressed in different forms broke out, along with street mobilizations. Sometimes, the actions covered professional categories of national scope, such as those triggered by the bank. On other occasions, these mobilizations also marked short strikes, by workplaces, and can count or not on the leadership of the unions. The street sweepers’ strike in Rio de Janeiro in March 2014 was perhaps one of the most emblematic of the period opened in 2013.

Thus, contrary to the alleged inaction of the working class, it was evident that the strikes marked their presence in the social and political decontamination that swept the period. Let us remember, just to stay at this juncture, that since 2012 we have witnessed the outbreak of several important movements such as, for example, in Rondônia, of the workers in the Plants of Jirau and Santo Antônio (2012) and, in Rio de Janeiro, the Road Workers (2014), of the workers in the works of the Petrochemical Complex of Rio de Janeiro (2015) and of the street sweepers (2015).

Worthy of note is that these movements, with a marked presence of the precarious working youth, were made beyond the union leadership, and that, depending on the situation, pushed them, trampled or overtook them. There are several indications of disproportions that, in the face of a certain paralysis of the trade union summit, separated directions and union bases, both in the demands, as in the forms and dynamics of struggle.

The Lula's project, which had been underway for a decade, demonstrated its fatigue and began to collapse. From public teachers to street sweepers, from banking to metallurgical workers, from health workers and from transportation to outsourced workers, in fact, a myriad of wage-earners have broken this new strike cycle which, in some way, expressed discontent with regard to precarious working conditions and wages, the struggle for expansion of achievements already ensured, or solidarity with other categories, adding to the broader protests that were present in the social and political scene of the country.

## **From crisis to coup: conciliation exhausted and preventive counteraction advances**

It was in this critical situation that the Dilma's government reached the elections in October 2014, when the intensity of the economic crisis gave evidence of strong accentuation. Victorious, not without a fierce dispute, his second victory, which began in January 2015, bowed very quickly to the new demands of the different fractions of capital, which began to give even greater signs of dissension toward the government. The polyclassist pact, designed by Lula and supported by the PT, was coming to an end.

Seeking to prevent this movement from expanding, Dilma expanded the primary surplus; encouraged further privatization in airports, ports, etc.; increased the interest rate; it implemented a fiscal adjustment that severely penalized the working class, publicly assuming flags – such as pension reform – that were increasingly demanded by the ruling classes.

On the other hand, shortly after the electoral victory, amid the growing popular discontent, the expansion of precarious work and the development of unemployment, Dilma changed the rules for granting unemployment insurance, increasing the minimum uninterrupted working time (from 6 to 12 months), for the benefit for the first time, and also extending it in the case of new requests. If that were not enough, she promoted changes in the criteria for granting pension for death, clearly signaling that the burden of the crisis would once again be paid by the working class.

In June 2016, when the context that drew Dilma's impeachment seemed irreversible, unemployment already reached 11.5 million workers. According to IBGE, unemployment rate<sup>14</sup> jumped from 6.5% in the fourth quarter of 2014 to 9.5% in the first quarter of 2015,<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> In the midst of increasing unemployment, as of July 2015, the Employment Protection Program (PPE), instituted by a provisional measure by the Dilma government, was applied. The measure, considered emergency and converted into Law 13.189, allowed companies, through the allegation of financial difficulties and through collective agreement, to reduce hours and wages by up to 30%. Part of the wage loss of workers (50%), as provided for in the Law, would be compensated with funds from F&A.T. Companies such as Mercedes Benz, which over nearly two decades benefited from tax reductions, breaking constant productivity and sales records, have signed agreements of this nature. In August 2016, before the agreement reached an end and disrespecting the stability provided for in the EPP legislation, the automobile industry started the layoffs process. Days later, it was suspended to sign a new agreement, this time, aimed at opening another Voluntary Resignation Program (PDV).

<sup>15</sup> Indicators of IBGE / Continuous Pnad (DIEESE, 2016).

reaching, in June 2016, 11.3%. Along with the expansion of unemployment, the working class had seen the strong deterioration of its income, falling by 4.2%, if compared to the figures between April and June 2015, with average values approving, despite inflation, those practiced three and a half years ago.

With the worsening of the international crisis, its strong repercussion in Brazil and the consequent dizzying fall in the price of *commodities* – which were found in one of the pillars of the Brazilian economy, the different bourgeois fractions, which previously supported the PT governments, began to open the project. Thus, in addition to penalizing wage earners even harder, the Dilma's government was submerged in a strong intra-bourgeois dispute, since, in this context of crisis, the disputes around who would suffer less with the reduction of profits arising from the economic framework were expanded. This situation of instability was also greatly expanded by the outbreak of Operation Lava Jato, which pushed the Dilma's government to a situation that led it to the final outcome of the impeachment.

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016, the Federal Senate put the last point in the work that removed Dilma Rousseff and the PT from power, occupied for 14 years. Faced with the advance of the crisis and Operation Lava Jato, the PMDB, until recently preferred ally of the PT in the government, preferred the path of the conspiracy, dealing with the coup of parliamentary character. In one of the most depressing moments in the history of parliament in Brazil, the elected vice president, Michel Temer, replaced Dilma Rousseff, becoming president illegitimately. While the economic scenario was favorable, Brazil seemed to go well, but with the worsening of the economic, social, political and institutional crisis and, with the impulse of Operation Lava Jato, which hit some political corruption cores that were in charge of the party and even of the government, the project demonstrated its limitations and collapsed. All this deeply reviewed the previous “positive scenario”, visceral breaking the policy of agreement between the various classes and class fractions that supported the Lula's project for more than a decade.

Already in the fierce elections of October 2014 it was possible to perceive a reduction in the support of the bourgeois fractions to the Dilma's government. The decrease in the interest rate carried out in a short period was sufficient to give the “warning sign” to the sectors of the rentier bourgeoisie. The worsening of the recessive situation, in turn, anticipated the pressure of the dominant fractions that began to demand profound changes in economic policy in order to adjust to the new scenario.

It was not for another reason that, immediately after the electoral victory of October 2014, Dilma, to calm the opposition, constituted a coalition ministry and appointed Joaquim Levy, representative of the big banks, to the Ministry of Finance, with the task of carrying out a hard “fiscal adjustment”. The measure, however, proved unable to appease the entrepreneurial discontent. It also increased the contentions in the popular classes that allowed Dilma to implement a program that she criticized during the electoral process. In the middle classes, especially in their most conservative sectors – from liberals, to defenders of the military dictatorship, to proto-fascists and fascists – a real hatred of the Dilma government and the PT of Lula has been unleashed.

By failing to attract these sectors and by having defended one program during the elections and applied another, attributed to the neoliberal right during the electoral process, Dilma was accused of “electoral fraud.”

In the low middle layers, discontent also increased, as wages were reduced, inflation increased and unemployment reached explosive numbers. The myth of the PT government's "neo-developmental" project collapsed, to the exact extent that the crisis hit hard the sectors that had been included during the Lula's era.

The sectors that were still linked to the PT, made a huge effort to prevent impeachment, but the parliament, with a conservative profile – a true swamp of Brazilian politics – was already largely imbued with the proposal to remove the Dilma's government (and PT) at any price.

After more than a decade, the government's support base in the Congress was broken.

As impeachment is provided for in the Brazilian Constitution, an "ideal alternative" was managed of the ruling classes and their distinct fractions: a coup with a legal and constitutional appearance. A coup that, relying on the decisive support of the great media and decisive portions of the judiciary, supported the appearance not of a military coup, as in 1964, but a new kind of parliamentary coup, with strong judicial and media support.

Despite the Dilma's government, through the fiscal adjustment commanded by Joaquim Levy, seeks to implement the main demands of the ruling classes, the scale and scope of the crisis led them to decide for the disposal of a government that was always useful to them. In that context of deep crisis, the classes that once supported the mandates of the PT envisioned the real possibility of imposing a "pure" government to ensure that all the necessary actions for the resumption of bourgeois expansion were taken and, among them, the complete dismantling of social and labor rights, conquered over many decades of struggle. Thus, the conditions for a new preventive counter-revolution in Brazil were created, to recall the rich conceptualization of Florestan Fernandes (1975).

From the beginning of his illegitimate government, Temer presented his austerity proposals that deepened those previously initiated by Dilma. Recomposing the volatile parliamentary support base, on the one hand, Temer drastically reduced investments in education, health and public security, initiating labor reforms, with the aim of destroying the consolidation of labor laws (CLT), created in 1943; on the other hand, it has greatly expanded the interests of financial capital in the conduct of his government's economic policy.

It is also worth emphasizing that, in addition to its prominent role in the removal of President Dilma, the Brazilian Judiciary continues to act intensely and selectively in the sense of repressing the social and trade union movements of the indigenous peoples, implementing an exception legislation that seeks to ensure "transparency and social peace" to the new government that is called the "Order and Progress".

The first results of this intense and selective performance could be seen in the municipal elections of October 2016, as a possible measure, with the fall of PT from the third largest party to tenth place. The number of municipalities under its control decreased from 630 to 256, which means a fall of almost 60% (G1, 2016).

This percentage of fall was practically repeated in the number of votes that PT candidates received, when compared to the 2012 elections. The mark of corruption, which the PT, for decades, attributed to the other parties and used as a flag, calling for "ethics in politics", turned against it.



But it must be added that the political, judicial and media actions that have led to the coup and that support the new government have not targeted only the PT. The entire left spectrum has been or is being reached by the ultra-conservative and even autocratic measurements.

## Conclusion

The crisis that struck the second Dilma government (2015/6) reached a boiling point that resonated at the various levels: political, economic, social and institutional. As we try to indicate, this situation has unfolded from a complex combination of more or less simultaneous elements: 1) expansion of the international economic crisis and its effects in Brazil, which collapsed the PT myth of the commodity-based growth model, the expansion of consumption and the domestic market, and the false idea that Brazil would be immune to the international crisis and prepared for any external oscillation and adversity; 2) deepening of the political crisis, either by the split opened by the ruling fractions in this new context of crisis, or by the advance of complaints of corruption involving, once again, part of the political summit and the PT government; 3) destabilization of the arc of alliances that supported the Dilma government, with the dissension opened by the PMDB and much of the allied base, completely collapses the parliamentary political base that gave support to the PT governments, and finally; 4) Popular discontent that intensified with the “fiscal adjustment” measures of the second Dilma’s government in 2015, which further penalized the working class, generating the explosion of unemployment in Brazil.

Finally, the crisis of the Dilma’s government must be understood in the framework of the end of the cycle of a model of government conceived and built from a skillful policy of polyclassist conciliation, particularly under the leadership of Lula, capable of articulating, over three consecutive terms of the PT, deep concessions to the different sectors of the ruling classes, together with measures of redistribution of income to the most impoverished sectors, in addition to the expansion of the minimum wage policy, which caused both the increase in the consumption of wage goods, and significantly increased the indebtedness of the working class.

We also saw that, as there was an effective increase in employment and expansion of formal jobs, there were clear traces of contractual and wage precariousness, high levels of turnover, also living with a huge expansion of outsourced employment.

We must also consider, as we have indicated earlier, the incorporation of important segments of the trade union and popular movement into the structures of the state. This integration of part of the trade unions to the few positions available in the most diverse spheres of government, on the one hand strengthened the constitution of a new social sector within the state apparatus, on the other hand, worked as an important tool to brake and control the social and trade union mobilizations of the one that in the recent past defined itself as a new autonomous and independent syndicalism (Antunes; Santana, 2014; Antunes; Silva, 2015).

This new form of action of the new syndicalism, now part of the power, metamorphosed gradually into a negotiating and conciliatory variant, helping to disorganize the Brazilian working class, making it difficult – when not preventing – for its syndically more organized sectors to confront some of the structural pillars that preserve the Brazilian

capitalism, such as the concentrated structure of rural property, the exorbitant profits of the bourgeoisie (financial, industrial, agricultural, commercial and services), the great fortunes, a more progressive taxation that mainly taxed the bourgeois classes, etc.. None of these measures were even initiated by the PT governments.

Totally wrapped in a seemingly successful policy of polyclassist conciliations, the PT governments refused a minimally more confrontational stance. In addition to the examples above, another one can be added, which played a vital role in the coup: the discussion about the breaking of the monopoly of private media has not even been attempted.

In this way, the PT, stuck to the government, did not encourage the possibilities of resistance and advancement of the organized social and trade union struggle, did not activate the social movements that were close to it and did not seek links with others that were outside the orbit of the Labour Party. And when it tried to do it, during the final phase of impeachment, was already too late. Faced with the heavy artillery that was directed to it, it became more and more defensive, having to seek judicial and institutional solutions.

In 2013, before the rebellions that shook Brazil, it proved to be incapable of understanding them. In the second round of the October 2014 elections, the risk of conservative victory of the PSDB produced an intense mobilization that was decisive for Dilma's victory. Soon after, this mobilization was left aside and Dilma and the PT made a victory speech inviting the opposition to the union and, after the inauguration, her government implemented a drastic fiscal adjustment, advocated by the more conservative opposition.

It was then forged the "ideal alternative" of the bourgeois classes. The conditions were created for the outbreak of a coup, a new variant of goal already practiced in Honduras and Paraguay, for which a legal remedy was needed. It was there that a political praxis developed characterized by a double and articulated movement, characterized by the judicialization of politics and the politicization of justice, with the full support of the large media corporations.

And thus, Brazil, which seemed to follow a new and auspicious course, entered, once again, a new phase of deep regression, with the basic finality of operating a much more aggressive neoliberal deepening, with the attribution of privatizing the state companies that had been preserved and, on the other hand, destroy in depth the rights of work conquered over more than a century. Bolsonaro's electoral victory in 2018 sealed this tragic period and marked the beginning of a second phase, then much deeper, of preventive counterrevolution in Brazil (Antunes, 2020). But this is already another story.

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## II

### THE TOTALITY AND UP-TO-DATEDNESS CATEGORY AND THE HISTORICAL-SOCIAL ACTUALITY OF THE CRITIQUE OF POST-STRUCTURALIST AND POST-MODERN THOUGHTS

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#### Introduction

The category of totality<sup>1</sup> has long experienced, in the humanities and social sciences, a widespread<sup>2</sup> disuse, motivated by ideological, philosophical, sociological and historical approaches. To a certain extent, the explanation for this depravity is primarily linked to the reduction of social life to the spheres of singularity and of superficiality

This reductionism is the mark of the process of ideological decay, in the Lukacsian terms (1968), of the bourgeoisie since 1848. Under penalty of denying itself as a class that controls the means of production and, therefore, that establishes the form of social reproduction in its image and likeness, it began to deny the apprehension of contradictory processes in motion in society. Hobsbawm is clear about this when formulates that:

[...] the great revolution of 1789–1848 was the trump not of “industry” as such, but of capitalist industry; not of freedom and equality in general, but of the middle class or of liberal “bourgeois” society; not of the “modern economy” or of the “modern state”, but of the economies and states in a particular geographical region of the world (Hobsbawm, 1982, pages 17–18).

In other words, to maintain its condition as a ruling class, in the bourgeois world human possibilities for the realization of history are limited to the horizon of the phenomenal, where only this level is subject to changes. This process begins to express itself in elaborations and theories about social life limited to the appearance of social phenomena.

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<sup>1</sup> In historical terms, the totality category was foreshadowed in modern philosophy for the first time by Espinosa, had its elaboration in classical German philosophy, being taken to establish the distinction between dialectics and metaphysics (Kosik, 1976). It is up to Lukacs in “History and Class Consciousness”, from 1923, the detailed presentation of totality as a perspective of analysis of Marx’s philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> It suffices to mention the fascist philosopher and sociologist Othmar Spann, who gave the category of totality an extreme meaning, when he defended society as a totality that was itself the absolute supremacy of order and hierarchy. The totality here is taken as an organic whole that, as such, deprived of the dimension of causality and evolution, was also immutable. The result of this conception is the presentation of fascist society as an eternal society (Lukács, 1968, 1978).

It is therefore not interesting in this understanding an approach from the perspective of totality.

What it means to say that, on the one hand, the development of the social being has a growing internal differentiation of societies, with that of the involvement of new contradictions that are being introduced into the social dynamics as its complexity increases; on the other hand, it is noted that the greater the development of social complexity, the more conceptions and theories are reproduced that depart from the capacity to grasp the social dynamics in its entirety.

However, there is more. There is the same condition as the present time, or even better, the weight of the political-cultural ambience, which was imposed in Western Europe and North America, in the last quarter of the twentieth century and expanded to the peripheries. This ambience has marked the present time with a strong presence, which is based on a counter-revolutionary sense that cuts and reconfigures the humanist cultural broth that fermented society. In the words of Hobsbawm (1995), it is a “destruction of the past”, and the social mechanisms that link our personal experience to that of past generations and appear in theoretical elaborations in a brutal anti-ontologism<sup>3</sup> and that, therefore, deny the category of totality as a perspective for analysis and understanding of social life.

It is precisely in Marx's thought,<sup>4</sup> and, particularly, in some authors of the Marxist tradition,<sup>5</sup> like Lukacs, who, in our view, have due consideration of the category totality as an onto-gnoseological dimension.

In other words, the Marxian ontology captures the essence of what is proper to the structure of the social being: its character of totality. A social reality consisting of complexes, which cannot be thought of as an “organism” that is composed of parts that complement each other, but as a historical-concrete system of relations among the totalities that are structured second degree of complexity. This historicity that appears in the Marx's thought “is always the historicity of a complex” (Netto, 1994, p. 38) that moves through negativity<sup>6</sup> that crosses the complexes that build it.

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, we do not disregard the presence of this anti-ontologism in the positivist and neopositivist, structuralist tendencies. However, here, by the time frame, it is up to us to launch clues in post-structuralist and post-modern trends.

<sup>4</sup> It is in this sense that Korsch stated that “[...] for today's bourgeois scholars, Marxism represents not only a serious theoretical and practical difficulty of first order, but also beyond this, a theoretical difficulty of second order, an 'epistemological' difficulty. It is not possible to organize it in any of the traditional drawers of the bourgeois sciences system and, even if it wanted to open especially for it and its closest compares a new drawer called sociology, it would not even be quiet inside, would constantly walk for all the others. 'Economy', 'philosophy', 'history', 'theory of law and state', none of these lines can contain it, but none would be safe from it if it wanted to put it in another” (Korsch, 2008, p. 123).

<sup>5</sup> It is not possible for us within the limits of this chapter, nor is it our objective, to present the approaches present in the Marxist tradition about the totality category. It is up to us to record that we do not disregard this spectrum that is composed of names such as H. Lefebvre (1970, 1968); Korsch (2008); Lukacs (1968); Leandro Konder (2004, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> This movement is summarized by Netto in the following assertion: “The concrete totality is only dynamic as a carrier of an imminent negativity that proceduralizes it – a totality without negativity is a dead totality. But historicity does not conform to a unilinear line: in each constitutive totality of the concrete social totality, the negativity that stimulates is refracted according to its particularities – negativity takes place within the framework of a system of mediations that responds, in the movement of concrete social totality, by the uneven development of its constitutive totalities. Thus, the concrete totality (as its components) is stimulated through mediations – an immediate totality is an amorphous, unstructured totality” (Netto, 1994, p. 38).



The relations established among the various spheres of social being are of reciprocal determination, of relative autonomy, not configuring any mechanical dependence or absolute autonomy of any sphere of being. Understanding the relative autonomy of the spheres of human activity within the social totality means that, within the social being, each complex plays a specific role. The partiality of each sphere is explained not by laws internal to each sphere, but by the function that each particular sphere plays in the social totality. It is in this sense that,

The category of totality means, therefore, on the one hand that objective reality is a coherent whole in which each element is, in one way or another, in relation to each element and, on the other hand, that these relations form, in the objective reality itself, concrete correlations, sets, units, connected with each other in completely different ways, but always determined (Lukács, 1979, p. 240).

In these terms, we understand that the determination of the specificity, of each sphere of the social being, the laws that govern them and determine their developments, is necessary, if we do not want, on the one hand, to fall into the misconception of overdeveloping a complex of reality and assign to it functions that it is not capable of fulfilling and, on the other hand, to autonomize absolutely such with a markedly idealistic posture or to superimpose them conferring a mechanical determinism of the spheres. These misconceptions – so proper to contemporary analyzes – end up limiting rationality to the rational-cognitive procedures that deny the consequent and radical materialistic dialectic that is proper to Marxian thought and that implies a position of the subject that researches far beyond the mere institution of a set of rules, but the conformation of a relationship that allows the subject to catch the dynamics of the object itself. For Marx, the dialectical method is a way of overcoming the appearance of the phenomenon, reaching its essence, that is, its fundamental determination.

Thus, even realizing that bourgeois philosophy “[...] is stuck in the pseudo-dilemma composed of a rigid totality and objective chaos” (Lukács, 1979, p. 240), these pseudo dilemmas are updated in the formulations that there is no place for “great narratives”; in the emphasis on the fragmentary, provisional and changing character of all theoretical elaboration; in the appreciation of subjectivities and the imaginary in the construction of knowledge. In other words, when we seek to find epistemological paradigms in philosophies of irrationalistic matrices, the path opens up to the refusal of any inheritance of dialectical reason and concrete humanism.

In this sense, the present essay intends, albeit briefly, to systematize some limits of post-modern and post-structuralist thinking in light of the category of totality.

## **Before the (post) a historical determination**

To enter into the analysis of post-modern and post-structuralist thinking, it is necessary to return to today distant 1960, and to events related particularly to May 68, which create, in terms of Ferry and Renault “[...] A thought 68” (Ferry; Renault, 1988, p.11). We understand that this period is the historical ground under which post-structuralism and post-

modern thought arise. In other words, the number of the many (posts) needs and undeniably has roots in the significant socio-political, economic and cultural changes arising from the 1960. As a new time, of many innovations, in our view this milestone must be thought of as the historical-dialectical unity of capitalism itself in its crisis processes and its consequences in social relationships. In other words, we want to explain here the *quantum* of historical continuity, with previously existing and not novel tendencies, are present here.

Summarily, there are several phenomena that explained the probability of the pattern of dependent and associated development that became involved in the beginning of the decade. These phenomena were brought together, in this historical block, in a wide process, of a world character, of contestation of the form of monopolist capitalism that was in sharp worsening of its social contradictions and inequalities, thus intensifying, intersocial struggles in the central capitalist countries and their relationship with the periphery, mainly in Latin America.

It is a belief in the possibility of a revolutionary transformation of society – against the consequences of the development of capitalism in advanced countries – focused mainly on criticism of consumerism and individualism, at the same time, a series of criticisms of the methods of the so-called “traditional left-wing”, whose most open expression is the explosion of May 68.<sup>7</sup> These actions begin to characterize themselves, thus, as bearers of an ideary of counterculture that placed itself as an antagonism to the oppressive qualities of the technical-bureaucratic rationality of scientific basis manifested in the monolithic corporate and state forms and in their forms of institutionalized power (including that of political parties and trade unions regarded as bureaucratized). In David Harvey’s words, in a clear anti-modernist movement markedly cosmopolitan, transnational and, above all, contrary to the so-called “modern high culture”:

[...] counterculture explores the domains of self-realization by means of a distinctive “neo-left wing” policy of the incorporation of anti-authoritarian gestures and iconoclastic habits (in music, clothing, language, lifestyle), criticism of everyday life and the arts (Harvey, 1992, p. 44).

The theoretical dominance of post-1960 will thus be marked by Foucauldian-inspired post-structuralism.<sup>8</sup> In this thought it is symptomatic that a relationship between

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<sup>7</sup> In a broad way, it is enough to mention that a popular movement that began with the students ended up leading to the stoppage of 15 million workers in France. In Eastern Europe, the attempt to “democratic renewal” of socialism in Czechoslovakia with the movement inside the Communist Party led by Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek had as its slogan socialism with a human face.

<sup>8</sup> We are clear that it was F. Nietzsche, in the second half of the 19th century, who first makes a radical critique of modernity, questioning modern reason itself. With this, we want to explain that both Foucault’s and post-modern thinking are not a novelty, since they show clear traces of the 19th century’s anti-modern criticism. At the same time, prison, asylum, hospital, university, the school, are understood devoid of the resource of a comprehensive general theory. As Harvey explains, Foucault “[...] it interprets soviet repression as the inevitable outcome of an utopian revolutionary theory (Marxism) that resorted to the same techniques and knowledge systems present in the capitalist mode it sought to replace. The only way to ‘eliminate fascism that is in our head’ is to explore the open qualities of human discourse, taking them as a foundation, and thus intervene in the way knowledge is produced and constituted in particular places where a discourse of localized power prevails” (Harvey, 1992, p. 50). In these terms, we want to emphasize that Foucault did not intend to produce reforms in state practices, but was focused only on improving localized resistance to institutions, techniques and discourses of organized repression.

power and knowledge is established – starting a notion of power that is not only situated within the State, but in a range of micropower that appear in all relationships in different localities, contexts and situations. In this sense, a close relationship is established among the knowledge systems (discourse) that codify techniques and practices for the exercise of social control and domain in particular localized contexts. Hence his studies on the mental hospitals and prisons blend as a dispersed and non-integrated organization built independent of any systematic strategy of class domination.

Thus, a differentiation is built with Althusser's thought, since it is no longer a notion of the semi autonomy of the several levels or instances, especially the political instance and the dynamics of state power or its use to justify a semi-autonomy in the sphere of culture. What emerges from Foucault post-structuralism is not merely a heterogeneity of levels,

[...] from now on, semi autonomy will be extended into *tout court* autonomy, and it will be conceivable that in the dicentric and schizophrenic world of advanced capitalism, the various instances may really have no organic relationship with each other (Jameson, 2002, p.102 – emphasis added).

And what is more important, the idea will arise that the struggles pertinent to each of these levels (purely political, purely economic, pure cultural, purely theoretical struggles) may also have no necessary relationships with each other. Thus, the various social movements, the “dead subjects”, and the disillusioned with the practices of socialism really existing for a multifaceted and pluralistic attack on the localized practices of repression, but devoid of any frontal and radical attack on the capitalist system.

Thus, the culture that emerged from the late 1960 is based on a political practice that values daily life, the everyday life, here and now. Thus, it affects the hypertrophy of the subjective dimension as recognition of the autonomy of the various interests present in civil society and its respective social groups, thus triggering a conception of politics focused on the daily practice of each subject, in which each one makes the “revolution” in his or her daily life.

To put it another way, at the same time that the experience of the really existing society has become the subject of criticism, being taken as the necessity of socialism itself, from the criticisms that were directed to capitalism the ones that gained more and more the scene were those that were increasingly focused on its effects (“consumerism”, “individualism”), than in its central core: the expanded reproduction of exploitation and oppressions. Thus, in our view, a romantic anti-capitalist critique is established, “[...] that behind the pompous façade of grand phrases of deep resonance, including ‘revolutionary’, is always revealed again and again [...] the viscosity, at the same time cowardly and brutal, of the capitalist petty-bourgeois” (Lukács, 1981, p. 119).

Therefore, a fragmented vision begins to build on the periphery of the capitalism, that in the 1960 all kinds of ties of classical imperialism were being broken in a sweeping wave of “wars of national liberation” and the idea that in these years capital and power in the central capitalist countries were in retreat everywhere.

It is true that, after the World War II, “new social settings” have begun to emerge (a variable and mistaken society described as post-industrial society, multinational capitalism, consumer society, media society, etc.) new types of consumption; planned obsolescence; an

increasingly rapid pace of life of changes in fashion and style, the penetration of propaganda, television and the media, in general to a degree hitherto unprecedented in society; the replacement - the old tension between city and country, center and province, the suburbs and the universal standardization; the growth of large motorway networks and the emergence of car culture. But, from the apparent radical break with the old pre-war society, in fact, the 1960 really represent a period of transformation and systemic restructuring of capitalism on a global scale: the late capitalism.<sup>9</sup>

In this dialectical process of “liberation” and “domination”, the illusions of freedom and unbound possibilities must now be reconfigured, “[...] the unifying force is the new vocation of a global capitalism from which one can also expect it to unite unequal, fragmented or local resistance to the process” (Lukács, 1981, p. 119).

Thus, from the progressive agendas in the late 1960, a conservative re-action of the bourgeois order emerges naturalizing the idea of the historical infeasibility of communism and the inapplicability of the Marxian analyzes of these new social realities established – given the crisis of the really existing socialism. It is also believed at the end of the modern era, thus becoming extremely functional for the new and expanded scale assumed by capital. In this sense, considering the elements briefly discussed so far, we understand that it is only in the light of these determinations that we can grasp the disruptive elements with the whole category present in post-structuralist and post-modern thought.

## Notes on post-structuralist thought

As it has already been pointed out, the post-structuralism emerges from the 1968, gains prominence from the 1980's, and expresses an ideology of cultural counterrevolution that is essentially contrary to the class struggle. It is also possible to point out that this is a non-uniform cluster of ideas and concepts postulated by authors such as Michel Foucault,<sup>10</sup> Antonio Negri, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, among others, they have a common denial of totality and the production of the depoliticization of social relationships.

In this chapter, for the analysis of post-structuralism, we dialogue with some ideas present in the elaborations of Deleuze and Guattari. In these authors, reality is a subjective and social construction and the historical context is based on the experience of each one, not as social determination. In general terms, and briefly, the joint production<sup>11</sup> by Deleuze and

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<sup>9</sup> Analysis by E. Mandel (1985).

<sup>10</sup> As previously flagged.

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze and Guattari were production partners, published books and articles together. Among the books we highlight: “Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia” (published in 1972) and “A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia” (published in 1980). Although we do not intend to talk about the production of Deleuze and Guattari, it is necessary to make a very brief point on central issues in these two publications. Anti-Oedipus presents the idea or perspective of schizophrenic analysis as an ethical and aesthetic proposal. It would be the analysis of the desire that, according to the logic of the authors, is the basis of social production. The perspective of schizophrenanalysis is contrary to any analysis of the totality or structures. In this book Deleuze and Guattari presented two understandings for life or existence: one that they called pulsatile, which would be a sensory perception and full of affections; and the other called machinic, where the bodies, according to them, lost any power of expression. The book “A Thousand Plateaus” presents many concepts and perceptions of the authors about the place of “thought” and “truth”. It centrally counteracts the logic of transcendence – Western Platonic heritage – and immanence – a concept that for the authors surpasses transcendence, because it admits that everything exists in itself or in reality, everything has value in itself, without, according to the authors’

Guattari has its own characteristics, among them: they use different resources and knowledge to make their ideas (arts, literature, culture, botany, etc.); they are opposed to every form of exploitation of man by man, as well as contrary to all totalizing and universalist explanation of social reality; as well as deny the contributions of Marxian criticism to political economy as an element for understanding social relationships.

In Deleuze and Guattari (1972) everything is “production”. As expressed by the authors,

[...] in fact – amazing and black truth that arises in delirium – there are no relatively independent spheres or circuits: production is immediately consumption and registration, consumption and registration directly determine the production, but determine it within the production itself. In such a way that everything is production: production of productions, actions and re-actions, production of records, distributions and reference points; production of consumption, volume, anguish and pain (Deleuze; Guattari, 1972, p. 9).

We understand that the analyses of Deleuze and Guattari point out as their non-existent social relationship with the totality.

Using Netto and Braz we point out that production and production relations are central to the analysis of the whole economic process. However, we emphasize that the production process is involved and is affected by the distribution and consumption processes, demonstrating that “[...] production is the determining moment of that totality” (Netto; Braz, 2006, p. 64–65). Thus, giving centrality to the sphere of production does not mean the denial of the other spheres.

In the text “Introduction to the contribution to the criticism of political economy”,<sup>12</sup> Marx already offered us clarification on this issue. Marx deals with material production, understood in it the way individuals produce in society, also pointing out that certain production is characteristic of a certain degree of social development. However, at any time production holds common traits.

Production in general is an abstraction, but a reasonable abstraction, because it really puts in relief and fixes the common character, sparing us, therefore, from the repetitions. This general character, however, or this common person, discriminated by comparison, is organized in a complex way and diverges into various determinations. [...] The determinations which are used for production in general must be precisely separated, so that the essential difference per unit is not lost sight, which already stems from the fact that the subject – humanity – and the object – nature – are the same (Marx, 2008, p. 240).

In short, Marx states:

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interpretation, the hierarchy of western philosophical thought.

<sup>12</sup> We refer to “Introduction to the contribution to the critique of political economy”, which is part of the book “Contribution to the critique of political economy”, published by the Popular Expression Publishing House (2008).

The result we have reached is not that production, distribution, exchange, consumption, are identical, but that they are all members of a totality, differences of a unity. Production exceeds itself, in the antithetical determination of production, which exceeds the moments. [...] Production, without doubt, in its unilateral form, is also determined by other moments [...]. Finally, the need for consumption determines production. A reciprocal action occurs among different moments (Marx, 2008, p. 257).

Deleuze and Guattari (1972) present their observations on social production, and defend the idea that social production has as its sole basis the desire of individuals.

In fact, social production is simply the desired production under certain conditions. We affirm that the social field is immediately followed by desire, that it is its product historically determined and that libido does not need any mediation or sublimation, no psychic operation, no transformation, to invest the productive forces and the relationships of production (Deleuze; Guattari, 1972, p. 33).

According to them, production refers to the production of desire, and in it would be contained, according to the authors' terms, production of production, production of reproduction, production of anti-production (or non-production) and production of consumption. From the perspective of the authors the meanings presented to production would be an affirmation of the creative and creative potential of human beings, the so-called power of affections. In Deleuze and Guattari, affections are not feelings, but sensations, and power is the ability of the living being to affect and be affected, and thought would be the way to decipher these affections. In the authors this thought that deciphers affections would be a contradiction to the thinking guided by the modern reason, of totality; this thought which, according to the authors, would be reductionist, lapsed, only positive of models to be followed (Deleuze; Guattari, 1995).

Deleuze and Guattari claim that: “[...] the existence of a social repression that affects the desired production does not affect our principle at all: desire produces the real, or desired production is nothing more than the social production” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1972, p. 35). The authors, from the discussion on control, carry out a multifaceted critique: capitalism, psychoanalysis and universal forms of explanation of social reality. For the authors everything can be produced or invented because the world is production. And to this conclusion they call “revolutionary.”

Although these authors criticize the capitalist mode of production, their elaborations conceive that individuals have freedom of choice in this social order and that this freedom exists in the measure of the development of individual “desires”.

In our understanding, the fragility of this argument does not support concrete analysis in the light of the totality category elaborated by Marx, which explains the set of determinations of social relationships in the capitalist mode of production.

In the social production of their lives, men contrast certain relationships necessary and independent of their will, relations of production that

correspond to a certain stage in the development of their material productive forces. The set of these relations of production is the economic structure of society, the real basis on which the legal and political superstructure is carried and to which it corresponds determines the forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the process of social, political and spiritual life in general. It is not the consciousness of man that determines his or her being; on the contrary, it is the social being that determines his or her consciousness (Marx, 2008, p. 47).

However, there is also, in Marx, the indication of overcoming the antagonisms by the way of overcoming the capitalist system, that is, a concrete alternative to the private appropriation of collective labor. In Marx, freedom of choices is not only given on the mental level, but on concrete conditions and for all. In a system where capital produces inequalities, exploitation, subjugation and fear, where the majority of the world population does not have access to the minimum conditions of satisfaction of basic human needs, is it possible for individuals to revolutionize their lives and the relationship with work using the individual desire dimension? We do not think so.

Hobsbawm (1995), in his work entitled “Era of Extremes: the brief twentieth century – 1914–1991”, demonstrated that the youth of May 1968 – where the youth Deleuze and Guattari meet – operated a subversion of the politics notion as it brought to the public sphere the statement of private and personal desires. For Hobsbawm, this combination of “personal liberation” and “social liberation” did not have a progressive result in class struggles, on the contrary, denied the historical development of social relationships. In this sense, the flags of the May 1968 Movement are manifestations of this interpretation that suggests a supremacy of private “desire”: “It is forbidden to prohibit”; “I take my desires for reality, for I believe in the reality of my desires”; “When I think of revolution I want to make love”; “The people are political” etc. (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 325–326). Thus, it is possible to affirm that, in the elaborations of the mature phase of Deleuze and Guattari, we find unfolding of the interpretations of the youth.

That being said, in general terms, post-structuralism is based on the abandon of metanarratives, derived from modern thought, which give centrality to the category of totality. This rejection of the category of totality produces interpretations that advance in the sense of denial in historical procedurality, also present in the daily lives of men and women who are social beings before being classified as individuals. Some practical effects are the depoliticization of debates, the hypertrophy of the subjective dimension<sup>13</sup> and the denial of the class struggle and, therefore, the impossibility of overcoming the capitalist mode of production. In this way, we locate post-structuralism as an element of bourgeois counterrevolution inscribed in the recent crises of capital and its strategies of action. The denial of the category of totality assumes in this perspective the denial of the worker (of the proletarian) as a revolutionary subject.

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<sup>13</sup> It is not a matter of denying the dimension of subjectivity present in relation to objectification, but of refuting the hypertrophy of the subjective dimension in the reading of social relationships.

## Post-modern thought

For the postmodern people,<sup>14</sup> in recent decades, several signs checked in the arts, architecture, literature and social dynamics as a whole show the exhaustion of the modern design of civilization and the rise of a new societal order, the post-modernity. On the contrary, as we pointed out earlier, we understand as Mandel (1985) that this is a new phase, late capitalism, and, therefore, of modern bourgeois society marked by a process in which the last vestiges of traditional space or not transacted into commodity within and outside the advanced world are now finally eliminated (Mandel, 1985, p. 124).

It was up to Lyotard in his book “The Post-Modern Condition”, published in 1979, to postulate for the first time the discussion under the motto of post-modernity. In this work, the idea that knowledge changes status at the same time as societies enter the so-called post-industrial age and cultures at the so-called post-modern age (Lyotard, 2002, p. 15).

These modifications, whose origin, for the author, dates back to a crisis of science (and truth) that occurred at the end of the 19th century, are so substantive, that for Lyotard there is a real delegitimization of the mechanisms of explanation of science, caused by the impact of technological transformations on knowledge.

It is, however, in the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos that we find a vast systematization of what would be the supposed post-modern condition and, also, given the scope of themes mentioned by the author, that we can explain the negative of the category of totality in these elaborations. Thus, this author's criticism of the paradigm of modernity is established outside the concepts and canons established by this model of rationality, as well as its understanding of science, the idea of paradigm, the understanding of reason, democracy and capitalism. *The paradigmatic transition is defined by the paradigmatic struggles, that is, struggles that seek to deepen the crisis of the dominant paradigm and accelerate the transition to the emerging post-modern paradigm.*

Upon explaining this transitional process, Santos (2000) states that contemporary societies and cultures go through a period of paradigmatic transition in which two dimensions become fundamental axes, the epistemological and the societal. The epistemological transition takes place between the paradigm of “modern science”, whose bankruptcy process makes, according to the author, evident, and the emerging paradigm difficult to identify, but named by him as “post-modern science”.

According to Santos (2003) what is new for this century is the recognition of alternative rival knowledge to modern science and, from this, possibilities are opened for constructions of multi-cultural sciences. For him, modern science has enabled us to have an

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<sup>14</sup> According to Sousa (2005) “[...] there is not what we could consider as a post-modern theoretical position, as well as we cannot affirm that there is a theoretician, there are post-modern theorists.” However, according to Boaventura de Souza Santos (2003), in the socio-political field there would be a clear gap among these authors. There would therefore be a post-modernity of opposition in which the author claims to settle and a post-modernity of celebration. The author is based on the understanding that there are two axes that try to explain the present time: one, that points out that the promises of modernity were false and therefore unrealizable, another, formulates that the set of values and beliefs of modernity were exhausted and here it is not a question of saying that they were false, but that they became unrealizable. By this differentiation, post-Modern people such as Jean-François Lyotard and Michel Maffesoli would end up situating themselves in the first case that they consider the promises of modernity fallacious and consequently propose the replacement of modern reason. And post-modern ones, like Santos himself, would be more progressive in that they consider that the values proposed by modernity are valid, but that modern means are unable to realize them.



arrogant knowledge base,<sup>15</sup> being a corporate and autonomous activity, and that its autonomy suits both to detach from the processes of social struggles and exercise of citizenship, as well as to establish large mercenary contracts.

In the book “The critique of indolent reason, against the waste of excitement” (2000), Santos explains what he understands by paradigmatic transition in contemporaneity. With the publication of this book Santos reaffirms a post-modern knowledge of opposition, a term that he himself coined, to justify an emancipatory knowledge, being built from the marginalized epistemological traditions of Western modernity; he also argues that the critical theory built from this horizon must, necessarily, break with the existing dualism between scientific knowledge and knowledge originating from common sense.

Knowledge-emancipation must become an emancipatory common sense: imposing itself on conservative prejudice and prodigious and impenetrable knowledge, it must be prudent knowledge for a decent life. The reinvention of common sense is unavoidable given the potential of this form of knowledge to enrich our relationship with the world. Although knowledge of common sense is usually a mystified and mystifying knowledge, and despite being conservative, it has an utopian and liberating dimension that can be valued through dialog with post-modern knowledge (Santos, 2000, p. 107–108).

According to the conceptions of this author, the reason constituted by the modern paradigm is configured as an indolent reason, that is, a model of lazy rationality. This model is established from four forms of reason,<sup>16</sup> being the powerless reason (determinism and realism), the arrogant (free will, constructivism), metonymical (the part taken by the whole) and proleptic (the domain of the future over the form of the planning of history and the domain of nature). In this sense, a possible alternative to replace this indolent reason model is a cosmopolitan reason that is justified from three foundations: sociology of absences, sociology of emergencies and translation work (Santos, 2002, p. 240). As for the development of indolent reason, the author states:

The indolent reason, in its various forms, underlies the hegemonic knowledge, both philosophical and scientific, produced in the West in the last two hundred years. The consolidation of the Liberal state in

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<sup>15</sup> In the book “A Discourse on the Sciences”, Santos (1995) sets out the initial ideas about the debate on post-modernity. In this material, the author develops arguments regarding the conception of science, highlighting three fundamental perspectives of understanding in this theme: *dominant paradigm of modern science; the crisis of the current paradigm and transition to a new paradigm and the emerging “post-modern” paradigm*. Such ideas will be further deepened in the books: “Introduction to a Post-Modern Science” (1989); in the work published in Brazil in 1995, “By the hand of Alice: the Social and the Political in Postmodernity” (2003) and in the publication of the book “The Criticism of indolent reason: Against the Waste of Experience” (2000).

<sup>16</sup> Santos states that the indolence of reason criticized in this chapter takes place in four different ways: the impotent reason, the one that is not exercised because he thinks that nothing can be done against a need conceived as outside of itself; the arrogant reason, which does not feel the need to exercise because one imagines unconditionally free and, therefore, free from the need to demonstrate his own freedom; the metonymic reason, which is claimed to be the only form of rationality, therefore, does not apply to discovering other types of rationality or, if done, does it only to make them raw material; and proleptic reason does not apply to think about the future, because it believes that it knows everything about it and conceives it as a linear, automatic and infinite overcoming of the present (Santos, 2000, p. 240).

Europe and North America, industrial revolutions and capital development, colonialism and imperialism, constituted the socio-political context in which the indolent reason developed. Partial exceptions, romanticism and Marxism, were neither strong enough nor sufficient to be an alternative to indolent reason. That is why the indolent reason created the framework for the great philosophic and epistemological debates of the last centuries and, in fact, presided over them (Santos, *ibid.*).

Santos (2002) states that there was no restructuring of the knowledge about any of the four forms of indolence of reason. Among the four forms of indolent reason we highlight two, the metonymy reason and the proleptic reason, due to the intensification of the debates in relation to them from the sixties of the twentieth century. For this author, the metonymy reason is not able to understand the world outside the Western understanding of the world, that is, she believes that none of the parties should be thought out outside the totality of the relationships.

For him, this model of rationality has a limited understanding of the world and of itself and, hence, it must be overcome. Its overcoming in this phase of transition must begin from what this author calls the sociology of absences.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding the proleptic reason, this author states that the planning of history formulated by it dominated the debates about idealism and historical materialism, about historicism and pragmatism, being challenged from the decade of 1980 by the theories of complexities and theories of chaos. Its idea of progress was challenged with the ideas of failure, and there was no alternative.

Santos (2000) states that modern critical theory presented weaknesses throughout its development, its mistake was not to have recognized that the reason he criticizes cannot be the same as he thinks. For him, in the design of modernization there are two forms of knowledge: the knowledge regulation/emanation, both inscribed in the modern matrix. However, in European modernity regulation knowledge dominated emancipation knowledge, from the hegemony and institutionalization of knowledge. Thus, the promises of modernity turned into unavoidable problems without solution (Santos, 2000, p. 29).

For Santos (2000), the sociocultural paradigm of modernity was established before industrial capitalism became dominant in central countries, that is, the author understands Western modernity and capitalism as two historical and autonomous processes. For him, modernity will disappear before capitalism loses its dominant position, because it presents a process of overcoming and another of obsolescence.

What is missing in the construction of this author are the fragmentary and reifying aspects of the social division of labor and political economy under the capitalism. This widely understanding elaborated by Lukacs, in "History and Class Consciousness," from 1923, in which the Hungarian philosopher states:

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<sup>17</sup> It is an investigation that aims to demonstrate that what does not exist is actually actively produced as such, that is, as a non-credible alternative to what exists. Its empirical object is considered impossible in the light of conventional social sciences, so its simple formulation already represents a rupture with them. The objective of the sociologies of absences is to transform impossible objects into possible and based on them to transform absences into presences (Santos, 2002).

It is not the predominance of economic motives in the explanation of history that decisively distinguishes Marxism from bourgeois science, but rather the point of view of the whole. The category of totality, the domain of the universal and determinant of the whole, on the parts constitute the essence of the method Marx received from Hegel and transformed in an original way into the foundation of an entirely new science. [...] Proletarian science is revolutionary not only because it counteracts revolutionary content to the bourgeois society, but, first of all, because of the revolutionary essence of its method. The domain of the category of totality is the bearer of the revolutionary principle of science (Lukács, 2003, p. 105–106).

In this sense, we identified in post-modern authors, in general, and Santos, in particular, an embodiment of modern reason, taken away from the objective conditions in which it is carried out in modern bourgeois society. Sousa (2004) outlines the limits of this understanding when he states:

In these terms, it is possible for these authors to propose the overcoming of modernity without establishing any rupture with the bourgeois social order and, at the same time, post-modern thought appears as extremely “radical”, since it seems to effect “such incisive criticisms” about contemporary setbacks. What these authors have only forgotten to undertake was a blunt criticism of the globalized validity of capital; on the contrary, we realize that post-modern thought is, in the contemporary moment, the expression in the plan of the ideas of the decadent existence of this system (Sousa, 2004, p. 23).

Thus, in making such a movement, we understand that this is where the rupture with totality is clearly placed as a perspective of analysis of reality.

## **Final Considerations**

The elements dealt with so far allow us to affirm that post-modern and post-structuralist thinking, by expressing bourgeois ideological decadence, constitute explanatory bases for capitalist efforts to defeat the worker (the proletarian) as a revolutionary subject. The denial of the category of totality produces practical effects that can be seen today, for example, while experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic. Especially in Brazil, we observe daily denial of science, depoliticization of debates and the affirmation of capital profitability interests over the bodies of workers, increasingly substitutable.

In this sense, it is evident that the denial of the whole category is not a debate held only in academic circles. The idea, for example, that the new coronavirus affects everyone equally is false and obscures the important inequalities in access to health care, as well as work itself. It is an epidemiological issue, but it is also the expression of social inequalities arising from the Brazilian social formation – peripheral, subordinate and dependent.

In the light of post-structuralist and post-modern thoughts, irrationalist and relativistic statements are gravitated to promote a distortion of social reality as a way of sustaining the denial of reason and totality. The conservative and stabilizing function fulfill

these thoughts of order in a wake that unifies them and their rhetorical derivations to the counter-revolutionary logic that fragments social struggles by treating men and women as islands, as autonomous individuals disconnected from the social determination to which they are so immersed. It is a ruse of reality that fulfills the function of fragmentation of social struggles.

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# III

## CONSERVATIVE BALLAST AND DEPENDENT CAPITALISM: A PRESENT FILLED WITH PAST

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### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Orthodox economic thought, based on the premises of classical and neoclassical economy, but with remnants on the Keynesian foundation itself, although deteriorated by the world crisis of 2008 onwards<sup>2</sup> (Oliveira, 2012) and the health crisis of 2020 with the exponential loss of lives<sup>3</sup> (Chesnais, 2020), does not break down in its ideological devices and advances strong force in the media and in the circuits of power. The neoliberalism seems to be unable to do without some kind of regulation. In modern times, this reposes the debate of economic currents within order and their supposed real divergences in the resolution of concrete social problems. Thus, the (neo) developmentalism protects its neolithic artifacts, naturalizing its catastrophic achievements on the social level and propagating them as a unique truth in the face of the global financial capital crisis (Traspadini, 2017).

The dominant expressions of the crises inherent to the metabolism of capital, experienced in conservatism and systematic retreat of the democratic civilizing process, are being imposed by neoliberalism with speculations of social-liberalism,<sup>4</sup> present in the first twenty years of the 21st century. In recent years, reactionary conservative segments have advanced unprecedented, with new determinants overshadowed at the religious-Pentecostal roots with fascist labor, with the premise of advancing extractivism, expanding the agricultural frontier and violating the social rights present in the 1988 Constitution, as a guarantee of the struggles of the working class.

Given this context, this article aims to highlight the ultra-conservative ballast from the homogenization of ideas in the class society rooted in contemporary Brazil. What is

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<sup>1</sup> Some passages of this article are based on the development of the doctoral thesis “Critique to a ‘new’ sociability of capital: for a ‘more human capital’” (Oliveira, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> On the economic-financial crisis of 2007–2009 and the subsequent recession before the pandemic, related to its intensification with the Covid 19 pandemic. See CHESNAIS (2020).

<sup>3</sup> The current health crisis is characterized as a pandemic from March 2020 by the World Health Organization, when it recognizes the alert of the constitution of a Public Health Emergency of International Importance by the new Covid-19 Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Available at: <<https://www.paho.org/bra>>. Access on: 30 jul. 2020. Brazil, as one of the countries of the global epicenter of the coronavirus, presents the alarming mark of more than 140 thousand losses of human lives, in October 2020, expanding the range of profound social inequalities. Concerning the health crisis, as Warning of the World Health Organization (WHO) about the risks of economic openness without the control of the economy. See also: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2020/07/30/casos-de-covid-no-brasil-ultrapassam-2-6-milhoes-onu-alerta-para-riscos-de-abertura>.

<sup>4</sup> As an unfolding of a reformist conservatism, social-liberalism is revealed in an uncritical posture of contemporary social-democracy. For more information, see Oliveira (2012).

proposed to present, through a literature review, is the favor for sharpening the hegemonic block that has been reinforcing and feeding conservatism, in confrontation with the Constitutional Charter of 1988 and opens precedents to culminate in the conservative reaction of the last decade legitimized by the far-right wing in the country. To do so, we will briefly recover the history of the foundation of the republic under the control of the Monroe doctrine.

The reaction to the conservative heritage is, represented by the expropriation of rights,<sup>5</sup> by the policies of employment and income generation and by the social policies structured in a particular condition of dependent capitalist mode of production<sup>6</sup>, for the conformation of imperialism and the enormous changes of values agreed by the international relationship between North and South. This mechanism has impacted the Brazilian social formation in a structural way, from a precarious composition of the workforce, the reproduction of capital and the daily survival of workers and their families.

In times of contravention, of withdrawal of the constitutive promises and the inclusion of a mechanism for naturalization of the precariousness of labor, intensified from the 1990's and 2000's, with the deepening of informal labor relationships, reflect the extreme fragility of the union,<sup>7</sup> (Oliveira, 2020) experienced by a destructive sociability in political, public and private institutional bodies, and, not least, in the streets and more spaces of sociability.

With the pandemic,<sup>8</sup> the processes of social expropriation – that is, What Marx (1977) defines as expropriation of the conditions necessary for the social reproduction of the workers' lives<sup>9</sup> – deepen with the deprivation of public goods and services and the lowering of the value of labor force - to them, constituting another transfer of resources to large capital (banks and large companies), to the detriment of the maintenance of the labor force overexploitation (Amaral, 2012).<sup>10</sup> The “Bulletin Employment in Staff” of the Interunion Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE), published in July 2020,<sup>11</sup> reveals the lowering of the workforce under the first impacts of the pandemic on labor relationships. According to the information, 18.5 million Brazilians did not work and did not

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on the expropriation of social rights, see Boschetti (2017).

<sup>6</sup> “Dependent economies are subordinated to the international division of labor that characterizes the capitalist world market. The structural determinants of this dependent condition are constituted by different mechanisms for the transfer of the value produced in dependent capitalisms that are appropriate and therefore they are part of the process of accumulation of central, imperialist economies” (Carcanholo, 2018, p. 23).

<sup>7</sup> On the debate, see “Trade union and labor reform under discussion”. Cf. IHU On-Line, São Leopoldo, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005. (Oliveira, 2020) Available at:

<http://www.ihuonline.unisinos.br/media/pdf/IHUOnlineEdicao138.pdf>. Access on: 20 jul. 2020 and see: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2020/05/01/por-mais-lucro-neoliberais-atacam-sindicatos-para-desorganizar-trabalhadores>. Access on Jun 23<sup>rd</sup>. 20.

<sup>8</sup> According to data from the International Labour Organization (ILO), in the first quarter of 2020, the result of the 4.8% reduction in economic production is the worst since the crisis of 2008 with about 1.6 billion informal workers and 1.25 billion people presented, as jobs in sectors considered high-risk, "drastic and devastating" increases in layoffs and reductions in wages and working hours. For more information about the catastrophic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on working hours and gains globally. Available at:

[https://www.ilo.org/brasilia/noticias/WCMS\\_741052/lang-pt/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/brasilia/noticias/WCMS_741052/lang-pt/index.htm). Access on: May 2020.

<sup>9</sup> To a certain extent, the pandemic context alludes us to reference the particular social conditions of the creative act of us, intellectual working women, family caregivers and multiple working days, between pleasure and pain in the act of writing and in the face of the many deaths.

<sup>10</sup> On emergency measures to help mitigate the effects of the new coronavirus pandemic in Brazil see BNDES (2020).

<sup>11</sup> Available at: <https://www.dieese.org.br/boletimempregoempauta/2020/boletimEmpregoEmPauta15.pdf>. Access on Jun 26<sup>rd</sup>. 20.

seek occupation due to the pandemic; 19 million people were removed from work and 30 million had some reduction in labor income. In addition, 36% of the employed workers had some loss in income and the average wage reduction was 61%.

As it tends to occur in every systemic crisis, the price of crises is paid by workers in general, and informal workers in particular. According to the report, informal workers had a 56% loss in their income compared to the 26% loss of formal workers, constituting a significant social base available to capital, serving to lower wages and strengthen the over-exploitation of labor.<sup>12</sup>

In the last report of PNAD-COVID (National Household Survey), of July 2020, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) explains that 43% of Brazilian households received some kind of government support related to aid against the condition of a pandemic.<sup>13</sup> These conditions only explain that the pandemic context does not generate anything new, it only intensifies the historical setbacks conformed by the unequal structural relationship inherent in the logic of private property. Unique foundation of being of the market mode of production and its ability to transform pain into marketing potential. To this end, again the land and labor are at the limit of value extraction for the dominant perpetuation of commodity wealth production. The current moment has been conducive to a political basis of support to the ultra-conservative government, with reactionary characteristics,<sup>14</sup> of assistance base<sup>15</sup> with the imminent of another counter-reform. In consequently, the blatant harassment of the lands and cultures of the native peoples, of the quilombola communities is intensified; the murders of peasant leaders are accentuated; the genocide of poor and black youth, the peripherality of the cities with a strong action of the repressive apparatus of the State; broadens the discourse and ideological reproduction on the pathologizing of trans identities, expansion and qualification of the transsexualizing process with the criminalization of LGBTphobia; a national policy for the perpetuation of the feminicide is formed with the flexibilization of the right to arms possession in expanded Brazil, among other reactions inherent to reactionary conservative policy.<sup>16</sup> Once again,

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<sup>12</sup> The category of labor force overexploitation was elaborated by Ruy Mauro Marini as the foundation of the Marxist Theory of Dependence (TMD). According to Marini (2005), in *the sui generis* character of dependent capitalism, the over exploitation of the labor force, besides having the intensification and expansion of the working day, is also explained by the remuneration below its value. Thus, workers are denied the necessary conditions to replace the wear of their labor force, stimulating early exhaustion. We highlight that there is a contemporary debate about it already being found in the foundations of Marx or not. In our opinion, it is a misunderstanding to bring it closer to the conception of the absence of development of capitalism in the country, or as a representation of the depreciation of labor in general in the world. For further clarification on the category overexploitation, see: Marini (2005); Luce (2012; 2018), Osorio (2009; 2013), Amaral (2012) and Traspadini (2020).

<sup>13</sup> For more information on records of the quantitative drop of workers dismissed due to the pandemic. Available at: <https://covid19.ibge.gov.br/pnad-covid/trabalho.php>. Access on: 27 jul. 2020.

<sup>14</sup> On the negationism and the construction of the Brazilian tragedy under the pandemic, see: Calil (2020).

<sup>15</sup> The Bolsonaro government's assistance base (2019–present) has been treated by the intentional withdrawal of labor and social rights, exacerbating informal labor relationships and expanding social control in the coercive form of a consensus intentionally produced via the use of bullet. Thus, it imposes an expansion of assistance (Mota, 1995) as part strategic of the capital to reproduce minimally the labor force, at the same time that gathers a contingent of overpopulation relative stagnant, exposed to the salary lowering. The reactionary conservatism conceives a set of “[...] phenomena and movements of cultural political character (with economic roots) that intensify in the contemporary Brazilian scene, such as manifestations close to integrative, fascist, neo-Nazi, xenophobic, racist ideas, among others, because an approach of this nature requires its own space” (Souza, 2015, p.02).

<sup>16</sup> Strategic of the capital to reproduce minimally the labor force, at the same time that gathers a contingent of overpopulation relative stagnant, exposed to the salary lowering. The reactionary conservatism conceives a set of



North imperialism, with a presidency beyond truculent, fascist, finds a reflective mirror and a partner with air in South America.

The idea, therefore, is to highlight the construction of a “new”<sup>17</sup> social consensus designed to the subaltern classes of conception of the bourgeois world as unique and irrefutable, on the “social issue”<sup>18</sup> disseminated as a practice and ideologically by international organizations and absorbed by capitalist corporations – the ideologies of “social capital”, (neo)developmentalism,<sup>19</sup> of “more human capital” and “ethics of development”. This “new” coercive consensus reinforces the redirection of the public and private spheres in the provision of social services in a counter-reformist logic in the reconstruction of hegemonic mercantile mechanisms.

In order to realize the above-mentioned revision proposal, the current work will be divided into three items: 1. Historical background of consensual coercion in the 21st century: dependence and conservatism in Latin America; 2. The conservative ballast mirrored in neoliberal politics – (neo)developmental; 3. Transgenic package of politics in the 21st century: the conservatism as a social habit. In the final considerations, we will try to present some generating issues that raise the debate from the issues raised throughout the text.

## **Historical background of consensual coercion in the 21st century**

The year 1964, in Brazil, marked a concrete change in the relationship between coercive government and/or consensual government, even if there is not one without the other. Coercion and consensus can be worked on, within the scope of political theory intricated in the critique of the Latin American political economy, as movements whose tones more or less intense, for each of the terms, they reflect on the content of the class struggle in the continent and in the world from determining the historical contexts.

However, it should be understood that in the historical trajectory until the constitution of Brazil Nation, 1964 was another moment, among several others, of explaining the subordinate condition of Brazil to the American imperialist determinations that presented since the birth of the Republic, at the end of the 19th century.

In 1823, the US President James Monroe spoke in evidence propagated by the war the unaccepted continuity of the European colonies on American territory. This would not mean critical to colonization but adept at its own way of conditioning the continent to the yoke of Northern power over the whole hemisphere. In the appearance of the approval of independence, American imperialist policy thus materialized a perverse and renewed game of exploitation of a territory, Latin America and the Caribbean, for itself and not for itself. In

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[...] phenomena and movements of cultural political character (with economic roots) that intensify in the contemporary Brazilian scene, such as manifestations close to integrative, fascist, neo-Nazi, xenophobic, racist ideas, among others, because an approach of this nature requires its own space” (Souza, 2015, p.02).

<sup>17</sup> The recurring use of the term “new” in quotation marks is justified by its high ideological and political burden, requiring a critical analysis that demystifies it.

<sup>18</sup> Marilda Iamamoto (2004) states that the social issue acquires different forms according to the development of the productive forces of the capitalist mode of production. And also according to the classic Karl Marx (1996), which explains how the general law of capitalist accumulation generates poverty in this society is manifested.

<sup>19</sup> We share the understanding that (neo)developmentalism is a cloak of neoliberalism. The (neo)developmentalism as a process enhanced by neoliberal policies that rescues political reformism and conservatism from the moralization of the social issue that build a unique thought construct. For more information, see: Oliveira (2018).

the words of Moniz Bandeira (2008, p. 10–11):

This doctrine, summarized in the motto “America for the Americans”, had started to function, from the end of the 19th century, as an ideological cover for the strategic goal of the United States that was focused on maintaining its hegemony over the entire Western Hemisphere, conquering and securing South American raw material sources and markets for their manufacturing, combining the competition of Great Britain and other industrial powers in Europe of the subcontinent. Hence the proposal to make up with Latin American states a commercial community, a kind of customs union, presented during the Pan American Conference, located in Washington, in November 1889.

The entry into the twentieth century presented, as an antithesis, a political position based on the maintenance of a conservative, latifundist, monocultural and transition, never finished, from slave labor to free labor, but not necessarily wage labor (colonato) (Martins, 1983). This contradictory movement between an apparent new republican process as the insurer of old colonial bases is on the structural basis of what has been conformed, on the hegemonic plane, as a national policy throughout the twentieth century.

With the defense of a sovereignty protected by the then imperialist North and maintaining the violent processes of geopolitical invasion of the countries of Central America, the United States forged, in the fetishized idea of the republics, a dependent conformation that has not yet been broken. And when there were, in the scope of the international class struggle, conditionalities set for a movement contrary to such subordination, the military coups directed the political and the conflict between the act of rebellion, resistance, it fights for the right to life and the other order and the fossil continuity of the secular ties of torture on the peoples of the Latin American continent.

In this sense, while preserving the structuring constraints of understanding on the historical trajectory of coercion and consensus in Latin America, 1964 marks the contradictory stage of maintaining a cursed heritage and possibilities of building another story also inherited from the places of resistance on the continent. Dependent capitalism, imperialism and the conformation of the superstructural bases, which manage and are managed by the logic of equal, will be present (Marini, 1976).

The military coup of 1964 was thus the historical result of objective conditions inherent to the international production phase under the hegemony of American import, in a monopolistic competitive dispute with the Japanese and the German. The coercive policy of the coup announces the tracks of the monopolist struggle for leadership in the production-circulation of goods worldwide in the face of the trend law of the fall in the rate of profit and the mechanisms used for the advancement of concentration and centralization of capital.

So that military coups in the context of the capitalist mode of production, yesterday and today, need to be understood within the very dynamics of retraction-expansion of capital, its new phases and the trend even more violent of this over the territories and the working class. The coups in Latin America define the weaving of a double movement: 1. The United States has closed the dispute against the Russian threat and its respective revolutionary particularities on the continent; 2) the market protection of the commodity materials and future consumer markets at exorbitant prices conditioned on the currency of

world circulation, the dollar, against its enemies in every historical time in the production and valorization of capital in its expanded content – in the twentieth century, Japan and Germany, in the 21st century, China.

According to Marini, when studying the condition of the coup d'état in Chile, which not only deposed, but murdered Salvador Allende, he said. It reveals the concrete need of the international and Chilean bourgeoisie to resume the political and ideological bases that are linked to its condition of “unquestionable” preponderance over the economic life of the country. The coup, coercive in all its fabric, tried to set the rupture with a “popular” order in the resumption of the mercantile order without brakes. In the words of Jaime Osório (1983, p. 78–79): “El golpe militar, que restaura la dominación burguesa sobre la sociedad, fue así el resultado del accionar político del conjunto de la burguesía, cuyas fracciones en todas sus expresiones políticas —aunque de distintas formas— actuaron con el fin de zanjar militarmente la situación”. The armed forces, in the recent history of the military coups in Latin America, have meant more than the framework of the coalition: according to Osório, they have become, above all, the brain of political conduct from the US currency, ideology and military apparatus (Osório, 1983).

What the 1960 to 1980 teach us is that coercion and consensus, with different tones over time, more open or closer in the quality of red (blood, death, torture), will depend on the chain of forces among the great imperialist world capitals, their headquarter states and the expressive form that will take their inductions on the continents that subjugate in the material production of market value.

In this sense, the conservatism, as a social political weapon for the sake of capital, will be presented as a natural sphere and, as such, forming in the political cells of the dominant ideas of each epoch. This is important, because, in the analysis of the ideological formation of a generation born in the years of military dictatorship, we will see as a result, at present, a political conception whose historical trajectory narrates the disaster of ideological formation for torture, death and armaments.

What we will live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the most developed expression than throughout the 20th century capital forged as a social prison system to the dominant ideas of the military era. In view of this, the class struggle was being worked on the rhythm of the suffering of the world of work increasingly oppressive and over explorer and a history of survival on the margins by the majority of the working class. It is from this double movement – capital and its processes of maintenance and expansion of the dominant order – the work in its dynamics of resisting within order and creating other possible orders, that will lead to complexity and backsliding in the plane of rights present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **The conservative ballast mirrored in neoliberal – (neo) developmentalist politics**

With the argument that human capacity is a promising element for economic skills to be developed, the World Bank, from 1990, begins to distinguish four forms of capital: natural capital with the use of natural resources; financial capital fostered by society expressed in infrastructure, capital goods; financial capital, real estate, among others; human

capital defined by the degrees of health, education and nutrition of a people; and the “social capital”<sup>20</sup> manifested by the capacity of a society to establish interpersonal bonds of trust and cooperation networks with a view to the production of collective goods (D’Araújo, 2003).

Bringing together the scholars of dependent capitalism, we defend the thesis that neoliberalism –(neo)developmentalism is an updated version of development theories with the same roots of cooperation/integration, social participation without distinction of classes and in the updated versions of the ideology of development in community actions (community action, social action, community organization and community development) linked to educational practices of integration in a high degree of sociability and civility. This shows that it has nothing new in its foundation, but renews the manifestations of social relationships that circumvent the set of practices to confront the “social issue”. The design of integrated economic development was associated with human development and with this the new fetish was presented about the supposed guarantee of greater opportunities with a response to “alleviation of poverty”, being proper to the creation of networks by the associativism model.

The discourse of “more human” capital is highlighted by the promotion of ethics as the driver of the economy by the authors Sen and Kliksberg (2010). Part of conservative thinking requires alternative approaches to the accumulation of unprecedented capital, aiming to innovate by a humanist perspective capable of “alleviating” poverty and reducing it through a reformist ideary (typical example of Durkheimian sociology and its sociological school) of conservative thinking as a dysfunction or threat to social cohesion in the sphere of the order, in the context of the globalization of capital (Chesnais, 1996), under the rule of large financial capital. The object of a moralizing action, the development in the concentration and centralization of wealth (Marx, 1996) has been a leading car in the pedagogy of hegemony (Neves, 2005).

The modernist, progressive aureate and mainly with a humanizing sense of a more humanized capital (Sen e Kliksberg, 2010; Kliksberg, 2003) as an expression of the intellectuals of bourgeois hegemony implies the idea that, by working social capital, the need for development and ethics would lead to the incorporation of the human dimension into the economic process. This possibility is limited by the very capitalist essence that prioritizes capital in the relationships of production and objectifies social relationships in the conversion of human activities and products into merchandise, not to meet the most elementary needs of the population, but to create expanded needs of consumption (Oliveira, 2012, p. 32).

Within the framework of the ideology of capital sociability, the implications for understanding intermittent work, voluntary work, solidary work, community work, cooperative and associated work and combined work challenge us to understand the world of work, although not to explain it in its entirety and the correlation on the advance of conservatism. We consider the universe of dominant ideology, and its fetishized absorption

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<sup>20</sup> Social capital, according to the definition of the World Bank, confers the “social relationships and norms that give quality to interpersonal relationships in a given society” having “social cohesion as a critical factor for economic prosperity and sustainable development.” (D’Araújo, 2003, p. 11).

in the time of capital, indispensable for the study of the development of public policies.

In Coutinho's analysis (2011), the "modern conservative thinking" and "reactionary" present in the defenders of the old regime has its original basis.

In the process of reaction to the Enlightenment in the face of the consequences of the French Revolution. There is also another modality that arises as an opponent to the French revolutionary movement that stands in defense of absolutism. This is the current of "liberal conservatism" (Netto, 2011) and has as main representative Edmund Burke (2014).

In the studies of Escorsim Netto (2011) there is a consensus among the conservatism's students as to the origin of their emergence from the French Revolution as "[...] A reactive response to all that the fall of Bastille signalized" (Netto, 2011, p. 38). In other words, conservatism originates from a process of class struggle and bourgeois reaction in defense of the old regime, especially the recovery of values of Catholicism. The social function of conservative thinkers who come after Burke is of interest to the privileged of the old regime, the land nobility and the high clergy. That is, conservatism was at its origin a defense of the old regime and, specifically, Catholicism, as a cultural expression of the bourgeois order.<sup>21</sup> However, with the new class interests from the degree of development of the productive forces, new expressions of conservatism arise to meet these class interests.

The author, Souza (2015), by consolidating the reflections on the fundamental axes to understand the transformations of conservatism and its contemporary expressions in the Brazilian reality, considers that:

It is possible to affirm that modern conservatism, in general: (i) operates the dehistoricization of the present time, based on a conception of the "presentist" world; (ii) there is an approximation between the conservative system of ideas and other traditions of thought of the bourgeoisie: liberalism, pragmatism and empiricism; (iii) modern conservatism also hyperdimensional [...] practical knowledge; (iv) it makes a harsh criticism of rationalism and seeks distance from irrationalism, enthroning a conception of reason extracted from positivist formulations; (v) values the function of traditions in the individuation process; (vi) engenders the defense of social reforms that do not affect the structure of the current society and, in this sense, it is placed as the prudent vehicle to conduct the "necessary changes", without falling into the various forms of "totalitarianism" (Souza, 2015, p. 219).

Contemporary conservatism thus presents the ideological basis of conformation of master ideas in the maintenance of the reproductive order of capital. Capital with a human face, entrepreneurship, outsourcing are the bets on a "trank" policy as a way to keep the alliance under control and control of the order representatives. In this sense, the ideas-forces materialize the real power of materialization of the project of big capital in Latin America.

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<sup>21</sup> In this text, we recognize the diversity of tendencies of classical conservative thinking with the authors Joseph Maistre (1753–1821); Louis de Bonald (1754–1840); August Comte (1798–1857); Alexis– de Tocqueville (1805–1859); as well as the conservative thinking of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917). However, the idea here does not conform to the study of classical conservative thought or even modern conservatism, but the recovery of conservative thought with the concern of historicizing it as an integral part of the counter-revolutionary bourgeois reaction, with its most penetrating illustrator Edmund Burke.

Contemporary conservatism, in its expressive feature of fascism, connects itself indissociated with Neoliberal-(neo)developmentalist politics. Hand in hand, their leaders delegate to the working class the most intense phase of overexploitation, oppression and exclusion experienced in dependent capitalism *sui generis* Latin American.

## **Transgenic package of politics in the 21st century: conservatism as a social habit**

The ideological forms assumed today, in the period of “mundialization of capital” (Chesnais, 1996), according to the mode of production of material life, conditions the development of social, political and intellectual life in general and bets on a uniformity of consciences consecrating a homogenization of habits and thought (Marx, 1977).

Gramsci, bringing a living element of consciousness formation, tells us that the conception of the world is “mechanically imposed from the external environment”, which, “passively and slavishly”; becomes “the mark of the personality itself” (Gramsci, 2000, p. 93–94).

We consider that the mode of production of material life consecrated in the consumer society establishes a process of ideological standardization in the conquest of hegemony and contributes forcefully to ensure a new pattern of productive restructuring. “Science, technology and consumption are important vectors in the process of forming a globalized society” (Ortiz, 2006, p. 32). In the intellectual and moral direction of “new” sociability, culture is “[...] it has transformed into one of the world’s leading instances of definition of legitimacy of behaviors and values” (Ortiz, 2006, p. 10). The cultural organizations, as one of those responsible for ideological diffusion, within the set of organizations of the “private apparatus of hegemony” also present themselves as a dispute of societal projects and ideological diffusers.

This “new” culture, considered by some authors as an anti-state culture,<sup>22</sup> is produced by the international bourgeois order and was based, mainly between the years 1980 and 1990, on the implementation of neo-liberal reforms, disqualifying both of democratic liberalism and the possibilities of construction of the socialist project (Nogueira, 2001). In the call of civil society and subalternised classes, adherence to this logic disqualifies politics and democracy.

We consider it important here to mediate the debate on the issue of anti-state. In our view, capital has never left the state in the hegemonic struggle for the development of the productive forces. Contrary to the idea of an anti-state culture, we find the extension of the public fund in the last few years. Basically, what we see is a culture of anti-state in the social function of the state. As a powerful ideological potential, national culture stands for values, patterns, formulations and meanings generated in the dominant and generalized nations.

Nowadays, configured in a more improved way, the classical author of Brazilian social thought, Octavio Ianni (1976), draws attention to the issues of the conditions of production, circulation and reproduction of ideas and conceptions, doctrines and scientific

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<sup>22</sup> For Simionatto (2004, p. 22), an anti-state culture is one that cements the need to privatize goods and services of a public nature, appropriate by private companies as sources of new profits.

and technical theories. Ianni says (1976, p. 37) on the main elements of bourgeois culture present in relationships, processes and structures of economic appropriation and political domination:

Capitalism cannot function, that is, continually reproduce whether social, economic, political or other relationships are not founded on principles or values such as the following: the principle of private property; the definition of wages as the fair price of labor force; business profit as a fair remuneration for the work of the entrepreneur and his or her capital; the exchange of goods, or the buying and selling of goods as a process independent of economic, social and political relationships between the worker and the capitalist; the contract, as a technique of universal formalization of social relationships in the factory, in the family and in all institutions directly and indirectly related to private property; the valorization of effectiveness, competitiveness, practical spirit, sense of time, affective neutrality, asceticism, *achievement*, *performance* and other expressions of rationality inherent to forms of thinking and acting characteristic of capitalist society; the identification of capital as the superior historical form of development of relationships of production (Ianni, 1976, p. 37, author's emphasis).

Ianni (1976), upon situating the peculiarity of dependent capitalism, believes that capitalist relationships of production reveal cultural specificities and the imperialist relationships of production depend both on material production and on cultural production<sup>23</sup> to reproduce. For the author, capitalism cannot function, that is, the main elements of bourgeois culture cannot function unless they are founded on principles or values.

We assume that the strategies for the internationalization of capital challenge critical thinking by seeking the nexus and denouncing the consequences of capitalist accumulation for the working class, arguing that the power of the discourse of incompetence, the absence of the State on social policies, has become strong.

Dependent capitalism, an expression of structural dependence, under the important aspect of imperialist-type relationships, “[...]reveals, in detail, the way in which imperialism is inserted and disseminated within the subordinated society; or how the interiorization of imperialist relationships takes place by dependent society” (Ianni, 1976, p. 122).

Florestan Fernandes (2003, p. 11, the author's emphasis), convinced that class society has closed a mode of progressive control of certain basic knowledge by the working classes with the spread of “reformist”, “nationalist” and “developmentalist” rhetoric on the one hand,

[...] because of the conservative pressure of the ruling classes, what everybody recognizes and proclaims [...]. On the other hand, because middle-class intellectual people open to “basic reforms” monopolized

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<sup>23</sup> For Eagleton (2005) culture requires certain social conditions, and since these conditions may involve the state, it may also have a political and social dimension. No political power can be satisfactorily maintained through pure and simple coercion.

the roles they managed to absorb, as *intermediaries in the structures of power*, and showed themselves satisfied with the resulting situation.

The nature of the national bourgeoisie is loaded with the oligarchic base that is made within a cultural horizon that was essentially the same. Therefore, we have a bourgeoisie which is linked to an autocratic practice, inherited from the past or improvised in the present. (Fernandes, 2003, p. 11)

[...] a bourgeoisie which has had one of its roots in the structural link between slavery and the primitive accumulation of capital, which still has to resort to certain pre-capitalist forms of accumulation and which has not been reformed (and has never tried decisively to break), with the visible and invincible ties of indirect domination (via the world market or, later, the internationalization of forms of production) *it does not socially produce*, within and through its class situations, the collective impulse for major reforms (or linked revolutions) which place the development of capitalism at the climax of the history of civilizations. Even if this impulse was configured, psychologically, culturally and socially, it would not have enough material basis to convert it into reality (Fernandes, 1982, p. 108, author's emphasis).

A conservative consolidation of bourgeois domination in Brazil, as called by Florestan Fernandes. The reproduction of the bourgeois *ethos* between coercion and consensus is nothing more than the standard of civilization united with the world expansion of capitalism. What makes it essential to establish a subsequent social formation by attitudes and behaviors of a new type prior to the consolidation of a market economy of capitalist bases – the “ways of being, thinking and acting socially” (Fernandes, 2008, p.39).

Considering the elements analyzed by Marini (2005, 2010) on the dialectic of dependence on the basis of the Marxist method, capitalism does not constitute a relationship of political subordination among the Capitalist nations. It presupposes that dependence is a particularity of capitalism and, in this sense, comprises three elements related to it: (i) the transfer of value to the central economies; (ii) the overexploitation of the labor force; and (iii) for the intensification of the contradictions inherent in the capital cycle, considering the production of goods intended for export and for elites.

Therefore, elucidating the conservative thought coated with progressive, or even, in the current conjuncture of resumption of a classic conservatism (Netto, 2011), is a crucial element because this (neo)conservative broth has been reupdating in the social thought conceptions present in the (neo)conservative strands with a strong presence of post-modern thinking that has a legitimizing discourse of cultural nature founded on economic structure. Since the 2000's the conservative broth has been updated and these influences are already beginning to be felt and, in our understanding, nowadays, are increasingly updated.

The capital is covered with a “new”<sup>24</sup> style presenting itself as “social capital” and “more humanized” (Oliveira, 2012). This style refers to the meaning of a direct relationship

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<sup>24</sup> The word “new” appears here in quotation marks meaning that the “new” clothing is not new because it reaffirms the interests of capital. That is, the accumulation of wealth under the exploitation of labor, understanding the incompatibility between capital and a “more human” capital in bourgeois sociability.



with the idea of (sustainable) development for a democracy associated with a possible “more human” capital (Oliveira, 2012).

The dissemination of this thought in coping with increasing poverty in the turn of the millennium (from 2000) being disseminated as practice and ideology by international organizations<sup>25</sup> and absorbed by civil society corporations.

In this direction, the view of “unique” thinking refers to the idea of “new” characterized as an alternative to neoliberalism with the aim of overcoming the crisis that was constituted from the reforms advocated by the International Monetization Fund (IMF). It refers to the emphasis that some contemporary scholars place the current bourgeois sociability so that developing countries, in a Latin American context, become compatible with the context of international and national changes in interest capital in the technological, political and economic levels, defended by the “new” ECLAC (Economic commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) and the World Bank.

In the context of poverty and social inequality, neoliberal (neo)developmentalist politics counts on scholars from the “new” pedagogy of hegemony (Neves, 2005) with a speech loaded as an alternative to neo-liberalism. This ideary to achieve this legacy of cultural changes that avoid conflict educates for tolerance, peace and mutual trust.

In this scenario, the State has a fundamental role in conducting this political function of building a strong market. A promotion of an environment of cooperation between the State-market-civil society, building a ‘civic culture’ listed in values of solidarity and cooperation to construct the social well-being (Oliveira, 2012). Whether for the arm of capital more humanized on the basis of solidarity, mutual aid, associativism, “civic culture”,<sup>26</sup> or even, by the incursions of modern conservative thinking.

## Final considerations

This text was based on a concrete consideration: the history of conservation in Latin America from the constitution of the Republic to the contemporary moment, with the premise of the tones of coercion and consensus carried out by the United States as an imperialist country conforming to the logic of dependence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this sense, both the conflicts over the 19th century of consolidation under the tutelage of independence in Latin America, and the industrialization processes throughout the 20th century, narrate the facet of dependent capitalism as the hardest facet of the ties of the imperialism over the continent.

This dependence condition that has as its substance the suppression of the labor force, the expansion of the latifundium and the control of the bourgeoisies on the economic-political-ideological conduction, makes us establish a direct relationship between the past and present of the history of struggles in our context.

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<sup>25</sup> The neoliberal – (neo)developmentalist policy, which appears as an alternative to neoliberalism, is aligned with international organizations, among others the World Bank; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Oliveira, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> The word “new” appears here in quotation marks meaning that the “new” clothing is not new because it reaffirms the interests of capital. That is, the accumulation of wealth under the exploitation of labor, understanding the incompatibility between capital and a “more human” capital in bourgeois sociability. The neoliberal – (neo)developmentalist policy, which appears as an alternative to neoliberalism, is aligned with international organizations, among others the World Bank; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Oliveira, 2012).

Given this, some questions are necessary as a way to keep the debate proposed in this work open: 1) The conformation of the national states in Latin America has opened wings to what kind of consolidation in the nationalistic and democratic?; 2) Conservatism in the 21st century tells us that there are no conditionalities against the old material production of coercion and consensus?; 3) Generations born under the dictatorship form, in the 21st century, what political direction on life, therefore, have been educated so that sense of homeland, order and progress?; 4) Revolutions in Latin America, upon breaking out along the century XX, presented counterweight to history in the continent? These questions open reflective horizons for new works from the concrete material bases that form a society that, by naturalizing precariousness, overexploitation and oppression, defines as a horizon of possible sense the trivialization of life.

What we elucidate, by bringing these elements, is the renewal of the conservatism in contemporaneity in the Brazilian reality with the resumption of orthodox, liberal thinking, in the course of the expanded reproduction of capital. In the context of social thought, contempt for the ontological dimension of the real is on the agenda.

The materiality set of conservative thought evokes the contrary forms of the State, the conformation of an alluring policy on civil society and its materialization of the lowering of public policies, as a specific nature of contemporary class society under the rule of capital.

The focus on the absence of class identity, the criminalization of progressive ideas and the violent production of a “fake news” policy, is now in Latin America and, in particular in Brazil, the fetishism of political leaders from international organizations such as the Internal Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Anchored in the idea of greater equity and income redistribution in the directions of solidarity, “mutual aid” and associativism, civic culture, social network, peace, security and cooperation, these bodies are involved in mechanisms of intellectual and moralistic direction that contribute to a process of “education for conformity” (Mota, 2007).

In this realm, solidarity, the “culture of peace”, communitarianism, the social network, etc., conceal the production and reproduction of social relations by becoming a progressive perspective, in the inauguration of an anti-capitalist transformation. We believe that they are based, in fact, on the reformist and counter-revolutionary forces in Latin America, distancing themselves from the proposal of the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the consolidation of social rights and, in this context, depoliticizing the social policies. It is about encouraging civil society in the ethical and political direction for the construction of a hegemonic bourgeois culture.

In this sense, we conclude that the conservatism, by advancing in the reformist tone of neoliberalism – (neo)developmentalist, the basis of its classical essence, under the aegis of social liberalism as an ideology of maintaining the capitalist order, creates support for a certain kind of “cleansing” of the left-wing.

The scholars of the pedagogy of hegemony (Neves, 2005), in a library of ideas, support a mechanism for the conservation of an ideological unit introducing, in the discourse, the idea of “new”, which again has nothing, given its actions that do not problematize the bases of capitalist accumulation, wealth producer and inversely of misery at the same time. In these terms, we try to draw attention to the legacy of the constitution of what the hegemonic bloc constitutes as “new”, to ensure the consensus and legitimacy of neoliberalism–neo-developmentalism by the use of coercive apparatus of domination. The

arguments, outlined here, culminate more in an approach signaling the singular points of explicitation of the homogenization of habits and conservative thought.

After the progressive period in Latin America, and the traditions it presents, given the maintenance of the bourgeois order of development policy, the conservative profusion of neo-developmental policies is again on the scene, but more aggressive, reactionary, consolidating itself as a consensus for part of the population on the idea of “cleansing” of the left-wing on the continent.

In this sense, dependence gains even more strength before the advance of imperialism and the world of work, so unequal, is seen even more attacking the minimum rights won over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the event of the democratic civilizing process, we need to reinvigorate the resistance in articulated mass movements in support with popular education identifying the new determinants of homogenization of conservative thought.

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# IV

## TAKE REFUGE TO SURVIVE: EXPROPRIATIONS OF RIGHTS

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### Introduction

As we entered the second year of Jair Bolsonaro's government, we had a row of 1.5 million families who stopped receiving the *Bolsa-Família*.<sup>1</sup> This policy of combating hunger and misery, with its neoliberal essence, is now, at the same time, denied by the current minister of the economy, that comes in an escalation of setbacks with the aim of more counter-reforms. But, in this period of crisis of the new coronavirus, it brought the defense of the so-called "Renda Brasil" as a way to reorganize social programs such as the *Bolsa-família, o abono-salarial, o seguro-defesa e o salário-família*.<sup>2</sup> This turn was made by establishing the possibility of increasing the political base of support to the government, due to its consequent decrease in rhetoric and negative practices in the face of the pandemic.

We highlight the rise of precarious working conditions and the development,<sup>3</sup> in addition to the ultra-liberal and reactionary macroeconomic policy, which reinforces the condition of capitalism dependent on Brazil, such as the lack of education, encompassing science and technology, the expansion of the breakdown and maintenance of *commodities* as an economic support, deepening technical-scientific, economic, commercial and financial dependence.<sup>4</sup>

The economic situation of the country has worsened with the pandemic of the new coronavirus, we have more than 140 thousand people killed by Covid-19 and a high loss of formal and informal jobs,<sup>5</sup> with thousands of people without any income. In this sense, ultra-liberal measures, on a global scale, have led to some minimum income measures guaranteed

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<sup>1</sup> Fachin; Machado (2020).

<sup>2</sup> Resende; Caram (2020).

<sup>3</sup> According to PNAD COVID19/IBGE, the unemployment rate is 13.1% (4<sup>a</sup> week of June 2020), see Barros (2020).

<sup>4</sup> "By way of example: trade dependence influences the balance of payments and strengthens financial dependence; the latter presses for export balances reinforcing dependence; technological dependence impacts on financial dependence and limits the possibilities of rupture of commercial dependence and so on. [...] Dependence is translated into phenomenal forms, which can be more easily observed in trends in international trade, international financial flows and capital export movements in the productive sphere. In this sense, commercial, financial and technological dependence are layers of totality, which denote some of its most immediate characteristics" (Luce, 2018, p. 48).

<sup>5</sup> According to the General Register of Employees and Unemployed Persons (Caged, 2020), we have 4.4 million workers with suspended contracts and a loss of 1.1 million jobs in a celebratory regime and a total of almost 7.8 million occupations, of these 5 million are lost informal occupations. Available at: <https://economia.uol.com.br/empregos-e-carreiras/noticias/redacao/2020/05/27/empregos-formais-caged.htm>. Access on: May 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.

by some nation states.<sup>6</sup> In our country, emergency aid comprised 65.2 million people, but left out 42.5 million people, who did not meet the requirements, according to Dataprev data.<sup>7</sup> During the first three months of the pandemic, thousands of people were crowded into huge queues to find access to the benefit.

This chapter aims to discuss refuge, as a result of imperialism, deepening the diaspora, in the last 30 years, with the configuration of contemporary capitalism: with permanent restructuring, neoliberal macroeconomic policies and the so-called financialization. As well as problematizing the responses presented to the conditions of refugees, such as social assistance policy, limited to hunger relief with the strategy of appeasement, articulated to precarious employment and income policies, which mystify precariousness as “freedom” under the illusion of “commercial entrepreneurship”.<sup>8</sup>

We demonstrate, therefore, how capitalism is composed of collective expropriations movements,<sup>9</sup> in addition to the exploitation of more value, as well as the tendency and countertendency of accumulation. And, as in countries of dependent capitalism, such as Brazil, the contradictions are more explicit, considering that we never experience a democracy of expanded participation, but we experience the predominance of restricted democracy<sup>10</sup> with moments of democracy of co-optation.<sup>11</sup>

The protracted counter-revolution<sup>12</sup> sharpens and rekindles the most retrograde features of the racist, antisocial and anti-national Brazilian bourgeoisie with its traditional and violent appropriation of the public thing. And, in turn, I welcome the refugees who have already experienced traumatic expropriation processes.

## **Expropriated: take refuge to survive**

Migration flows in bourgeois society have a great deal of difference in the international division of labor, which covers the origin-destination, the social class and the historical moment of capitalism. Bourgeois social practice has demonstrated how there are particularities of certain socio-historical contexts, which indicate the direction of a particular population flow, and how wars, lack of employment and the absence of possibilities of survival, that is, the consequences of the mode of production of the population, promote this process.

The migrant worker can be considered the one that is in the most precarious condition. These people only leave their countries of origin to considered “more developed”

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<sup>6</sup> Available at:

<http://www.rfi.fr/br/economia/20200325-especialista-da-onu-defende-renda-m%C3%ADnima-universal-durante-crise-do-coronav%C3%ADrus>. Access on: Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>7</sup> See Melo (2020).

<sup>8</sup> According to World Bank's agenda for social development as freedom, in the motto: freedom of choice characterizes a world without poverty. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/pt/news/press-release/2014/11/18/world-without-poverty-Brazil-seminar>. Access on: April 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>9</sup> “Marx, in deciphering the processes of primitive accumulation states that ‘expropriation steals from the workers their means of production and all the guarantees of their existence’, i.e. expropriation does not only refer to the separation of the working class from the means of production; it covers the processes that remove the only livelihood they have from the workers, which obliges them to sell their workforce and freely participate in the process of accumulation” (Boschetti, 2020, p. 5).

<sup>10</sup> See Fernandes (2011).

<sup>11</sup> See Iasi (2012).

<sup>12</sup> See Fernandes (2011) and (2019).



countries,<sup>13</sup> because they live the absence of work, or scenario of conflict/war or political or ethnic-racial and cultural persecution.

“The great beauty of capitalist production is that it does not only constantly reproduce the wage-worker as a seasoned worker, but produces, in relation to the accumulation of capital, a relative overpopulation of wage-workers” (Marx, 1996, p. 387). Understanding what migration is and the elements that amplify or reduce its flow is fundamental to understand the *modus operandi* of the capitalist world today.

It is well known that Brazil is considered, at the same time, a country of origin, transit and destination of migrants. Considering, in particular, a place of destination, we can highlight that Brazil recorded, between 2010 and 2018, the entry of almost 775 migrants, according to the Observatory of International Migrations of the Ministry of Justice.<sup>14</sup> According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Venezuela alone has granted more than 550 people — among refugees, asylum seekers and temporary residents, setting Brazil as one of the countries that most affected Venezuelans since the worsening economic and social crisis in Venezuela. Thus, the Brazilian territory is ranked fifth among Latin American countries that most host Venezuelan refugees, according to the Federal Senate (2020).<sup>15</sup>

This population that arrives in the country, whether seeking better conditions of life or seeking to safeguard their lives, forms the world working class and joins a workforce that is likely to be subjected to any kind of degrading work, exhaustive and out of the norms of the consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) or even to slave labor.<sup>16</sup>

Before we enter the migration and work relationship, we need to point out that, in the face of a serious scenario of displaced persons forced by wars and conflicts today, as well as in the face of the intensification of poverty and poverty in the countries of the periphery of capitalism, we witness European countries and the United States “washing their hands” and not recognizing their responsibility in this current diaspora.

In this discussion it is essential to analyze that capitalism profits from areas dominated and exploited by imperialist incursions and action of the war industry, but on the other hand it creates expulsions, given the widespread violence and extreme poverty that war causes. Thus, we start from the assumption that refuge is also a manifestation of class antagonism, because there are those who benefit from this migratory flow and there are those who lose everything and all their rights (seriously violated) with this condition.

Refuge is also an expression of the “social issue”, after all this migratory flow, which is a historical reality, results from the violence engendered by capitalism — based on the contradiction capital *versus* labor —, where bourgeois particularist interests materialize in disputes for wealth (natural or produced), by spatial domination or by the control of the workforce. Such aspects facilitate the valorization of monopoly capital, which transforms the whole society into a large market, that is, potentially profitable, even if this will impact the lives of countless people. In a word, we realize that the refuge provoked by wars and

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<sup>13</sup> Like those who leave Africa or the Middle East to go to Europe or the United States. On this, see also Lénin (1984).

<sup>14</sup> See the full report: <<https://www.justica.gov.br/news/collective-nitf-content-1566502830.29>>. Access on: May 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>15</sup> In this ranking, Brazil is behind Colombia, Peru, Chile and Ecuador. See: <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/audios/2020/02/brasil-e-o-quinto-pais-que-mais-recebe-venezuelanos-aponta-debatedor>. Access on: May 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>16</sup> On our analysis of contemporary slavery, see Soares (2013).

conflicts is not a natural consequence, it is an expression of the development of capitalist society recognized at the threshold of the twentieth century, from the great World Wars.

Summarizing: the phenomenon of refuge, historically complex,<sup>17</sup> is reflected in the eager desire of the capitalist system to make the whole society potentially profitable, even if it threatens the lives of thousands of people who are forced to move in search of safeguarding their lives. In this sense, refuge is understood as an expression of social inequalities.

Capitalism, from its historical genesis, through the industrial advent, until it reaches the imperialist stage, has the violence, expropriations (of the land and the rights of the worker) and the migration of the labor force to achieve its basic objective: the exploitation of more-value and, in turn, profit.

In the early period of the bourgeois system in Western Europe, the lever of capitalist development was founded by a process of domination, which under the use of force associated with a discourse of “freedom”<sup>18</sup> suddenly and violently expropriated large peasant masses from their territories, forcing them to migrate to serve as a workforce in urban centers. This expropriation, accompanied by the movement of country-city migration, analyzed by Marx in chapter XXIV of *Capital* – entitled “The so-called primitive accumulation” – shows that “[...] expropriation is inscribed in the annals of humanity with traces of blood and fire” (Marx, 1996, p. 341) and:

The starting point of the development that produced both wage labor and capitalist labor was the servitude of the worker. The continuation consisted of a change in the form of this subjection, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist.

In view of this, the development of this system presupposes basic actions, the coercion to migration with large population displacements and the exploitation of man by man to obtain a greater *quantity* of more value. The stage Marx called “[...] pre-history of capital and its own mode of production [...]” (Marx, 1996, p. 340), intervened within the feudal regime in Europe, where England pioneered this historic and therefore classical process. And it was from the decomposition of the economic structure of feudal society that the economic structure of the capitalist society was born.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The definition of the refuge was built gradually over the course of the 20th century. The Geneva Convention of 1951 stands out, and embracing the concept undertaken in this document, but above all, advancing it in recognition of this condition, the OAU Declaration and later the Cartagena Declaration are regional instruments that made possible a leap in the conceptualization of refuge, for they considered the specificities of the historical time and the region where they were elaborated, encompassing the new flows of refugees that are not necessarily motivated by persecution, but by forced exit because of: aggression perpetrated by another State and/or as a result of an invasion that translates the reality faced by individuals of the African continent, as stated in the OAU Declaration; or because the life, security or freedom of individuals has been “[...] threatened by widespread violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order”, as advocated in the Cartagena Declaration.

<sup>18</sup> Freedom of production and social reproduction, therefore, freedom subsumed to the social need for a mode of production that develops and spreads as a world market in unequal development. Thus, “[...] the human right to freedom is not based on the attachment of man to other men, but on the contrary, on the separation between one man and another. It is the right to this separation, the right of the limited individual, limited to himself. The practical application of the human right to freedom is equivalent to the human right to *private property*” (Marx, 2013B, p. 49, editor's emphasis).

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that Netto and Braz (2011) consider that this period, in which the circulation and control of goods by traders prevailed, comprises the first phase of capitalism: the commercial (or mercantile), being a stage in which capitalism was not yet fully developed.

According to Fontes (2005, p. 65), the expropriation movement and, therefore, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie, was correlated with “[...] the violence of peasant expropriation in European countries or the” African slavery, forging a truculent movement of violence and expropriation, which counted on the “experience of multiple dilemmas and conflicts even within the dominant groups”.

For the author, the successive expropriations are condition and result of this mode of production, and it is up to us to consider that capitalism, in an attempt to reverse the decline in the rate of declining profit, has the expropriations to expand its domain and acquire new spaces for the valorization of capital, under the hegemony of large financial capital, “[...] resulting in an unimaginable commodification of all forms of social and human life” (Fontes, 2010, p. 59).

An example of this is the operation of countries to buy foreign land, such as China, which has already taken over 5.3 million hectares of land abroad through its investors, having as main land targets of Central Africa and Southeast Asia.<sup>20</sup> Another example of this form of commodification of social life is the promotion of a conflict in a region rich in raw materials, as a strategy for the extraction of these wealth. As emblematic cases, to illustrate this statement, we can mention Syria’s question and the problem of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The two have been able - in installed conflicts, but suffer from the pillage and the destructive interventions of foreign countries that attempt their minerals, such as Syrian oil<sup>21</sup> and the “coltan” of the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>22</sup> These cases explain the remarkable consequence of the capitalist system, which is exploitation and expropriation as a way to overaccumulation.

Mészáros (2003), as well as Fontes, is dedicated to analyzing the ongoing phase of imperialism which presents crucial changes after 100 years of Lenin's analysis. He identifies – in his book “The 21st century – socialism or barbarism?” –, the current phase of imperialism as a third moment of imperialism called “hegemonic global imperialism”,<sup>23</sup> for it is the apex of the most harmful form of this expansion, with the US as the dominant force that governs the world after the outbreak of the structural crisis of capitalism (Mészáros, 2003, p. 72).

It should be noted that American influence is expressed in its economic and military position and having this country the largest GDP in the world, it also has the largest military budget among all nations. Under the administration of Donald Trump, the United States pulled global growth with military spending.<sup>24</sup> However, this finding reinforces the Luxembourg thesis, in which the author attests that the “[...] militarism has a determined function in history. It pays off all the historical phases of the capital [...]”. According to the

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<sup>20</sup> See: <https://exame.abril.com.br/mundo/10-paises-que-estao-comprando-terras-estrangeiras-aos-montes/>. Access on: Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Available at: <https://www.cartamaior.com.br/?/Editoria/Internacional/Petroleo-interesses-americanos-e-ogolpe-na-Turquia/6/36490>. Access on: 10 jul. 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Available at: <https://www.revistaforum.com.br/digital/150/os-minerais-de-conflito-congo/>. Access on: 20 jul. 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Completing the three very distinct phases that the author analyzes, the first phase of imperialism is the “modern colonial imperialism builder of empires”, which arose with the “expansion of some European countries into some easily penetrable parts of the world.” The second phase is called by him as “ ‘Redistributive’ imperialism ’ antagonistically” contested by the main powers in favor of their quasi-monopoly enterprises, called by Lenin the “supreme stage of capitalism”, which involved a small number of contenders, and some small survivors of the past, clinging to the remains of the ancient wealth that came to an end.

<sup>24</sup> Available at: <https://br.sputniknews.com/defesa/2018030110635332-orcamento-militar-eua-russia-conflito>. Access on: 10 jul. 2020.

author, from the purely economic point of view, militarism is a privileged means of which capital is used to realize the increase in value (Luxembourg, 1970, p. 399). It has, therefore, as a perverse effect the production of conflicts and wars during the history of humanity, forging a symbiotic relationship with the question of refuge.

It is essential to seize the large mass of refugees as a working class that also migrates as an active labor force, according to David Harvey, “[...] mass migration movements are gathering forces of work in competitive configurations” (Harvey, 2018, p. 190). According to the author, the result is the “temporal space compression of both capital and labor”. Producing, according to him, “[...]A range of tensions and political responses ranging from anti-immigration movements and the resurgence of nationalist passions to the spontaneous acceptance of multiculturalism as a harbinger of a different future for humanity” (Harvey, 2018, p. 190).

The spectrum of the extreme right that surrounds some countries, as well as in Brazil, has constantly built xenophobic, racist and violent discourses to migrants and refugees,<sup>25</sup> transforming it into a barrier to be transposed. In addition, these workers, when operating in the labor market today, are immersed in the current predominance of precariousness.

Antunes (2018) recalls that the crisis of the Taylorist/Fordist accumulation pattern, in the years 1960 and 1970, submitted the capitalist system to a wide process of productive restructuring, in contrast to the demands of the social forces of labor. According to the author, the bourgeois sociability found in the formula of flexibilization of labor laws and in the precariousness of jobs a way to continue the superexploitation of the labor force<sup>26</sup> of the workers. For Antunes, the constant search for the “instrumental rationality of capital”, that is, the constant pursuit for the minimization of losses and the maximization of profit, “[...] has been driving companies to make work relationships more flexible, on-the-job, reintroducing new relationships and forms of work that often take on informal features.” Furthermore, according to him,

We are therefore facing a new phase of deconstruction of unprecedented work throughout the modern era, increasing the various ways of being of informality and precariousness. If in the 20th century we have seen the *era of degradation of work (author's emphasis)*, in the transition to the 21st century we are faced with new modalities and *ways of being* precariousness, of which *outsourcing* has been one of its most decisive elements (Antunes, 2018, p. 154–156).

Therefore, as the expanded reproduction of capital is the result of the maximization of the exploitation of the labor force, the more precarious this payment and the lower the cost for the maintenance of the labor contract, that is, with legal charges governed by the labor agreements, the greater the profit of the capitalist will be, that said, an article of Migra Mundo, recalls that:

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<sup>25</sup> We recommend the reading of Clóvis Moura (1994) and Abdias Nascimento (2016) about the supposed racial democracy and the mythical cordial man, in addition to the eugenic policies of the Brazilian State, which aimed both the extermination of black men and women in Brazil, as well as the bleaching by encouraging white migrants from Western Europe. “Cordiality” and “racial democracy” actually serve to camouflage violence and racism throughout the history of our country.

<sup>26</sup> About the category superexploitation of the workforce we recommend Chapter 3 of Luce (2018).

It is good to stress that the exploitation of migrant workers is not only aimed at immediate and contextual interests but conceals a much more perverse intention: the precariousness of all jobs. In fact, from the perspective of hegemonic economic rationality, the perfect worker is *the gastarbeite*, the temporary guest worker, without the obstacles of the family and the unions, with reduced capacity for demand and urgent need for money. The violation of foreign labor rights is therefore the starting point for the vulnerability of the entire working class (Marinucci, 2017).

The work as a “historical antagonist of capital” (Mészáros, 2002) is, at present times, totally detached from its historical importance, and is placed in the current phase of financial capital (fictitious and interest-bearing) as if it were something secondary to the relationship among the individuals, and not as a social driving force. The worker is seen today as an object that must be totally deconstructed from its historical importance and as a social force that leads society.

Taking advantage of the increasingly scarce offer of jobs, which according to Mészáros, is transfigured as “structural unemployment”, the capitalist constrains the worker to accept any form of labor relationship, allowing individuals to submit “[...] to the orders emanated from the expansionist imperatives of the system; and, for the ever increasing number of not so ‘happy’ others, it means exposure to humiliations and extreme suffering caused by ‘structural unemployment’” (Mészáros, 2007, p. 91).

Within this portion of non- “happy” subjects, as Mészáros (*Idem*) explains, is a social layer composed of migrants and refugees, which far from their homelands – some even undocumented and, most of the time, is found. being only with the clothes of the body – they may become a work force of maximum degradation.

It is important to note that, in 2019, the Federal Police (PF) found Venezuelans in a situation of contemporary slavery in the civil construction sector in the city of Votorantim, interior of São Paulo. This rescue occurred during the investigation of a businessman suspected of trafficking persons in Roraima. Such a PF operation arrested the entrepreneur after denouncing workers who managed to escape and report the case to the authorities in Pacaraima.<sup>27</sup>

This situation cannot be interpreted as an isolated case, but it is common to other refugees and migrants in Brazil, with insertion in precarious, irregular or in conditions of contemporary slavery. They are more susceptible targets to irregularity, informality and degradation, because it is recurrent not to communicate in the Portuguese language and also do not know the labor laws, or, when they know, the very need for over-experience causes them to submit to demeaning work.

In this direction, we can reflect that part of the irregular migrants and part of the refugees make up the category that Fernandes classified as “convicts of the system”. This term was coined by the author to identify “[...] marginal human sector of its economic order” (Fernandes, 1975, p. 71), who participates in the process of capitalist accumulation, but who

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<sup>27</sup> See the following article in full:  
<https://g1.globo.com/sp/sorocaba-jundiai/noticia/2019/09/24/venezuelanos-sao-encontrados-em-situacao-analoga-a-escravidao-em-votorantim.ghtml>. Access on: May 18<sup>th</sup> 2020.

lack “[...] of the means to sell his or her work as a commodity, or it can only do it in a very precarious way” (Fernandes, 1983, p. 27).

It is in this sense that we can consider the aforementioned segments as “[...] convicts of the system (or its necessary victims)” (Fernandes, 1975, p. 71), because although they are inserted into the logic of capitalist accumulation, they are the targets of works with non-“typically” capitalistic bases, such as fragile or zero labor contracts. They sell their labor force for low wages and no benefit or no remuneration, because they are deprived of the rights historically won by the working classes, throughout the history of Brazilian social formation. It is also a clear expression of the heterogeneity and precariousness of the typical working conditions of dependent societies.

Without decent working conditions<sup>28</sup> guaranteed and with losses of labor rights, via labor counter-reforms, we also saw that the structure of Brazilian social protection, besides not absorbing the Brazilians who need it, leave out hundreds of migrants in irregular situations and refugees. “The expropriation, therefore, constitutes a process of subtracting historical constraints of reproduction of the labor force, through the reappropriation by capital of part of the public fund intended for the rights conquered by the working class” (Boschetti, 2017, p. 61).

According to the UNHCR Report “The Socioeconomic Profile of Refugees in Brazil” (2019), which interviewed 487 people in a situation of refugee,<sup>29</sup> a little more than half are working (280 or 57.5%). In the other extreme, 95 refugees (19.5%) are looking for work – a much higher rate of unemployment than the national average – while 28 interviews (5.7%) are unemployed, that is, they are not employed or looking for employment. In total, therefore, 123 respondents (25.2%) of sample is outside the “labor market”, a very high number. In addition, the surveys shows that 26 people (5.3%) declared themselves occupied with “domestic chores” and 3 refugees (0.6%) are retired or pensioners.

During the pandemic, as well as 41% of the economically Brazilian population that was in informality, the refugee migrants, for the most part, were left without any source of income and, consequently, were evicted from their homes.<sup>30</sup> Because many failed to have access to emergency aid,<sup>31</sup> like the Waraos (Venezuelan indigenous people in Recife)<sup>32</sup> and Senegalese, as well as other refugees from other nationalities, in the city of São Paulo.<sup>33</sup> Thus, in the same situation as several Brazilian women, they had to disobey social isolation policies and risk contamination with the new coronavirus in order to be able to support themselves.

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<sup>28</sup> Here thinking dignity in constitutional terms, as in Articles 1, 3 and 170 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 in the guarantee of the “dignity” of work.

<sup>29</sup> “This sample was applied in 14 cities, distributed in eight States – São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul, Distrito Federal, Santa Catarina, Minas Gerais and Amazonas – which concentrate 94% of the refugees under the protection of the Brazilian government” (UNHCR, 2019, p. 5).

<sup>30</sup> See Sudré (2020).

<sup>31</sup> On the difficulty of access to emergency aid, see Salati (2020). For access to emergency aid, migrants are not required to be regularly migrated and Brazilian identity document with a photo issued in Brazil (such as National Migration Registry Card – CRNM or National Immigration Registry Provisory Document – DPRNM). The migrants who do not have documents, or, even if they have them, are out of the validity period due to the suspension of the services of the Federal Police Department are also entitled to benefit. See at: <https://sjmrbrasil.org/apoio-auxilio-emergencial/>. Access on: May 10<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>32</sup> See Santos (2020).

<sup>33</sup> See Dias (2020).

In the case of many African migrants, despite a large part of them being highly qualified, above the average of Brazilians, they do not hold positions in the area of training.<sup>34</sup> Although we recognize that many Brazilians also suffer from this problem, we know that, in relation to African refugees, one of the main causes is racism, which structures capitalist sociability and is strongly expressed in Brazilian daily life.<sup>35</sup> In addition to the difficulty validating their diplomas, these people have great problems getting documentation to enter the labor market. As well as “[...] they suffer from precariousness in labor relationships due to labor reform and the trend of ‘uberization’”, due to the withdrawal of the State from the current policy for *employability*” (ESMPU; ACNUR, 2020, p. 57, our emphasis).

## **Expropriation of rights: compensatory policies and the precariousness of work**

Faced with the Brazilian reality that received, before the pandemic of the new coronavirus, thousands of migrants from different parts of the world, we discussed the state responses to the exponential enlargement of the ranks of the relative overpopulation and the increase in the precariousness of working conditions. Historically in Brazil, the “solution” to this structural problem of capitalism was characterized by criminalization or charity.

In the course of Brazilian history, social assistance was built from the conception of charity, aimed at those “deserving” not inserted in the “labor market”. The policy of social assistance, in aligning with the other policies, in the composition of Social Security,<sup>36</sup> focused on the universe of work, formed for the direction of focus, of immediatism and became a compensatory policy.

The supposed conquest of universal social protection, with the Federal Constitution of 1988, already demonstrated problems in its hybrid format. Because instead of conforming as an articulated and comprehensive system of social protection,<sup>37</sup> has set itself “[...] a contradictory unit: while the mercantilization of health and social security makes precarious access to benefits and services, social assistance expands into a new fetish of coping with social inequality” (Mota, 2007, p. 129).

In a society, where the “favor” constitutes the public sphere<sup>38</sup> and the restricted democracy is articulated to a democracy of co-optation, the process of deconstruction of social rights, under the aegis of neoliberal macroeconomic policies, was also facilitated by a Manichean view of a supposed inherently corrupt and ineffective state. Moreover, after the outbreak of the economic crisis of capital, the need of monopolist groups to resume profits and growth, under the discourse of state inefficiency, directed the constitution of Social Security “[...] around two poles: privatization and welfare of social protection, instituting, at

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<sup>34</sup> Dias (2020).

<sup>35</sup> On the debate on structural racism we recommend Almeida (2019).

<sup>36</sup> Social Security is an interlace of structures that need to function, like a gear, together and with quality. However, since its construction in Brazil, the model has been conducted as a remediating effect of a “flawed and complex” system, which cannot respond to all the demands that the working classes need.

<sup>37</sup> Even if they are structured in Social Security, social policies in the field of social security, health or social assistance have not been implemented and articulated with each other. Thus, it is observed the fragility within the public space and its monetarization, being articulated mainly by bank-financial operators (Granemann, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> About this see Roberto Schwarz (2005).

the same time, the figures of the citizen-consumer and the citizen-poor, the latter object of social assistance” (Mota, 2007, p. 130).

There has been an expansion of focal and compensatory policies, policies to combat hunger and the enhancement of the human rights agenda, to the detriment of social rights.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the Social Assistance Policy is a centrality, especially in the governments of the Workers Party, being a great ally for the appeasement of the working classes, through immediate policies to cushion hunger and misery.

The encouragement of a<sup>40</sup> human rights agenda and income transfer policies is heading toward the deconstruction of universal social protection and social rights of work, to strengthen the neoliberal macroeconomic policy, with the aim of deepening counter-reforms (privatization and precariousness). But, with political-ideological strategies of passivation,<sup>41</sup> articulated with the ideas of “entrepreneurship”, self-employment, voluptuous, individual solidarity, self-help, corporate responsibility, “human capitalism”, “sustainable and green”. We realize that the assumptions of freedom are constantly renewed to ensure new expropriations.

Employment and income generation policies, as well as social assistance, under great influence from international organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America – ECLAC and the World Bank – place monetarization as a way to address poverty, seeing as a solution the transfers of income. Deliberately ignoring the structural pair that generates it (Silva, 2014).

The very configuration of contemporary capitalism<sup>42</sup> requires macroeconomic policies, which deepen the structural elements of the dependent economic insertion in the world market, via public indebtedness<sup>43</sup> and the drafting of the public fund – financed mainly by the workers –, with conditionalities, in which international institutions pay money to peripheral countries, in exchange for economic, cultural and political interference. Each loan allows the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to be opened and interchanged in macroeconomic policies and sectoral policies.

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<sup>39</sup> Conditionalities in the field of social security and health were expanded, while social assistance grew, justified by the increase in pauperism, in addition to the financial imbalance. This scenario encourages the need for complementarity in services, either through health plans or private pension. This is one of the expressions of the counter-reformist period, through the scrapping of public services (Moreira, 2019).

<sup>40</sup> The social policy of the period of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso turned to the creation of the Plan to Combat Hunger and Poverty, based on Betinho’s projects, with the principles of solidarity, partnership and decentralization. With the promulgation of the Constitution of 1988, social assistance policy takes on a new aspect, being designed, but at the same time directed to the rules of capital. On the other hand, we had the organization first of the Organic Law of Social Assistance – LOAS, created in 1993, which deals with the organization of Social Assistance and subsequently the National Policy of Social Assistance – PNAS (2004) and the Single System of Social Assistance – SUAS (2005) (Moreira, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> The emphasis is added to the Millennium Goals during the Copenhagen Conference in 1995. It was agreed among state representatives, from a total of 189 countries, to meet the targets by 2015. The main goal is to reduce poverty by improving health and promoting peace (STEIN, 2009). According to the concept brought by this goal of the millennium was to strengthen the responsibility of civil society, through solidarity, in which it affirms that the “[...] volunteer is the protagonist, the agent of social transformation who provides unpaid service donating his or her time, his or her skills and his or her energy.” Moved by solidarity and citizenship and driven by personal, social, political, cultural or religious motivations, it is spontaneously dedicated to causes, projects for the benefit of the community. Source: <https://nacoesunidas.org/tema/odm/>. Access on: July 10th 2020.

<sup>42</sup> See Carcanholo (2010).

<sup>43</sup> “[...] *debt service* more directly expresses financial dependence: dependent economies, by not having strong currencies, nor determining international financial flows, contract subordinate relationships not only to the capital-money function in a more general sense [...]” (Luce, 2018, p. 51, author’s emphasis).



If in general terms the role of the State in contemporary capitalism is to provide capital with optimal conditions of valorization, to cushion the effects of the crisis – it does so via public fund resources – nowadays this state has in expropriations the lever for the profitability of capital in the face of overaccumulation and its obstacles (Oliveira; Souza; Soares, 2019, p. 17–18).

With a subaltern insertion in the international division of labor, the social production of wealth in Brazil is divided among the imperialist countries. This dynamic demands a greater exploitation of the Brazilian workforce. That is why exponential inequality, with a strong concentration of political, income, land power and the great influence of imperialism are expressions of permanent nature in the Brazilian reality. In this sense, the integration into the international division of labor in a late and dependent manner reflects structural aspects of our social formation and our social classes, seen in the precariousness of working conditions and the policy of social assistance.<sup>44</sup>

Research on people in a situation of refuge in our country imposes an analysis on how the unequal development of capitalism is structured, migratory flows, the conditions of wage labor and the way in which the more-value socially produced is shared via social policies.

According to the Acnur survey (2019), in relation to public social services, public health is the service most used by people in situation of refuge, there are 444 refugees, equivalent to 91% of the total number of people surveyed (487 people). Public education is accessed by 201 refugees (41% of the total sample). With reference to the services of social assistance there are only 93 refugees (19% of the total sample). The survey shows that 71 refugees (14.6% of the total sample) have access to some type of social security service (health insurance, maternity insurance, etc.), even lower than those who contribute to social security (34% of the total sample).

A reduced number of 86 refugees (17.8% of the people interviewed) access the Continuing Benefit (BPC) and/or income transfer programs. In relation to the assistance programs, the Bolsa Família Program (PBF) stands out, which serves 83.72% of this small group (17.8%). That is, among the services accessed by social assistance, Bolsa Família program is the majority. Acnur survey concludes that the working conditions of refugees are very precarious, because most are unemployed or work hard and have insufficient income to ensure their survival. They also have low integration due to the little language mastery and racism existing in Brazil. In addition, most of them do not have access to social protection, since they do not contribute to social security. They highlight that “[...] there are refugees in a situation as precarious as the Brazilians who are the beneficiaries of the Bolsa Família Program. They fundamentally reveal the great difference between the public services accessed and available” (Acnur, 2019, p. 44).

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<sup>44</sup> It is seen as *a blessing* to whom is serviced by it. Not to mention that there is a transfer of responsibility to its civil society, which through NGOs's and other groups, formalized with the State through partnerships and with a social responsibility nature.

The scope of Bolsa Família<sup>45</sup> is unquestionable, but the limitations that are presented are noticeable and, in more than 15 years, it was not able to reduce the disloyalty. The calculation of the poverty limit is not readjusted annually by the inflow, there is no adequacy of the value to be transferred, nor does it spend 0.5% of GDP for these types of programs. Add to this scenario the link to the social protection network, with the education and health deterioration.

The management of the Program is done in a decentralized manner, having the participation of all levels of power and the Federal Economic Cash is the agent that executes the payments. The PBF inserted millions of beneficiaries into the banking system, thereby remunerating financial institutions to validate the services provided. The Social Assistance policy gains this prominence as a social policy, differentiating from previous actions more focused on corporativism and philanthropy, but it is simultaneously focused on the care of interest-bearing capital, by interweaving in its relation to families and their funds. As low as the value of the benefit passed on to those who receive it, this value represents an amount seen in a unique way, as it is passed on. What happens is that this money remains in the bank while families do not withdraw, allowing services and operations on the part of financial capital (Brettas, 2017).

The issue of Social Assistance policy, centered on the transfer of income, at the same time guarantees access to consumption (ensures the realization of value) and provides the financialization of the policy. This is because it inserts the working class – the beneficiaries – into the circuit of finance, to the extent that it operates the benefit, using the way of the banks, through the use of a card and thereby inserts the resource that would be public within a banking and financial logic. It also assumes the characteristic of the monetarization of social policies, that is, it abandons the policies of state equipment for transfer of money, transforming the right into money.

There is an incentive to credit, increasing the incentive for beneficiary families to consume. The delicate thing about this is that it encourages for those of low income to adhere to individual credit works as a foundation for having access to what should be a right. Example would be what is guaranteed in CF 88 as housing, food, education, health, welfare, among so many others, the “integration” of that individual to social programs occurred incorrectly (Brettas, 2017). The income transfer programs and the allocation of other policies with the private sector caused a considerable adjustment of the working classes with financial institutions.

Precisely this is the new face of social policy, reconfigured to meet the changes in the pattern of reproduction of capital, aimed at the so-called financial capital. The most profitable form of interest is precisely in the wages and incomes of the working classes. The financial expropriation happens precisely from this relationship, because the workers extend their relationships with the banks and it is possible to withdraw profits from the individual income retained in these institutions (Brettas, 2017). These thoughtful programs act in the

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<sup>45</sup> The Fome Zero was also the embryo of the Bolsa Família, regulated by Law No. 10.836 of January 09th, 2004, making the most comprehensive income transfer program in the world. The whole proposal presented in the PFZ was limited to actions of little expression, leaving only the greatest emphasis on the PBF. The Bolsa Família Program became the model of social policy of the Lula government, followed by the following mandates. It was the unification of the programs created in the FHC government, such as the School Stock Exchange, Food and Gas Stipend. According to information from the government, the proposal consists of being a direct transfer of income program, seeking to guarantee families the right to food, access to education and health (Moreira, 2019).

face of the manifestations of the “social issue”, which the PT governments assumed a type of reformism, but without reform.

The expropriation of rights, conquered by the working class and widely financed by it, becomes the fundamental instrument of ensuring the valorization of capital: on the one hand, sending resources for interest-bearing capital – via public debt – and on the other hand, opening up space for the mercantilization of social reproduction in its totality (Oliveira; Souza; Soares, 2019, p. 21).

The governments of PT<sup>46</sup> sought to reconcile what would never be harmonic, which consists of neoliberal measures under the mantle of a supposed neo-developmentalism. This is materialized by the intense counter-reformist process of social security, education and health, while leveraging social assistance as its main policy of government. In line with an expansion of individual credit to the consumer, it has created loans to popular payments. What happened was the mediation of interests: if, on the one hand, it met some of the working classes; on the other hand, it sought to secure the premises of the ruling classes (Mota; Amaral; Peruzzo, 2012).

By meeting in part the demands of the working classes, the Lula government did not do so in a way that included them in the socialization of produced wealth, moving away from the class conception of struggle. Due to this, the results were the neglect of class antagonism and they were given through the consent around immediate guidelines. At the time when poverty was decontextualized, although not qualifying it as design or chance, but as a result of historical inequalities, it was treated by means of compensatory policies. Thus, it ensured both the response to the immediate needs of the most impoverished, as well as to the requests of the ruling classes (Mota; Amaral; Peruzzo, 2012).

Therefore, the intense process of massification of income transfer programs served to block manifestations of the most impoverished fringes of the working classes. For Simionatto and Costa (2014), the PT party governments served to create a social conformism, rather than educationally providing a “collective man.” It was a perfect environment for capital, because it articulated antagonistic interests to continue the process of capitalist development and this through a passive consensus, with great collaboration.

Therefore, social policies have been increasingly privatized, scrapped, rephilanthropized and financialized. A structure to ensure low levels of social protection, as a compensatory, relief and containment policy to human rights violations. Thus, in this long period of preventive counterrevolution, in a hegemonic and destructive crisis of capital, it is of interest to the capital

[...] to solve the obstacles of the super accumulation generated and, amid the crisis, the public fund will be its lifesaver. Reducing its action as

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<sup>46</sup> The Fome Zero program presented limitations, while highlighting important points of CF 88, because the structural character allowed to demonstrate that hunger was not due to lack of food, but because of the poor and unequal distribution of Brazilian income. Increasingly subordinate to economic policy, because it was necessary in times of crisis to contain the class struggle. A pre-electoral program that advocates a counter position to the Solidarity Community is formed. However, there is an opposition to what was planned and put into practice during the Lula administration, being marked by the continuity of the FHC government and, mainly, guided by the neoliberal foundations (Siqueira, 2013).

Indirect balance and expanding its role as a financier and subsidiary of its accumulation and valorization process, especially as a feeder of interest-bearing capital. The counter-reforms initiated in Brazil, are the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, passing through the PT governments and sharpened to the maximum power in the current government (Fascist and liberal) are reasonable evidence that the public fund, in the dispute between capital and labor, has been the main instrument of salvation in the face of the crisis of capital and of reaffirming our dependent condition. In this path of clear counter-revolution to implement the counter reforms, the Brazilian capitalism in crisis shows that its anti-national and antisocial bourgeoisie is brutally directing all the burdens to the working class (Oliveira; Souza; Soares, 2019, p. 19–20).

And it would not be different for refugees who are expropriated from their homes and arrive in countries, which historically carry in their structure the precariousness of work and social policies. In this period of pandemic, as mentioned earlier, the situation of extreme poverty of several Brazilians, migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples and quilombola communities worsened. And thousands of people did not have access to emergency aid due to the impossibility of having a cell phone with data to fulfill registration steps.<sup>47</sup> In view of this situation, endlessly queues were formed in the agencies of the Federal Economic Bureau that put at risk the lives of many people who do not have adequate food, adequate housing and access to quality health, making them much more susceptible to the most harmful effects of the disease.

In addition to the impacts of the pandemic on the lives of these people, “[...] there is no link among public employment policies, protection of migrants and refugees and combating work under conditions similar to that of slave” (Esmpu; Acnur, 2020, p. 58).

The existing actions to address the lack of effective public policies to combat the susceptibility of refugees are actions made possible in partnership with non-governmental organizations and with the support of the Brazil Network of the United Nations Global Compact (UN) and the High Commission of United Nations for Refugees (Acnur).<sup>48</sup> Many of these initiatives have of a great importance and impact on the lives of these people. However, because they are not public policies, they do not have the guarantee of regularity and access to all, as well as some of these actions are aimed at the perspective of “entrepreneurship” and self-responsibility of the individual for self-employment.

As mentioned in the first item, the permanent restructuring of capital brought even more precariousness to the Brazilian labor market. Labor counter-reforms placated the

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<sup>47</sup> Soares; Fachin (2020).

<sup>48</sup> “Integrated Action Project, maintained by MPT-RJ in partnership with Cáritas, with the objective of integrating workers in vulnerable situations to the labor market, offering training and other tools for the workers themselves to develop their skills. The UN Global Compact Brazil Network and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) launched, in April 2019, the Refugee Companies platform to promote the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the Brazilian labor market. The initiative has support from UN Women and the Empowering Refugees project. On the platform, a private enterprise company can open the doors to refugee people and foster growth, innovation and diversity in the workplace. Companies with executive teams with higher ethnic diversity are 33% more likely. According to the Report Delivering Through Diversity, of 2017, of Consulting McKinsey. The categories of engagement of companies are: promotion of employability; support for entrepreneurship; encouragement of knowledge and education; and realization of awareness and engagement initiatives” (Esmpu; Acnur, 2020, p. 57).

legalization of irregular labor practices, promoted greater deprotection and consolidated the negotiated on the legislated. The arguments that moved this process of expropriation of rights were supposed modernization and economic freedom.

In the current fascist and ultra-liberal government, the agenda of compensatory and human rights policies is disregarded and rejected. Thus, a reality of extermination of compensatory policies, which no longer resolved numerous violations of fundamental rights, is consolidated.

## Final Considerations

Expropriated from their countries, by hunger, by wars, many of which under false flags of “peace” and “humanitarian interventions”, these refugees are expropriated from their lives by the consequences of bourgeois sociability. When they arrive in the countries of destination – in this case Brazil, a country of dependent capitalism, racist and that historically imposed a policy of extermination to the original peoples and black people – they experience racism and/or xenophobia and undergo a second expropriation.

The expropriations under the banner of freedom or peace make up capitalism: with different arguments, the imperialist countries, in order to resolve the overaccumulation, bet on the war industry, on the expulsion of native peoples, riparian inhabitants and quilombola for the extraction of wealth, on the commodification of public social services and on the withdrawal of labor rights. It is added that the peripheral countries in receiving these workers who have denied access in the central and imperialist nations, the overcoming other companies in profitability is expressed the failure to exercise the right to freedom to go and come, by denial in an attempt to seek a border are clearly expressed.

In addition to the current configuration of contemporary capitalism in its purpose of giving materiality to fictitious capital, it usurps even more rights of the Brazilian working classes and, in turn, refugees suffer from the absence of social protection and can still be victims of human trafficking, smuggling of migrants and contemporary slave labor.<sup>49</sup>

The insufficient and precarious Brazilian social protection system and the opportunities for employment insertion – which are committed to “entrepreneurship” and informality – express the marks of our social formation and our peripheral and dependent insertion in the international division of labor. With the cultural broth of a restricted democracy, of nullification of speech and dissent and of appropriation of the public thing by the ruling classes, social policies are marked by insufficiency, precariousness and disarticulation.

Despite a possible proposal from the “Income Brazil” Program, the Social Assistance Policy also goes through a field of uncertainty, since there is a lack of planning for a broader program that can meet a large number of affected people by the Covid-19 crisis. A considerable number entered the basic protection for the first time during this period and is already in the waiting queue, either to receive the emergency benefit, or to be later inserted into the Bolsa Familia Program. This lack of preoccupation with those inserted and served by this policy makes up a rights attack project, reinforcing the social minimum and repudiation of Brazilian bourgeoisies to any kind of possibility of a basic income.

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<sup>49</sup> ESMPU; ACNUR (2020).

In the current articulation of the present period of capitalism, we are only certain of the dynamics of so-called financialization, which optimizes violence in all senses, to realize an added value that was often not produced and, at the same time, to resolve overaccumulation.

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# V

## AGRIBUSINESS HEGEMONY AND ACCELERATION OF AGRARIAN COUNTER-REFORMATION: BOLSONARO GOVERNMENT POLICIES FOR THE FIELD

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### Introduction

By making an initial analysis of the Bolsonaro government, it is possible to affirm that its policy for the countryside is marked by the acceleration of the agrarian counter-reform, contributing to the strengthening of the hegemony of agribusiness in Brazil. Clearly delineated since the campaign times and reaffirmed after the assumption of the presidential chair, its policies totally paralyzed the creation of rural settlements, the demarcation of lands where indigenous peoples live and territories of quilombola communities, in addition to inciting violence against these populations and the social movements of the countryside – especially the movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) –, allowing us to evaluate that there are clear elements of fascistization in the actions developed by this government.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to highlight that the priority for agribusiness as a basis for the development of the Brazilian countryside, established by the current Bolsonaro government, actually intensifies (through continuities with some differences) trends that have been delineating in governments since the late 1990. Relying on the state apparatus and under the reins of financial capital, agribusiness has been fundamental in defining the movement and strategies of social classes in the countryside, confronting it with the proposal of peasant and popular agrarian reform built by social movements. According to Fernandes (2004), agribusiness is a new (and broader) type of landowners, whose power of concentration and domination is not only restricted to land, but also to production technology and development policies; an euphemism to conceal the land owner image of the predator, expropriatory and exclusionary model of the economic development of capitalist agriculture, which carries with it all the inheritance of political and economic backwardness, slave labor, coronelism and subservience.

In this sense, in order to understand the hegemony of agribusiness – and the consequences that its model of economic development highlighted in agroexport brings to the current Brazilian conjuncture – it is necessary to recover, in this chapter, some historical

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<sup>1</sup> The very appointment of Luiz Antonio Nabhan Garcia to the Secretariat of Land Affairs indicates this trend – after all, it is about the licensed president of the Democratic Rural Union (UDR), the most astounding employer organization in the Brazilian field, historically associated with violent practices to combat land occupations and murder of rural workers.

mediations that particularize the agrarian question and the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil. To analyze the Brazilian agrarian question, taking into account the numerous transformations suffered by agriculture, as well as to situate the theme in the current situation, without leaving aside all the history of the struggle for land in Brazil and the great territorial dimension of the country, it makes the subject increasingly complex and the subject of discussion in academic and political circles.

The issue of land structure has always been present in the national political scenario, forming the basis of a policy of extreme social concentration of land ownership that not only generated the latifundium but also demarcated the structures of monopolization of power by reduced elites. Linked to the historical process of colonization of the country, the land occupation structure based on the existence of latifundia crossed the various economic cycles without major changes. As Martins (1999) points out, just as the issue of slavery was rooted in the constitution of the monarchic state in imperial Brazil, the agrarian question is nuclear in the constitutive process of the republican and oligarchic state in the country.

The transition from “democracy of the oligarchs” to the “democracy of the great capital” deepened the bonds of external dependence, at the same time that it did not effect a radical breakdown of the colonial heritage in the context of the Brazilian agrarian structure (Iamamoto, 2006). The implementation of the policy of “modernization of agriculture” in the post-war period, with profound transformations in the productive sphere from technologies originated from industry entities, has worsened this scenario. This process of continuous modernization led by the military regime instituted after the April 1964 coup intensified the conflicts in the camp, the expropriation of the rural worker,<sup>2</sup> and the very insertion of the State through policies that enhanced the expropriation and concentration of land.

With the capitalist crisis opened in the 1970, a new cycle of accumulation was formed characterized by globalization and financialization, whose development reached agriculture. From the 1980 onwards, a scenario opens in which the role of agriculture nucleated the management of the various macro-economic conjunctures of the period, and the territorialization of capital promoted the installation of large agro-industrial complexes in the field, via monoculture, for export, enhancing the expropriation and expulsion of workers from the countryside to the cities. The expansion of globalized and financialized capital to the agricultural sector gains a new dynamism from the 1990/2000, driven by the foreign strategy (and internal agricultural policy) of prioritization of agribusiness, which has become

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<sup>2</sup> We understand that the concept of peasant is current for the analysis of the understanding of the Brazilian agrarian reality, because it allows us to know the complexity of the historical subjects it establishes, diversely from the concepts of small production and family agriculture. For the understanding of this concept, we start mainly from the reflections of Marques (2008) and Fernandes (2008), from which we understand that the peasantry is formed by a diversity of social forms based on the relationships of family work and different forms of access to land such as the tenant farmers, the partner, the foreman, the lessee, the small owner, etc. In this sense, we understand that the centrality of the role of the family in the organization of production and in the constitution of their way of life, together with work on earth, constitute the elements common to all these social forms. Finally, we start from Marques (2008), which says that, although the peasant is an expropriated migrant, he does not completely break his ties with the land. For this author, the majority of expropriated peasants maintain some relationship with the countryside, whether it is closer or more distant – direct work relationship, family bond, origin relationship, etc. What explains, in part, the permanence among them of a set of symbols and values that refer to a traditional moral or logical order and the possibility of access to land presents itself as an alternative to the poor of the countryside and of the city who seek to ensure their survival while maintaining the dignity of workers.

a structuring part of the governments that have assumed the presidency since then, and that intensified with the arrival to power of Jair Messias Bolsonaro in 2018, whose actions have contributed to the advance of this hegemony through the intensification of the agrarian counter-reform.

These are the questions that will be developed in the chapter presented here, in order to reinforce how the current hegemony of agribusiness potentiates problems historically present in the rural environment and that the fight against this model of capitalist development in agriculture raises to higher levels of larger and economic growth. the challenges to be faced by social movements in the struggle for land and land reform within Brazilian society are complex.

## **Historical particularities of the agrarian question in the Brazilian social formation**

Upon analyzing the essence of our social formation, Prado Jr. clarifies that when the country was divided by the Portuguese into large tracts of land, centralizing production for the supply of external markets, the Brazilian society and economy have organized and worked to produce and export to Europe some tropical or mineral genera of great importance; that is, everything that existed in it was subsidiary and intended solely to support and make possible the achievement of the essential external objective, contributing to the occurrence of land concentration and to a form of land use based on the great agromarket exploitation (Prado Jr., 2000, p. 117). The development of the main economic activities throughout the colonial period presented two fundamental characteristics: a significant regional diversity and a policy of occupation of territories that directly interlinked with the most profitable activity at the moment (Prado Jr., 2008).<sup>3</sup>

In the framework of an emerging colonial world, the maintenance of the state stratification, which served as a social basis for the existence and strengthening of the patrimonial state in the Brazilian colonial world, was under the historical condition of granting land grants,<sup>4</sup> that demarcated the power structures that could not and should not be destroyed, forming a policy of land-based control that not only generated the latifundium, but also:

[...] excluded, *ab initio*, the mass of the free population, whether or not belonging to the state, from the possession of the land and, so on, from the control of power and the right to have direct ties with the state. In

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<sup>3</sup> It was seen, for example, the peak of the sugar economy during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially in Bahia and Pernambuco, due to the favorable climate and the possibility of production flow due to the proximity of the ports. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the discovery of the auriferous and diamantiferous deposits in Minas Gerais directed to this region the productive focus, which also boosted the development of cities around it, such as Rio de Janeiro (which becomes the capital) and São Paulo. With the depletion of the mines, the production scene again highlights agriculture – especially with sugar, tobacco and cotton – and also livestock and its derivatives (such as milk, cheese and leather), which developed particularly in the regions of Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul and Mato Grosso.

<sup>4</sup> There was undoubtedly a structural injustice in the land grant regime: only free man could be a land owner and, until the mid-eighteenth century, pure of blood and pure of faith. The acculturated Indians and the mestizos were, in general, forbidden the concession of the sesmaria, because they were classified in the category of administration, that is, protected by a white and free lord” (Martins, 2002, p.164).

itself, the land was not a wealth and it would take some time for it to assume this meaning (even as a connection of the commodity capital). But it is based on the material basis of the transfer and perpetuation of an entrenched estate of privileges and patrimonialist domination itself (Fernandes, 1981, p. 69).

Understanding that the way in which the emancipation of Brazil was operated was the character of “political arrangement” (Prado Jr., 2012, p. 51), we can affirm that the particularity of the development of this transition contributed to the characterization of the whole process as a “hooded revolution” (Fernandes, 1976), under which Independence assumed both a revolutionary and a conservative element. Its revolutionary element emerges from the fact that it represents a definitive historical milestone of the extinction of colonial status and a reference point for the formation of national society. Its restorative process is solidified by the fact that the depth of rupture with the past was confined by the predominance of historical and social influences:

Large farming and mining, under the conditions in which they could be exploited productively, imposed the perpetuation of the structures of the colonial world – from slavery, to the extreme concentration of income and to the movement of power by reduced elites, with the permanent marginalization of the huge mass of free men who could not classify themselves in civil society and the invisible erosion of national sovereignty in economic, diplomatic or political relationships with the great powers (Fernandes, 1976, p. 33).<sup>5</sup>

The period that opens from the 1850's marks the route of several modifications that sought to change the physiognomy of the country, aiming to direct it to what was then considered modernity: the reduction and extinction of slave trade, with the consequent release of capital and business experience for productive investments in other sectors;<sup>6</sup> Land Law that instituted private property of the land and its commercialization; the centralization of the National Guard; and the approval of the first Commercial Code. Throughout the imperial period, most of the reforms proposed by the liberals had been exclusively political (except for abolition), so they did not modify the deeper economic, political and social structures. The result of this development process was the survival of command structures that implied the marginalization of broad sectors of the population that, in practice,

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<sup>5</sup> The concentration of power in the hands of a minority explains “[...] the survival of traditional production structures and forms of political control characterized by the manipulation of local power by large owners and the marginalization and apathy of the majority of the population” (Costa, 2010, p. 60).

<sup>6</sup> According to Medeiros (2003, p. 10), “when, in the mid-19th century, difficulties began to arise for the continued use of slave labor, since slave trade was publicly condemned and harshly persecuted on the international level, the debate on new forms of work for large crops has also become a discussion about land use and the conditions of their appropriation. At that time, although voices in favor of a division of land were already appearing in Parliament, the power of the great landowners prevailed. The result of the controversy surrounding land ownership and use was the Land Law, approved in 1850. Through it, mechanisms were ensured that allowed the maintenance of land concentration and the availability of labor. The Republican Constitution of 1891 and the Civil Code of 1917 maintained them.” Promulgated by a parliament consisting of large farmers and slave lords, the Land Law “[...]transferred to private domain and possession, creating a kind of absolute right that is the main cause of Brazilian latifundism and the difficulties to give the land, fully, a social function” (Martins, 1999, p. 122). The consequences of this legislation are evident years later, around 1920, in the landmarks of the Old Republic, where “[...] 4.5% of those who could buy had almost half of the country's rural properties” (Coggiola, 2007, p. 3).

guaranteed and reiterated “[...] the monopoly of the state apparatus by the owners of slaves, sugar mill lords, coffee makers, stationers, landowners, traders, foreign interests” (Ianni, 1985, p. 11).

During the Old Republic, Brazil remained as a country predominantly agricultural until the 1930. According to the last census carried out in this period (1920), only 16.6% of the population lived in cities of 20 thousand inhabitants or more, and 69.7% engaged in agricultural activities, while 13.8% engaged in industry and 16.5% to services (Fausto, 2012). In rural society, the large landowners dominated, who before 1888 were also, in the vast majority, slave owners. With the support of power rooted in land ownership and wealth, the “colonels” began to perform public functions through a system of reciprocity and exchange of favors toward their dependents, through State resources. Coronelism thus conforms as an indicator phenomenon of “[...] Rarefaction of the public power against private power or the privatization of public functions and resources in the functions of private interests” (Iamamoto, 2007, p. 139).

The dominant political liberalism in the federalist organization of the first Republic instituted the autonomy of the states, which was of interest to the coffee oligarchy and the particularism of their businesses. In Article 64 of the Federal Constitution of 1891 (Brazil, 2020a), the transfer of federal public lands to the patrimony of the states of the federation is guaranteed, giving them the prerogative to legislate on them. This measure contributed to the formation of large land areas, prevailing the landowner order of the imperial agrarian elites.<sup>7</sup>

The policy of governors developed throughout the First Republic established a political structure that represented the return of land owners to power and “[...] it allowed the ruling classes of the most powerful states to add up the disputes of state oligarchies and regional inequalities, in order to preserve and strengthen the power of the group that dominated the state apparatus” (Ianni, 1985, p. 15). There were several forms of exploitation of labor within the relations of production in force, making the first public privileged scenario of what Candido (1989) called the “decidedly draining scheme” rooted in our society. In the field, employment bonds contaminated with the vices of the not too distant past confided situations bordering on slavery, where employees found themselves trapped by debts often impossible to pay off. The excess of rural population that facilitated the exploitation of easy and cheap labor; the obstacles to access to own land; the predominance of large landowners and “colonels”, all this made the semi-existence of those who veiled in it in extreme need. The conditions of an agrarian structure of colonial character - with the great property and monoculture that persisted as occupation of the land and as a regime of exploitation - prevented the improvement of the conditions of the man of the countryside even with the shocks of abolition. This situation has not been changed by the Republic. On the contrary, the great concentration that develops until the crisis of 1929–1930 not only contributed to the expansion of the area of agricultural crops, but also generates the misery

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<sup>7</sup> According to Rodrigues (1982, p. 83), the allocation of the land returned to the states brought as a consequence “[...] not only the fractionation of the territorial mass, but also allowed the concessions of public interest, made in isolated acts of favor that favored the landowners or allowed the sharing of almost a whole state, such as the Amazon, divided into eight zones, delivered to foreign companies for the exploitation of their mineral wealth.” Another measure adopted by the Republican government was the regularization of public land tenants – large landowners who occupied public land without any legal mechanism, making them legal owners of large leased areas.

and famines that dramatize the daily Northeastern life in the time of droughts.

The increase in conflicts was the inexorable consequence of this process (Barboza, 2014). The intensification of the “social issue” triggers a conjunct of social struggles in the field for the guarantee of the rights of peasant workers.<sup>8</sup> There is an explosion of hundreds of strikes for wages and working conditions, such as those that occurred in the coffee farms of São Paulo. Economic collapse, social destruction, political subjugation, the desert of moral and cultural values motivate the reaction that is manifested in different forms in the backcountry. Against the monopoly of land, against the exploitation of the rural worker by the landowner, against drought, against periodic famines and even against police repression flooded with abuse and bloodshed, the *cangaço* represented a form of struggle, a response against the social organization (Rodrigues, 1982). In these milestones,

The rural world reveals the weight of state violence as a mark of dependent capitalism, advancing on the right of workers in embodying and overcoming pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and their ideologies of conservation that hold the exploited the rural worker accountable for his or her social and economic condition (Barboza *et al*, 2019, p. 62).

After the “revolution of 1930”, which decreed the end of the Old Republic, a facet was formed of the modernization of Brazilian society; a transformation that inaugurated, still under the hegemony of the oligarchy, “a recomposition of the structures of power, by which bourgeois power and bourgeois domination would be historically configured”, a recomposition that marked the passing of the “feudal era” (or former regime) of the “bourgeois era” (or class society) (Fernandes, 1976, p. 203). The “Constitutionalist Revolution” of 1932 and the promulgation of the Constitutional Charter in 1934 (Brasil, 2020b) would require that the political force of rural oligarchies had not been entirely removed, which forced the need for the recomposition of the power pact in these oligarchies and the rising industrial and commercial bourgeoisie. This process culminated, on the one hand, in the preservation of the structures owned by them of four centuries past, without signs of changes in the Agrarian Reform. On the other hand, it implied the maintenance of the political conditions of the large landowners to exercise power in rural areas, with the monopoly of state institutions, a strong control over the rural population, thus ensuring the maintenance of its political representation force (even on a secondary plane).

Absorbing the population surpluses of export agriculture and characterized by the substitution of imports and the concentration in the production of durable consumer goods, industrialization took place without effecting a break with both the economic dependence of central countries and the rural oligarchy (from which the new ruling elites originate).

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<sup>8</sup> The fact that the numerous struggles and resistances concerning the question of power crystallized in the form of land monopoly have developed since the Portuguese invasion is incalculable. These are some examples of this period: the constitution of quilombos by black people and enslaved Indians, having been Palmares a historical reference around 1629, the indigenous confrontation led by Sepé Tiaraju (1753–1756), the Baiana Conjunction (1798), the insurrection of the Malês (1835), the Balaiada (1838), the Cabanagem (1835), the Sabinada (1837), the Praieira Revolution (1848–1850), the Canudos War (1896–1897) and the Contestado War (1912–1916). In the decades following the period referred to in the paragraph, we can highlight: the Revolt of the Cauldron (1935), the Pau de Colonar Movement (1935), the guerrillas of Porecatu (1944–1951), several organizations of Tenant Farmers around 1957–1961, the Revolt of Trombas and Formoso (1955–1964), The Union of Farmers and Agricultural Workers of Brazil – Ultab (1954), the peasant leagues (1955 – 1964), the Landless Farmers Movement – MST (1960) and the advance of rural union in the 1960.

Thus, a long period is formed in which the close relationship between capital and land ownership is in force; a pact where the large crop is built as the basis of capital accumulation and economic diversification. Under these circumstances, unlike the classical economic models in which the ownership of capital and land ownership were separated – and, at the same time, the class of capitalists was also separated from the class of landowners – here, they both merged; and, not infrequently, into great property, the owner made himself not only a landowner (in the traditional sense of the word), but an entrepreneur (Martins, 2002, p. 170). The old agrarian oligarchy recomposes and remakes alliances to remain in the power block, modernizing itself economically and decisively influencing the conservative bases of bourgeois domination in Brazil.

## **The ties of the process of capitalist modernization of agriculture in Brazil**

During the 1950's, with the model of dependent industrialization that resulted in the necessary import of machinery from Europe and the USA, it was the generation of foreign exchange from the continuity of agricultural exports that made it possible to pay this amount of machinery derived from the import of machinery.

According to Stedile (2005, p. 31), from this process there is an industrial sector linked to the production of inputs for agriculture (such as the tools, machinery, chemical fertilizers, poisons, etc.); and another sector linked to the implementation of the agricultural processing industry (the so-called agro-industry), a model that also brought forth an agrarian bourgeoisie, of large landowners, that aimed sought to modernize their farm and intended it to the internal market, in a process of capitalist modernization of large rural property. In the structure of land ownership, a contradictory and complementary logic was thus built:

On the one hand, there was the multiplication of small properties, by the purchase and sale and reproduction of family units. And, on the other hand, in vast regions, great capitalist property advanced and concentrated more land, more resources. And, in general, there was a historical trend, natural of the logic of capitalist reproduction, that land ownership, which was already born on land-based bases, remained on average concentrating even more (Stedile, 2005, p. 32–33)

If the import of means of production considered more modern marked the first steps, still in the 1950, of the process of capitalist modernization of agriculture in Brazil, it will be from the 1960, specifically with the start of military governments derived from the 1964 coup, that agriculture will be inserted more strongly into the reality of capitalist production, through the implementation of economic development plans that would aim to adapt the production of primary goods to financial capital (Delgado, 2012, p. 13–15). When the country is now headed by civil autocracy – bourgeois military, from the mid-1960 to the 1980, a new stage of conservative modernization is implemented. The State has directed this change of course by creating the basis for capital accumulation, through the regulation of capital-labor relation, fundamentally by labor laws; the transfer of resources to the industrial enterprise and the promotion of qualitative change in the field of agricultural production;



which remained important to the international capitalist dynamic, but also has a primary role to feed the urban masses, that is, in production for the internal market.

With regard to agricultural development policy, a series of mechanisms for large-scale agricultural production improvement are implemented – mainly through credits for chemical inputs and machinery for large owners, implementing the so-called Green Revolution.<sup>9</sup> This gave a boost to the process of modernization of agriculture, starting mechanization and poisoning of agricultural production, as a way to increase productivity and ultimately profitability. Furthermore, with the internationalization of the Amazon lands, the growth and development of the landowners, and an Agrarian counter-reform associated with the colonization of the border areas, agrarian conflicts intensified, and thus the role of trade union militancy. Not by chance, the military-business dictatorship pursued, arrested, tortured and disappeared with peasant leaders and, from 1972, pushed the rural unions to provide medical and dental care and also to send them to support and pensions in order to bureaucratize and depoliticize their struggles.

This economic model of modernization of agriculture in the country, which maintained the concentration of land and potentiated the export monoculture, had as main factor of strengthening the interest of international capital that was invested in the national industry, which needed both to expand the production of goods and inputs for agriculture, and to increase production and export from the Brazilian raw material (Palmeira, 1989). In this case, agricultural or agro-industrial production has been invaded by large economic groups, which have started to immobilize capital in land, in the sense of benefiting not only from the valorization of them, but also with the possibility of raising public funds for the realization of financial applications that were more profitable at that time. According to the analyses of Müller (1989, p. 34):

With the integration of industry and agriculture in the period 1960–80, we are faced with companies and economic groups that have a powerful influence on the dynamics of agricultural activities, with profound repercussions on their structures. But in agriculture itself companies and economic groups arise, which with their industrial counterparts, are part of the economic power with interests in agricultural activities.

Delgado (2005) signals us that the 1980 was formed as a moment of transition and contradiction to the Brazilian Agrarian Question, with the resumption of breath, after the end of the military regime, of the social forces that for two decades had been subjugated by the authoritarian rule of the movement of agriculture.<sup>10</sup> In addition, if between 1965–1981

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<sup>9</sup> On the post-World War II, in opposition to the Red Revolution (which proposed a radical social transformation, changing the structure of the productive system that generates social relationships with profound inequalities, as expressed by misery and hunger), the Green Revolution was created as a technical alternative to increase productivity and solve the problem of food supply in the world (Carneiro, 2015). Ironically, we come to the 21st century with 1 billion of famished, as the UN itself, through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), recognizes.

<sup>10</sup> “With the environment of political openness there is a wide articulation of social movements and agrarian advisory entities: The Rural Workers’ Movement without Land (MST) is born, the National Confederation of Agriculture Workers (Contag) is reorganized, the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Contag), the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Contag), the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Contag), the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (Contag). The Pastoral Land Commission of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), created in 1979, is strengthened by the Church and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) emerge in support of the

Brazilian agriculture completed a cycle of technical modernization and growth without making a substantive change in the agrarian structure, from the 1980, a scenario will open up in which the role of agriculture will conform as crucial for the management of the various macro-economic conjunctures of the period. The Mexican moratorium of 1982 triggered an international liquidity crisis, which has continued for the long period of relative stagnation of the Brazilian economy, largely established by successive macroeconomic “adjustment” operations to the external debt crisis, carried out in order to try to adapt the internal economic dynamics to the limits imposed by the new restrictions.

Thus, this process of “constricted adjustment” to the globalized economic order (to which the country undergoes over the 1980/90 and which the years 2000), had as basic characteristics the restrictions of external and internal order, expressed by high public indebtedness and external dependence,<sup>11</sup> in addition to the influence of the international economy on the political economy of the agrarian question.

The way in which the economic establishment will promote the management of the crisis of external dependence from the reversal of the economic cycle of cement in 1982 requires a significant participation of the agricultural sector and the related agro-industrial chains in the generation of external trade balances. These become essential to meet the financial needs of the current account deficit of the balance of payments. The way foreign economic policy will incorporate the agricultural sector into the “solution” of external indebtedness reinforces the strategy of concentration and latifundium speculation in the land market. The greatest sign of this is the liberality with which it promotes the appropriation of land income by the large owners (Delgado, 2005, p. 62)

During the 1990/2000 decades, globalized capital increasingly expands its “tentacles” for agriculture, which is now required to meet the requirements of this “constrained adjustment” and domestic and foreign debt. Thus, a new moment of impulse to the external strategy of prioritization of agribusiness and promotion of the agro-export sector, associated with the new global economic policy of capital financing, where the commodification of land and exports of primary products are potentially valued. The policy previously used in the conservative modernization scenario of the 1960/80 – of investments in industrial complexes associated with large private land ownership to respond to the external trade balance – is resumed in this new threshold period of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, with prioritization of agricultural agriculture in the foreign macroeconomic agenda and in the domestic agricultural policy, as a way of generating foreign trade balances to supply the current account deficit.

The development strategy based on the implementation of “development fund” from the “integration axes” with alternatives of regional integration tends to perpetuate the spatial fragmentation of development according to the international flow of goods, expressed

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“National Forum for Agrarian Reform” (Delgado, 2005, p. 61).

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that, in essence, these “macroeconomic adjustments” were not able to equate these debts, “on the contrary, they prolong this phase of stagnation of the Brazilian economy for more than two decades” (Delgado, 2005, p. 62).

in the Initiation for the Integration of South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA).<sup>12</sup> Thus, another stage is materialized of structural reforms of neoliberal character, thus perpetuating the spatial fragmentation of development and the intensification of conflicts in the field in the face of the reprimarization of exports, considering that the agricultural areas are being disputed by the national corporations. The country is placed “[...] in liquidation for the capital seeking re-production in the portentous commodity exports business” (Leher, 2009, p. 72, emphasis added).

The responses of the neoliberal federal governments to the broader context of the national agrarian question and agricultural development were, in summary: promotion of land access policies via markets; credits aimed at vertical integration of producers considered efficient; promoting technological packages that associate the use of transgenic seeds with the use of pesticides that cause acute and chronic damage to rural workers, environmental damage through poisoning of soil, water, air and the food that reaches the consumer's table; the reprimarization of exports by means of the prevalence of latifundium, associated with the domestic capital for the production of *commodities*, and the predatory exploitation of mines; the combination of high technology used in agribusiness with work analogous to slave labor; lands foreignation;<sup>13</sup> growth in the occupation of indigenous territories and traditional populations, in the name of development; sustainable territorial development projects combined with compensatory social policies that do not alter the structure of agricultural production; among other expressions. More intensely and more widely, the Brazilian state combines the criminalization of peasant social movements with public policies that depoliticize the agrarian question and cool off the social struggles.

## **The hegemony of agribusiness in the Brazilian field**

From these reflections, it is important to emphasize that the priority for agribusiness as a basis for the development of the Brazilian countryside, established by the current Bolsonaro government, deepens trends that have been deleting since the second term of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government (FHC), crossed the PT governments of Luís Inácio da Silva (Lula) and Dilma Rousseff, and they despaired in the Michel Temer government. Agribusiness was defined by Delgado (2006, p. 1) as an “[...] Association of large agribusiness capital with large land ownership, under fiscal, financial and patrimonial sponsorship of the State”. We consider it important to add to this definition the political-ideological support of the big business media – not for nothing, the large media business groups are part of the Brazilian Agribusiness Association (ABAG).

The political priority given to agribusiness comes from the end of the 1990: when pressed by the exchange crisis of 1998/1999, the FHC government stimulated the exports as a way to obtain balances on the trade balance to pay the debts of the country. Among the sectors stimulated was the agribusiness, free from the payment of taxes on the export of

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<sup>12</sup> This is a program involving the twelve countries of South America, which aims to promote the integration of this region with the modernization of infrastructure, transport, energy and telecommunications. Financed by the IDB, CAF and FONPLATA and also national governments, it has been the target of several criticisms, especially by environmental movements, due to the causes of the various environmental impacts of the enterprises adopted.

<sup>13</sup> According to Stédile (2013, p. 29): “[...] It is estimated that foreign companies should control more than 30 million ha of land in Brazil.”

primary products, since Complementary Law 87/1996, known as the Kandir Law (Brasil, 1996).

From then on, a movement to raise the agribusiness to the condition of one of the pillars of the Brazilian economy, at the same time that agrarian reform was presented as anachronistic and the social movements of the countryside as violent and backward. With the increase in the world demand for so-called *commodities* in the 2000, driven by the growth of the Chinese economy, Brazilian exports of agricultural products were strongly expanded in quantity and value, and agribusiness was increasingly strengthened. The average annual value of exports rose from 50 billion in the 1995/99 period to about 200 billion in the late 2000, with the share of basic products going from 25% to 45% of the export tariff in 2010 and, added to semi-manufactured products, this number goes to 54.3%, setting up the reprimarization of foreign trade (Delgado, 2012, p. 95).

This political strategy of anchoring the economy in the export of *commodities* was not exclusive to Brazil, spreading throughout Latin America, configuring what Svampa (2013) called “consensus of *commodities*”, that is, a kind of political and ideological consensus that the only possible or possible path for development is through intensive, large-scale exploitation of natural resources for the production of primary products.

To this growth of agribusiness contributed decisively to the adoption of a set of policies: labor, which promoted the flexibilization of labor relationships; environmental, whose regulatory frameworks were reviewed; infrastructure, especially production flow; territorial planning and land regularization; and financing (Heredia; Leite; Palmeira, 2010).

Leveraged by this set of public policies, agribusiness was also favored, contradictorily, by the economic-food-energy-environmental crisis of 2007/2008, since it triggered a strong growth of foreign investments in the sector, either to invest in food and agrofuel production, whose prices increased, either because in crisis periods the land is seen as a reserve of value. Although this scenario has suffered a certain inflection from 2010, with the fall in the price of *the agricultural commodities*, in particular soybeans, there was rapid price recovery, and Brazil’s incorporation as China’s main supplier allowed the continued growth of agribusiness throughout the 2000, although with oscillation.

The result of this development model has been the intensification of land concentration, revealing that Brazil was not able to transpose the land structure. On the contrary, the maintenance of concentration on our lands was and is functional for capitalist rule. According to Incra (2020a), there are 5,766,542 million rural properties in Brazil registered in the agency that together account for 521,837,119 million hectares (ha) of land. The last IBGE agricultural census, of 2017, proves the concentration of land in Brazil, pointing out that 77% of the land of agricultural establishments are in the hands of agribusiness (IBGE, 2019).

However, the growth of large property does not translate into broad rural employment or better wage conditions, as the data found in the same document shows. Of the 5 million agricultural properties in the country, just over 51 thousand own 47.6% land used for agricultural production. On the other hand, small owners, landowners up to 10 ha, occupy only 2.3% of the total. The research also points to another trend: the decrease of establishments occupied by family farming and, consequently, the shrinking of jobs. The reduction was 9.5 percentage points compared to 2006. The segment was also the only one

to lose labor force: while there was an increase of 702 thousand jobs in other sectors of agribusiness, family agriculture lost a contiguous of 2.2 million workers (IBGE, 2019).<sup>14</sup>

With this, according to data from IBGE (2020a), between 1990 and 2018, the area planted with temporary crops in Brazil increased from 45.98 to 73.23 million ha (that is, it grew 27.25 million ha), concentrated increase in three products primarily aimed at export or processing industry – the so-called *commodities* – soy, sugarcane and corn. The area planted with these three products increased from 27.2 million ha in 1990 to 61.43 million ha (a growth of 34.2 million ha). On the other hand, the production of three basic foods for Brazilian food, rice, beans, and cassava, decreased from 11.44 million ha in 1990 to 6.04 million ha (a reduction of 5.4 million ha).

Another revealing of the paths of Brazilian agricultural production is the expansion of cattle breeding in Brazil, an activity that is due to the extensive character, and whose number of heads (213.5 million) is already greater than the number of Brazilians (210 million). In this case we observed that cattle breeding expanded in all regions of the country, but with emphasis on the Amazon, where the expression was more significant, from 17.8% of the Brazilian herd in 1990 to 40.6% in 2018 (IBGE, 2020b).

The expansion of agribusiness did not mean the improvement of food conditions for the Brazilian population, on the contrary, increased food insecurity in the country. Between 1990 and 2018, the Brazilian population went from 149 to 208.4 million inhabitants, a growth of 39.9%. In the same period, rice production increased by 58.3% and beans increased by 30.5%; that is, rice outnumbered the population growth, but bean production fell below this. The case of cassava is even worse, as production decreased by 27.5%. Thus, when we considered the availability of food per inhabitant, we observed that this reduced by 1 kg in the case of beans and almost 80 kg in the case of cassava. In the case of rice there was an increase of 6.6 kg per inhabitant (IBGE, 2020b).

On the other hand, the corn production increased by 285.5%, sugarcane production was 184.3% and soybean production was 492.5%, this confirms the priority of the current Brazilian agriculture for products aimed at export or the production of raw materials for the industry to the detriment of food production for the population, pointing to the inexorable expansion of our insecurity there, resulting from a productive model that expands *the* production of *commodities* to the detriment of food production (IBGE, 2020b).

In the wake of economic growth, agribusiness was also politically strengthened. Not for nothing, practically all the ministers of agriculture in the last two decades have been prominent figures of agribusiness, such as Roberto Rodrigues (then president of ABAG) in the first Lula government, Kátia Abreu (at the time president of the National Confederation of Agriculture) in the Dilma government, Blairo Maggi (one of the largest soybean producers and owner of the largest Brazilian soybean processing and marketing company) in the Temer government, and Tereza Cristina (then leader of the “Ruralista Bench” in the chamber, officially called the Parliamentary Front of Agriculture – FPA) in Bolsonaro government.

Perhaps the greatest political expression of the strengthening of agribusiness is the growing power of this “Ruralist Bench”, which has been acting in the defense of agribusiness interests in Congress and has become the largest and most influential sector bench of the

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<sup>14</sup> However, in terms of volume of production and income generation, small units exceeded the medium and large, showing that agrarian reform is not an outdated agenda, but a concrete necessity for the present and future of the country.

Brazilian parliament. In the legislature 2014–2018, the Bench had 214 members and 24 senators associated – respectively, 41.7% of the total of congressmen and 29.6% of the total senators. The Bench grew even more in the current legislature, which began in 2019, adding 225 congressmen and 32 senators – which corresponds to 43.9% of the Chamber and 39.5% of the Senate.

The strengthening of the “Ruralist Bench” implies the increase in the capacity of agribusiness to press for public policies that favor the sector; but it goes far beyond that, because it is a segment with sharp and strong links with other benches that have strengthened in recent years, like the evangelical and the armamentist, conforming what has been called “BBB bench”<sup>15</sup> – the ox, the bible and the bullet – to which some acres have another B, the banks, indicating the association of financial interests with the most retrograde sectors of Brazilian society.

## **The acceleration of the agrarian counter-reform**

Backed by the support of agribusiness and politically supported by the “Bs” benches, the Bolsonaro’s government, elected in 2018, suspended the destination of land for the creation of rural settlements, indigenous lands and quilombola territories; it created the mechanisms to break the land of settlements and indigenous peoples for the expansion of agribusiness and other capital interests – such as mining and hydroelectric construction – and intensified the legalization of land grabbing in the Amazon. In addition, he extinguished programs like Pronera<sup>16</sup> and Terra do Sol.<sup>17</sup>

Marx said that, in order to unravel social relationships, we need to go far beyond appearances. Nothing more fallacious than the discourse of agribusiness ideologues that the land is no longer fundamental to contemporary agriculture, because it is intensive in capital and technology. Land is not only fundamental for agribusiness, but today it is also for a number of other strategies of capital, among them the speculation driven by large transnational companies, as well as the most diverse financial funds, which increasingly invest in land as financial assets.

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<sup>15</sup> The expression refers to a television program and was used for the first time by the congresswoman Mrs. Erika Kokay of the PT. See Rocha (2015), disponível em: <https://epoca.globo.com/colunas-e-blogs/felipe-paturo/noticia/2015/02/kokay-aumenta-bancada-bbb-biblia-boi-e-bala.html>, acesso em: Sep. 07<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Through Pronera, the young people and adults from settlements have access to basic education courses (literacy, elementary and high school), high-level professional technicians, higher and graduate courses (specialization and master’s). The program also empowers educators to work in local settlements and coordinators – multipliers and organizers of community educational activities. The actions of the program, which was born from the articulation of civil society, are based on cultural and socio-territorial diversity, processes of interaction and transformation of the field, democratic management and scientific and technological advancement.

<sup>17</sup> Program to promote agro-industrialization and commercialization through the elaboration of business plans, market research, consultancies, training in economic viability, as well as management and implementation/recovery/expansion of agro-industries. Non-agricultural activities – such as rural tourism, handicrafts and agroecology – are also supported. The action was created in 2004 and is part of the National Plan for Agrarian Reform (PNRA) and the Multiannual Plan (PPA), which defines the priority Programs of the Federal Government. During this period, R\$ 44 million was made available in resources, which provided the implementation of 102 projects and benefited 147 thousand families throughout Brazil.

Thus, agribusiness, at the same time, acts to prevent the expropriation of unproductive lands located within its properties and to advance on public and community lands in Brazil, that account for 39% of the Brazilian territory and are now outside the land market – because it is land under state control (Conservation Units, Indigenous Lands and Rural Settlements) or collectively titled (Quilombola Territories).

The process of incorporation of new areas is a fundamental condition for the dynamics of agribusiness, expanding territorial domain and opening up borders through accumulation by plundering (Harvey, 2004), violent process of appropriation and expropriation of natural resources, lands and territories, it prints in the territories patterns of conflict expressed in systematic evictions, irregular assignment of land, foreclosure of public access, encampment of land for collective use, impediment of access to water, industrial scale capture of water resources, deforestation, among other conflicts.

In this perspective, areas of environmental preservation, indigenous lands, quilombolas, rural settlements and common use are obstacles to be removed, aiming to expand the supply of land in the market that is experiencing a moment of intense warming.

The abandonment of land reform and the recognition of lands traditionally occupied by indigenous and quilombolas has lasted more than a decade. Data on the creation (and recognition)<sup>18</sup> of settlements indicate that, in the second Lula government, there has already been a retreat to lower levels than those of the FHC government. In the period covering the Sarney's, Collor's and Itamar's governments (1985–1994), 868 settlements were created out of a total of 9,415 created between 1985 and 2019 – which corresponds to 9.2% of the total. In the two FHC governments (1995–2002), 4,281 settlements were created, 45.5% of the total, mainly in the first term, before the primary-export turnover. In the Lula administration (2003–2010), 3,544 settlements were created, 37.6% of the total, but with a big difference between the first term, when 2/3 of these were created and the second term, with only 1/3. Since 2011, in Dilma's and Temer's governments (2011–2018), the fall in the creation of settlements is even more brutal, with annual inferior numbers every year between 1995 and 2010 and a total of settlements created in the 2010 of only 722, corresponding to 7.7% of the total, less than in the period 1985–1994.

Therefore, Bolsonaro's determination to completely paralyze the creation of settlements only radicalized a policy that had already been outlined earlier, in line with the interests of agribusiness.

It was not very different the scenario in relation to indigenous lands (TIs) and quilombola territories (IQs). With regard to the demarcation of indigenous lands, the number falls sharply in the 2010 until zeroing in the Bolsonaro government, as announced by the president himself in August 2019, in flagrant disregard of the Constitution which, in its article 231, provides for the determination of indigenous lands: “As long as I am president, there is no demarcation of indigenous land” (Verdêlio, 2019).<sup>19</sup>

The largest number of TIs approvals occurred in the years immediately following the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, the assassination of Chico Mendes<sup>20</sup> and on the

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<sup>18</sup> Recognition refers to settlements created by state and municipal governments that are integrated into the Incra database and their beneficiaries considered eligible to receive the policies developed by the body supporting the development of settlements.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/politica/noticia/2019-08/bolsonaro-diz-que-nao-fara-demarcacao-de-de-terras-indigenas>. Access on: Aug. 16<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Chico Mendes was an important leadership of the rubber tappers of Acre that was notable for the defense of

eve of Rio-92, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, A context in which there was great international pressure for the adoption of measures to preserve the Amazon and the indigenous rights until 1992, 39.9% of the total TIs created between 1985 and 2019 were homologated. The second period of greatest creation of TIs was the FHC government, with 32.3% of the total. In Lula's governments, 19.4% of the TIs were created. Already in 2010, a period that includes the governments Dilma, Temer and Bolsonaro was only 4.9% of the total.

Thus, once again, what we observe is that the Bolsonaro government radicalizes a tendency already outlined previously of abandoning the policy of demarcation of TIs.

In the case of quilombola territories the scenario is also no different. As in the case of indigenous peoples, with explicit racism demonstrations, the president rejects compliance with constitutional provisions that ensure the right of quilombolas to the territories that traditionally occupy: "these demarcations of quilombola lands, have 900 in front of me to be demarcated, cannot occur. We are one people, one race" (Paraguasu, 2020).<sup>21</sup>

The Pro-Índio Commission that follows indigenous and quilombola policies points to the existence of 182 quilombola communities, registered by Incra and by state land bodies. According to this survey, up to 2014 84.6% of all the registrations were made, and the period 2011–2014, which corresponds to the first Dilma government, was the one that had the greatest amount of registrations. This is not to say that this government was responsible for the registrations because, according to the survey of the Pro-Índio Commission, federal agencies were responsible for only 23.2% of the registrations throughout the period, while state agencies made 76.8% of the registrations – especially the Institute of Lands of Pará (Iterpa), which made 30.3% of all the registrations carried out in the country, and the Institute of Lands of Maranhão (Iterma), which made 29.2%, both overcoming Incra, which made only 20.5%.

Thus, we can conclude that the policy of recognizing quilombola territories was already slowing even before the Bolsonaro government, therefore, as in other cases, what Bolsonaro does is radicalizing a trend already underway.

The first objective of agribusiness in relation to land policy is to prevent new areas from being intended for agrarian reform, the creation of indigenous lands and quilombola territories. This objective was being contemplated increasingly since the late 2000, still in the second Lula government, and was accentuated throughout the 2010, reaching the current stage of full service in the Bolsonaro government.

The second objective is to open new frontiers for agribusiness in Brazilian public terms, replacing the land of settlements on the market and allowing the private exploitation of indigenous lands, even if they remain public.

The definitive registration of the lots of settlements was the way discussed by agribusiness to remarket the unsuitable land for the purpose of agrarian reform or to put on the market public land that was intended to the creation of rural settlements.

Although it has been part of the Brazilian legislation on land reform since 1993, the practice of granting definitive registrations has not been applied in Brazil since then,

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an agrarian reform adapted to the Amazon and the way of life of rubber tappers and other forest peoples. His defense of the preservation of the Amazon rainforest earned him international fame, but his fight against land invaders and landowners earned him enemies who eventually murdered him in December 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. <https://www.terra.com.br/noticias/brasil/bolsonaro-diz-que-nao-ira-demarcar-mais-pedidos-de-terras-quilombolas,c84b0e29893073548b2d922fc2c843b43hikpw6z.html>. Access on: Aug. 16<sup>th</sup> 2020.



prevailing the provisional registration that prevented the replacement of land on the market.

According to Fernandes (2020, p 7), in 2017 26,563 Domain Registrations (TDS) and 97,030 Concession-of-use Contracts (CCUs), more than in the previous ten years, and in 2019 there were 852 TDS and 14,868 CCUs. Whereas, the Incra Management Report of 2018, without detailing what type of registration was distributed, points to the issuance of 87,751 titles in 2017 and 112,846 registrations in 2018.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, what we observe is that the actions of the Bolsonaro's government in relation to privatizing the land of settlements represent a continuation of what was carried out by the Temer government, being distinguished, in this sense expressively of what the policy of the PT governments was (Alentejano, 2018).

The second fundamental movement of incorporation of new lands to the expansive dynamics of agribusiness is the opening of the exploitation of indigenous lands. This goal, long cherished by the landowners and object of numerous legislative projects, was championed by the Bolsonaro government in 2020, by sending to Congress the Bill 191/2020, which regulates economic exploitation in indigenous lands by third parties (Brasil, 2020c). The activities released are the lease of indigenous land for agricultural production, including transgenic products, mining, oil exploration and the construction of hydroelectric plants. According to Project, the indigenous peoples could only veto mining, all other activities can be authorized, even against their will.

It is estimated that there are 3.1 million ha illegally leased in TIs that would be immediately legalized, in addition to the possibility of expansion to another million ha (Gonzales, 2019).<sup>23</sup> In the case of mining, in the Amazon alone, there is a request for research and mineral mining on an area of 30 million ha located in TIs, especially in the Yanomami lands, Raposa Serra do Sol (Rondônia) and Alto Rio Negro (Amazonas) (Prizibiszki, 2020).<sup>24</sup>

But, the most scandalous of the ongoing processes in the Brazilian field today is the escalation of land grabbing, of which the most recent episode was the edition of MP 910 by the Bolsonaro government at the end of 2019. But Bolsonaro was not the only one to propose, in recent years, actions favorable to the land grabbing. Lula and Temer also did so.

Since the beginning of Portuguese colonization in what is now Brazil, which instituted the latifundium and with it the land grabbing practices, until the end of the twentieth century, there were two moments of legalization of large-scale land grabbing in Brazil: the Land Law of 1850 and the Decree of 1931 of Vargas (Oliveira, 2010, p. 38).

In the two decades of the 21st century, no fewer than four legislations were created to regularize the occupation of public land in Brazil, favoring land grabbing processes: Laws 422/2008 and 458/2009 in the Lula government (Brasil, 2008; 2009), Law 13.465/2017 in the Temer government (Brasil, 2017) and PM 910/2019 of the Bolsonaro government (Brasil, 2019a). This profusion of new legislation meets the interests of agribusiness that needs legal land documents to access credits and other public resources.

PM 910/2019, proposed at the end of 2019, lapsed in the face of difficulties to hold votes in Congress in the context of Covid-19 pandemic, but was transformed into Bill

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<sup>22</sup> INCRA (2020b). Available at: <http://antigo.incra.gov.br/pt/relatorios-gestao>. Access on: Sep. 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. <https://brasil.mongabay.com/2019/03/brasil-quer-legalizar-o-arrendamento-agricola-de-terras-indigenas>. Access on: Aug. 16<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. <https://www.oeco.org.br/reportagens/mineracao-em-terras-indigenas-a-proposta-do-governo-bolsonaro-em-10-perguntas-e-respostas>. Access on: Feb. 09<sup>th</sup> 2020.

2.633/2020 and follow the pressures of agribusiness for its approval. The PM proposed three fundamental changes in the land regularization policy in force, which were already broadly in favor of land grabbing: (1) reaffirms the expansion of the maximum area to be regularized, for 2,500 ha; (2) it exempts supervision or inspection for regulation; (3) it extends the term of occupation.

The most scandalous aspect of the PM is the prediction of self-declaration as a basis for land regularization. The PM extends from 4 to 15 fiscal modules the size of the area that can be regulated without any local verification of the situation, without being checked if there is a conflict involving the area or crimes against environmental or labor legislation. It suffices the presentation of self-declaration of the alleged owner. It is worth saying that the tax module in Brazil ranges from 5 to 110 ha, which means that areas of up to 1,650 ha can be regularized without any supervision, unless the “owner” declares that he or she has submitted any worker irregularly to slavery work or murdered someone in conflict for that land (Brasil, 2019a).

PL 2.633/2020, which replaced PM 910, hardly differs from this, the only significant difference being the reduction of the size of the area that can be regularized by self-declaration from 15 to 6 modules, in order to reduce the criticism that large land grabbers would be benefited from (Brasil, 2020d).

As we know long ago, land grabbing, deforestation and violence are processes absolutely associated in the historical dynamics of occupation of the Brazilian territory, since the colonization when the original peoples were decimated and expelled from the coast once inhabited by them in the midst of the Atlantic Forest, of which there was also little left. This historical genocidal and ecocide practice, fortunately, is constantly updated in the Brazilian field, now under the control of big capital, renewing violence against social movements, peoples and traditional communities.

Not by chance, the struggle for land against this model, which extracts in a predatory way the natural resources and overestimates the labor force, is accompanied by the protagonism of Brazilian social movements. Unlike previous governments, which sought ways to divide, co-opt or control social movements and indigenous and quilombola peoples, opening up channels of dialog with them – albeit often selectively, choosing the interlocutors and marginalizing movements regarded as more combative – the Bolsonaro’s government has established a deliberate policy of coping with these movements, qualifying them, more than as political advisers, as enemies. The response of the State to these subjects who fight for agrarian reform, with the agenda of food sovereignty and agroecology, is criminalization. Still in the campaign, he referred to the occupations of lands done by MST: “Private property is sacred. We must typify the actions of these marginal people as terrorists. Did they invade? Shot them!” (Agência Estado, 2018).<sup>25</sup>

In line with this position, he proposed Law 13.870/2019 (Brasil, 2019b), approved by Congress in September 2019, which establishes extended possession, that is, the possibility that rural owners not only maintain weapons at home, but can carry them throughout the perimeter of their properties. The effects of the new law in terms of increasing violence in the field in the period of *agribusiness boom* are not yet measurable, since the law came into force in the last quarter of 2019, but data from the Pastoral Land

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<sup>25</sup> According to: <https://www.otempo.com.br/politica/invadiu-e-chumbo-afirma-bolsonaro-em-palestra-no-rio-de-janeiro-1.1789465>. Access on: May 22<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Commission (CPT) on conflicts and violence in the countryside show that 2019 was even more violent than previous years, with the largest number of conflicts of the decade, with an increase of 23% compared to 2018. There was a 14% increase in the number of murders (from 28 to 32); 7% in assassination attempts (from 28 to 30); and 22% in death threats (from 165 to 201). The same report also included the highest number of murders of indigenous leaders of the last 11 years (of 9 indigenous people killed in conflicts in the countryside in the year, 7 of them were leaders). In addition, there has been an increase in land conflicts among conflicts in the countryside in the last decade. Between 2007 and 2009, land conflicts represented 40% to 50% of conflicts in the countryside, this level changed to 50% to 65% between 2010 and 2015 and jumped to more than 70% in 2016, remaining at this level in the years 2017 and 2019, with slight oscillation to 65% in 2018 (CPT, 2020).

It is also worth noting the growth of land conflicts in absolute terms, as these went from the 1,000 cases for the first time in a decade, in 2016, which is repeated in 2019, when it reaches the peak of 1,254 conflicts, more than double the annual average of the years 2007 to 2010. More astonishing is still the shot in the area disputed in these conflicts in recent years. From an initial level of between 13 and 14 million ha between 2009 and 2012, there was a fall in the years 2013 and 2014 to about 7 million ha, but from then on the figures skyrocketed to about 22 million ha in 2015 and 2016, 38 million ha in 2017 and 2018 and an impressive 53 million ha in 2019 (CPT, 2020).

We can infer that conflicts in the field are not isolated cases, but a killing project. The CPT, the academic community, political representatives and social movements related to the fight for land and the environment play an important role in denouncing these cases so that we can change this situation and propose a new form of development different from the market proposal aimed at profits and not lives. We are facing a real explosion of the land dispute in the Brazilian countryside, highlighting the fallacy of speech of agribusiness ideologists that the land does not matter to the sector. It is important and does not hesitate to resort to violence to obtain it, after all, the capitalism of the 21st century makes violence a method of renewal of the dynamics of accumulation, as Bartra reminds us (2015, p. 128, our translation):

[...] in the third millennium we have a shrewd capitalism that systematically uses the violent economy of “accumulation by dispossession”, we also have an imprisoned and authoritarian bourgeois order that, both globally and nationally, systematically uses permanent primary political violence [...].<sup>26</sup>

It is the old primitive accumulation described by Marx being reformulated in the 21st century, combining expropriation and violence, or, in the words of Harvey (2004), accumulation by despoliation in progress, accelerating the march of agrarian counter reform.

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<sup>26</sup> “En el tercer milenio tenemos a un capitalismo desmecatado que recurre por sistema a la economía violenta de la “acumulación por desposesión”, tenemos también a un orden burgués atrabancado y autoritario que tanto en el plano global como en el nacional, recurre sistemáticamente a la violencia política primaria permanente [...]”.

## Final considerations

In general, it can be said that governments change, but without structural changes in the agrarian question in favor of workers. That is, the Brazilian land-based “frame” has been maintaining, and now intensifying, the same violent and authoritarian offensives, with a mix of archaic and modern elements.

The Bolsonaro government, in its first year of mandate, complied with what was announced during the campaign regarding policies for the field, prioritizing agribusiness, stimulating land grabbing and violence against the social movements of the countryside, in particular the MST, indigenous and quilombola peoples.

However, not everything in these policies represents a rupture with the previous governments. The priority for agribusiness, for example, dates back to the second FHC government, went through the PT governments unscathed, and waned in the coup government of Temer. The abandonment of agrarian reform, the demarcation of indigenous and quilombola lands and the setting in motion of the agrarian counter-reform were also already being delineated. Land grabbing, in turn, has been stimulated by a series of legislations created since the second Lula government and deepened in the Temer government. Violence against social movements and rural peoples has already been growing in previous governments, although it is true that Bolsonaro was a pioneer in openly stimulating such practices and seeking mechanisms for their legitimation.

Therefore, the Bolsonaro government is taking broad steps to ensure mechanisms that enable the expansion of agribusiness over public lands, although not all of these mechanisms have been set in motion in this government, some have already been implemented previously, such as the private registration of land from settlements, started under FHC, practically suspended by PT governments, put back in accelerated march by Temer government and intensified even more in the current government. Whereas, the opening up of indigenous lands for agribusiness (and other businesses) is an old ambition of the landowners that the current government has invested in an unprecedented way.

Thus, we can affirm that, more than rupture, the policies of the Bolsonaro government for the countryside represent a deepening of the logic of the slow and predatory that marks the development of the Brazilian countryside under the agribusiness hegemony. The difference is that this is now done in a wide way, without any varnish and without any concession to social movements and peoples of the countryside, contrary to what happened in previous governments, in which, in different degrees, there were dialog and policies that, without affecting the hegemony of agribusiness, they met some of the demands of these segments, now considered enemies to be eliminated.

The PT governments, by abandoning agrarian reform and putting the agrarian counter-reform in motion, ignored that, since the early days of colonization, land is synonymous with economic and political power in Brazil. By economically establishing agribusiness, successive governments also became politically the most backward sectors of Brazilian society. And these, strengthened, turned not only against the PT governments, see the coup against Dilma, but against the movements and peoples of the countryside. The egg was being hatched, now the monster is on the loose, spreading terror on the field.

However, if we turn the arrow to the left to build another mode of agriculture, it is up to us to bet and engage in peasant struggles, because this process did not happen

peacefully, but filled with resistance by rural workers, who launched themselves in a process of struggle for land. Contrary to the development of this project, which expands by combining corporate economic advances with lack of democracy, socio-environmental damage and violation of rights, social movements resist and fight for the right to housing, land, work in traditional and peasant activities, such as fishermen, caíçaras, indigenous, quilombolas, and squatters, small family farmers, as well as, fight for labor and social rights and a sociability beyond rights.

Seeking to build alternatives to the consequences generated by this model, the various peasant organizations and rural workers, articulated to Via Campesina,<sup>27</sup> carry out struggles for a new agricultural model that primes for the preservation of natural resources, for agroecology, for the production of healthy food for the population, for the viability of the permanence of the small producer in the field, among other elements, for the construction of a new society.

In the meantime, the peasant worker has been creating and recreating his production space resisting the repressive and dominant forms of control of territories that violate the right to land of peasant communities, even in the conflicting and contradictory movement of capital in the various regions of the country. In a reality in which bourgeois society expropriates not only the material conditions for the reproduction of life, but also the immaterial conditions that relate to the social means of producing knowledge, more audacious projects are needed to strengthen class identity for transformations that point to better times. It is essential that the working class radically resume its autonomy, its role, its identity and reformulate its agenda of struggles and political strategies to consolidate a new corporate project in times of barbarism.

This analyzed conjuncture hinders and even tends to make impossible the possibilities of carrying out a progressive agrarian reform, which is synonym in the name of social justice, economic development and environmental conservation. Thus, the indigenous peasant and quilombola resistance in the struggle for land is legitimate and necessary to prevent the unbridled and greedy advance of agribusiness. The agrarian reform will only succeed if it takes into account the implementation of a project that enables the lives of the rural peoples, ensuring that the needs of material and social reproduction are met, using their life experiences and thus transforming the struggle for land into a struggle for a new sociability.

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<sup>27</sup> International organization that articulates social movements of the countryside created in 1993, which brings together peasants, landless workers, indigenous peoples from all over the world. It defends truly sustainable agriculture and a way of providing social justice and dignity. It is declared contrary to agribusiness and multinationals. It is an autonomous, pluralistic and multicultural movement. Its main defense is food sovereignty and the struggle to prevent the neoliberal destructive process. More information available on the website: [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org).

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# VI

## URBAN ISSUE AND PUBLIC SECURITY IN MARÉ SLUM

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### Introduction

This chapter discusses the debate on the urban issue, with emphasis on how state violence manifests itself on the population living in the slums, from the study on the reality of Maré slums, one of the largest slums in Brazil, located in Rio de Janeiro.

We will assume that the slums are constituted as housing spaces of segments of the working class that historically were lateralized by the state regarding quality public policies. Contrary to the thesis that defends its absence, we consider that the State has always been present in these territories through public security through repressive, violent or with insufficient and ineffective social policies. A poor and subaltern policy for an impoverished population.

Therefore, the study of this territory, as an expression of the social issue,<sup>1</sup> explains the dilemmas and contradictions of the urban issue of the city of Rio de Janeiro, considered one of the cities that exemplifies the development of territories.

The starting point of this study is given the light of the thesis of the unequal and combined development of capitalism – studied by different authors who help us understand how urban space is constituted. This text challenges us to think about the set of Maré slums as part of the city, having in the State one of the main conformation and violating agents of rights.

Recent data on public security and state action in Maré explain the structuring perspective of a city that is produced unequal and thus maintained by targeted political action, which is based on low-quality public policies and in the perspective of controlling the living population via consensus and coercion, according to Gramsci (2000).

The survey that we present is originated in the study experience, research and work in the area of urban issues and public security, focusing on the territory of Maré, which reveals, among other things, the necro politics applied by the State.

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<sup>1</sup> “As more than the expressions of poverty, misery and ‘exclusion.’ It condemns the banalization of the human, which attests to the radicality of alienation and the invisibility of social work – and of the subjects who perform it – in the age of fetish capital” (Iamamoto, 2007, p. 125), and in this sense also represents the organization and resistance of broad segments of the working class, that is, inequality and struggle.

## Maré as an expression of the Rio de Janeiro state urban issue

The development of modern cities follows a guiding thread of structuring from the binomial industrialization/urbanization, taking as its axis the process of unequal and combined development of capitalism, as worked by Trotsky (2007) and Lenin (2005). In this process, marked by the needs of capitalist development, the city is formed by different territories, marked by unequal state investment. But, besides the State, other social agents interfere in the construction of spaces, from the intervention in their daily life. Everyday life understood as the space of real production of life, the reproduction of ideology, the construction of social relationships of existence, considering different aspects of life, such as family, school, religion, work, culture and forms of collective organization. In this perspective, the development of public actions and state equipment are essential interlocutors for the process of production and social reproduction of life. Thus, churches, armed criminal groups, social movements, non-governmental organizations, social centers, public equipment, are being built by the forces in dispute in society.

Lefebvre (2008) defends the thesis that the industrialization process that generated urbanization, and that was once prioritized as the central issue in the sociological debate about the city, moves in contemporaneity to the urban problem. According to the author, urbanization quickly becomes a greater issue than industrialization itself, bringing contradictions and consequences to sociability, since it is still an unfinished process. Reflecting on the city,<sup>2</sup> Lefebvre (2008, p. 82) defines it as a set of concepts, in which the same highlights:

- a) The city is a spatial object occupying a place and a situation that must be studied, as an object, with different techniques and methods [...];
- b) In this sense, the city is a mediation between a close order and a distant order. The close order is that of the surrounding countryside that the city dominates, organizes and exploits, extorting from it overwork [...];
- c) The city is a work in the sense of a work of art. Space is not only organized and instituted. It is also modeled and appropriated by this or that group, according to their requirements, their ethics and their aesthetics, that is, their ideology [...]

In this perspective, the group of Maré slums, marked by state interventions and strong organization of residents, is constituted as an expression of the process of unequal conformation of the urban space, delimited by the very conformation of the city of Rio de Janeiro from its historical, political, cultural, and cultural, social and economic traits.

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<sup>2</sup> For Lefebvre (2008, p. 84) “[...] the urban is distinguished from the city precisely because it appears and is manifested in the course of the city explosion, but it allows us to reconsider and even understand certain aspects of it that have gone unnoticed for a long time: centrality, space as a meeting place, monumentality etc. Urban, that is, urban society, does not exist yet and however, it exists virtually; through the contradictions among habitat, segregation and urban centrality that is essential to social practice, a full contradiction of meaning is manifested.”

## Uneven and Combined Development and Urban Question

Economic development in Latin America and Brazil was distinguished by what Fernandes (1981), Harvey (2004), Ianni (2004) and others call unequal and combined capitalist development. Unequal and combined development because it integrates, at the same time, the advance and modernization caused by capitalist expansion in its different phases, specifically in its industrial monopolist phase, with archaic and conservative social elements.

In the combination between modern and archaic, between developed and pre-developed, internal and external brands are created to countries, with consequences in urban conformation. Social life is organized from the combined process between developed and developing poles, in a movement of interrelationship and mutual dependence in which the wealth and involvement of central countries takes place from the exploitation and generation of wealth of and in the peripheral countries.

The process of unequal and combined development has its origin, in the colonization process, already in the first phase of globalization,<sup>3</sup> as characterized by Santos (2008), when referring to the maritime expansion of the sixteenth century. It is understood that capitalism, as a world process of consolidating social relationships, builds forms necessary for its expansion. In this sense, the world universalization begins in the period of trade or commercial expansion, develops, enhances and matures throughout the phases of capitalist development, until it reaches the end of the twentieth century with technological globalization articulated to the development of neoliberalism.<sup>4</sup>

During the colonization period,<sup>5</sup> the territories are organized differently, without rigor in form and social organization, marking the emergence of the first Brazilian cities. Initially chaired by development of commerce, and later by industrial development, it is only in the twentieth century that cities begin to consolidate. According to Maricato (2008), it is the advent of the free worker, of industrialization and of the republic that drive the organization of cities.

The urban reforms, carried out in several Brazilian cities between the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, laid the foundations of a modern “trendy” urbanism “a lá mode” of the outskirts. Basic sanitation works were carried out for the elimination of epidemics, at the same time

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<sup>3</sup> For Santos (2008, p. 23), a “[...] globalization is, in a way, the culmination of the process of internationalization of the capitalist world. To understand it, as, additionally at any stage of history, there are two fundamental elements to take into account: the state of the techniques and the state of politics.” According to the author, the elements that allow us to understand the ongoing globalization process are “[...] the oneness of technique, the convergence of moments, the knowable planet and the existence of a unique motor in history, represented by globalized surplus value. A global market using these systems of advanced techniques results in this perverse globalization” (Santos, 2008, p. 24). To see more about the subject: Harvey (2004), Santos (2008), Netto and Braz (2006).

<sup>4</sup> According to Harvey (2008, p. 12), “[...] neoliberalism is first and foremost a theory of political-economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be better promoted by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and capacities within an institutional structure characterized by sound rights to private property, free markets and free trade.” To see more about the neoliberalism: Netto and Braz (2006) and Anderson (1995).

<sup>5</sup> According to Haesbaert (2007, p. 45), “[...] a Marxist, within historical and dialectical materialism, will defend a notion of territory that: i) privileges his or her material dimension, especially in the economic sense, ii) is historically situated and iii) is defined from the social relationships in which it is inserted, that is, it has a clearly relational meaning.”

that landscape beautification was promoted and the legal bases for a capitalist court real estate market were established. The population excluded from this process was expelled to the hills and fringes of the city. Manaus, Belém, Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Santos, Recife, São Paulo and specially Rio de Janeiro are cities that have undergone changes that combined environmental sanitation, beautification and territorial segregation in this period (Maricato, 2008, p. 17).

Cities, as a result of the development process, end up being the most tangible expression of urban space, becoming, in some cases, synonymous with urban space. However, it is worth noting that the city, despite being the symbol of the urbanization process, does not represent in an autonomous and independent way the urban space. The city, when it is constituted of different territories, begins to highlight the unequal conformation of the urban space, which is expressed not in the natural geography of the territories, but in its social and urban interventions.

The urban space, defined by Correa (1995, p. 10), as “[...] the set of different uses of land juxtaposed among themselves”, reveals the unequal appropriation of the soil, which becomes an important commodity in contemporary capitalist society, and the unequal distribution of socially produced wealth, translated not only by real estate constructions, but also by the distribution of public and private equipment.

The inequality generated in the appropriation and occupation of urban land forms different territories in the city, especially from the process of industrialization, and becomes a milestone in the development of the city. Countries, or agrarian and slave-owners, gradually become urban and industrial, generating the need for different adaptations and transformations.

The cities change from the conformation of new social relationships that cease to be based on agricultural production and become central focus of wealth production, industry. These relationships have a new driving tone and impose a new configuration in the appropriation of space, including from the resizing of the place of residence of workers and owners of the means of production, to the road constitution, the placement of public teams, etc.

The big Brazilian cities went through this process, emblematic from the end of the 19th century, intensified from the century XX. According to Corrêa (1995), the cities began to be divided into: central area, leisure area, cultural area, etc.

This is what urban space is: fragmented and articulated, reflection and social constraints, a set of symbols and field of struggle. So is the own society in one of its dimensions, the most apparent, materialized in spatial forms (Corrêa, 1995, p. 9).

The development of the Rio de Janeiro urban network takes place in the same sense as that of most Brazilian cities. It begins its expansion from the proximity to the central nuclei, which are formed to access the goods produced, facilitate exchange and circulation. In this sense, as expressed in Corrêa (1995), the city center is forged from the development of trade, industry, transport and social, cultural infrastructure, etc. Based on a common need, access to services and goods, the city develops in an extremely unequal way, especially in the

peripheral countries. Inequality marked by the difference between cities of different countries, between cities of the same country and between territories of a same city. As Corrêa states (1995, p. 7), “[...] it is simultaneously fragmented and articulated: each of its parts maintains spatial relationships with the others, although of very variable intensity”.

The variety in the constitution of cities and urban space derives, in other factors, from the following elements:

- Development dependent on peripheral countries;
- State action in the conformation of the space that meets the social and economic institutions of the economically ruling classes;
- Fragmentation of the territories that constitute the same city, in addition to the constitution of the housing sites of segments of the bourgeoisie and of the working class;
- Unequal distribution of public equipment, leisure areas, roads, cultural spaces, etc.

In this sense, the urban space is constituted as a product of the present actions of the State and of the private initiative, but also as a product of past actions that leave marks in its constitution. The city, in addition to promoting the uneven and combined development of the capital, also becomes a producer of meanings, desires, values and identities with the residents of the different territories.

Territories are spaces in which social relationships unfold, from the construction of everyday life. In this sense, Lefebvre (2008) and Santos (2008) claim that the space is built, not born ready, finished. And as Harvey (2004) states, it cannot be defined only by geographical dimensions. It is a challenge to understand the different dimensions that constitute the social relationships producing meanings, identities and relationships that produce the social subjects in the territories. Subjects materialized in social classes, even if they do not develop such consciousness, limiting themselves to a superficial position of understanding and positioning in society.

The territories are constituted from the economic dynamics and also from the identity of its residents. In a dialectical movement, the territories are constructed by the real subjects who settle there, with their identities, values, perspectives. At the same time they organize themselves as a space, they produce new<sup>6</sup> identities and subjectivities. In this perspective, the city is not static; on the contrary, it is in constant process of mutation, as it is a product and producer of identities, subjectivities and meanings for urban life.

According to Santos (2007, p. 13), “[...] the territory is the place where all actions, all passions, all powers, all strengths, all weaknesses, that is, where the history of man is fully realized from the manifestations of his or her existence.” In this sense, the territories of the city are also the result of disputes and contradictions proper to social relationships, as spaces that embody the existence of the subjects, which explains to us the experience in Rio de Janeiro.

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<sup>6</sup> The concept of identity has been discussed since antiquity, not having only one definition, since each area of knowledge defines it from certain parameters. In this work identity is considered as the set of characteristics present in the social relationships of a given group considering social, economic, cultural and territorial aspects that forge their daily lives.

## Rio de Janeiro and the constitution of the Slums space

Rio de Janeiro's experience regarding the genesis and development of slums, as well as in other Brazilian cities, expresses a process of modernization based on segregation and fragmentation of urban space. Rio de Janeiro state's slums appear at the beginning of the last century, parallel to the process of industrialization and urbanization of Brazil, directly linked to the particularity of the Brazilian social formation, which has in its slave roots its greatest expression. In this sense, the origins of Rio de Janeiro state's favelas also carry the mark of a process where the population, especially black, without work, without land, without roof, and the population, is not the same. without employment and housing, it seeks spaces to ensure the social production of life.

The main theoretical productions show that the field-city migration process occurred in Brazil in the late 1930's and early 1940's also influenced the demand for housing. Thus, slopes of the hills and tenements were constituted as a possible place of housing of this population segment that required a place to live.

In Rio de Janeiro, the "Morro da Providencia" is considered by some scholars as the site that, at the end of the 19th century, marked the slums origins. In Valladares' studies (2005), the soldiers returning from the Canudos War<sup>7</sup> settled in that space, building their homes and seeking to pressure the Ministry of War to pay them the wages due. Hence, we have the rapid association between hill and slum before this form of occupation of urban space and the hill/asphalt binomial that in the future would add a stereotyped logic of slum *versus* formal city.

Morro da Providência became known as "Morro da Favella" entering literature and social sciences as the first *favela* in Rio de Janeiro. To this process, Valladares (2005) calls for a "myth of origin", Euclides da Cunha's vision of the village of Canudos in his work "Os sertões" express the period in which the *carioca* favela is "discovered". At that time, the main focus of the hygienists was the "tenement". These collective, where people with lower purchasing power lived, were considered by doctors as a great danger to the city due to excessive agglomeration of people in small dormitories, lack of hygiene and, consequently, the proliferation of diseases. According to Valladares (2005, p. 24),

Defined as a true "social hell", the Rio de Janeiro's tenement was seen as the forerunner of vagabond and crime, as well as a place conducive to epidemics, posing a threat to the social and moral order. Perceived as a space that propagates disease and addiction, it was denounced and condemned through medical and hygienist discourse, leading to the adoption of administrative measures by the city governments.

Since the beginning of the century, the tenements and their demolition have appeared on the political scene as an important issue, which presses governments. With the

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<sup>7</sup> The Canudos War, which took place in the period from 1896 to 1897, was a military conflict among the residents of Arraial de Canudos, led by Antonio Conselheiro and the government of the state of Bahia, because the former refused to pay taxes and follow the government guidelines. The conflict came to an end in the third attempt to attack the state's armed forces, reinforced by military personnel sent by the federal government. The Canudos War, according to the author, meant the resistance of the marginalized populations of the northeastern backlands to the social injustices of the time (Moniz, 1987).



impossibility of development of the tenements in the central area of the city, the self-construction of precarious housing on the slopes and the expansion of housing in the suburbs and peripheries of the city occur more intensely where the control of the public power was smaller.

According to Campos (2004), in 1821, the black population constituted almost 60% of the total population of the city of Rio de Janeiro, and about a quarter of that was formed by black people. In his research, the author shows the existence of the relationship between the quilombo and the slum. He also highlights how this relationship is an intrinsic part of an ethnic and geographical-political bond, since both would have been constructed as “criminalized spaces” and that were gradually occupied by people from the slavery process that at the time composed the free labor force.

With the expansion of industrialization, the slums were constituted as a “urban and social problem”, which challenged public administration in the first decades of the 20th century. At this juncture, where political and economic changes boosted the migration processes from the countryside to the city, the slums are now included in the public power intervention plans. Thus, progressively, the issue of slums gains attention from the authorities since the process of urbanization and population growth of the city was affected as the process of industrialization progressed. In this sense, the population growth, the difficulty finding cheap housing, the investment in housing policies, drive the formation of irregular housing and settlements, which end up becoming slums very quickly. The impossibility of the formal real estate market to meet the demands of much of the working class expresses the fallacy of the neoliberal model of self-regulation of the market. With this, it “expels” to the most remote and precarious places this large portion of the population.

For Valladares (2005), after the period of “discovery” of the slum, there is a second period in which they will constitute themselves as a social and urban problem, followed by a third moment, when the idea of admitting the problem takes the form of concrete policies and actions. For the author, a fourth moment includes the production of official data through slum censuses and the transformation of a local phenomenon into a national reality, an example of the SAGMAS Report: Human Aspects of the Rio de Janeiro Slums, which is a socio-economic analysis developed by the Society of Graphic and Mechanical Analysis Applied to Social Complexes (SAGMAS). This document, published in 1960, demonstrates the actions aimed at controlling the poor population, and shows the first actions of institutions working in the slums. To this day, as Valla, Algebaille and Guimarães (2011) highlight, this study is considered by many as one of the most exhaustive works carried out in Brazil on slums in Rio de Janeiro.

As Valladares (2005) synthesizes in her studies, it is possible to highlight six main phases in the relationship between the State and the slums in Rio de Janeiro, namely:

- 1st) Years 1930 – beginning of the process of slum-growth of Rio de Janeiro and acknowledgement of the existence of the slum by the Code of Works of 1937;
- 2nd) Years 1940 – the first proposal of public intervention corresponding to the creation of proletarian parks during the Vargas period;
- 3 th) 1950 and early 1960 – uncontrolled expansion of slums under the aegis of populism;
- 4 th) from the mid-1960 until the end of 1970 – elimination of slums and their removal during the authoritarian regime;
- 5th) Years 1980 – Urbanization of the slums by the

NHL (National Bank of Housing) and by public services agencies after the return to democracy; 6th) Years 1990 – Urbanization of the slums by the municipal policy of the city of Rio de Janeiro, with the Slum/Neighborhood Program (Valladares, 2005, p. 23)

This reflection adds, in the 2000, the program *Minha Casa Minha Vida*, launched in 2009 during the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2006 and 2007–2010) and maintained in the government of Dilma Rousseff (2011–2014 and 2015–2016), and which was constituted as a great program of popular housing. However, the process depicted above, along with other smaller initiatives, reveals the historical proceduralism of the construction of the Rio de Janeiro State's slums, expressing the contradictions typical of the capitalist society. As the city develops, the scarce spaces of public policies and services that enable a dignified life are expanded. In summary, it is a choice for the construction and production of unequal spaces that reiterates the thesis that the capitalism cannot develop without its spatial adjustments, as pointed out by the studies of political geographer David Harvey (2004).

According to Harvey (2004), the capitalism builds a geography marked by inequality that facilitates the accumulation of capital at a given stage in its history, which means producing proletarian territories, devoid of quality goods and services, in places where a significant portion of the population resides. Today, the city of Rio de Janeiro has 1.4 million people living in slums. According to the IBGE Census 2010, considering only the population of this city, about 22.2% of the cariocas, or almost one in five, were slum's residents.

The city of Rio de Janeiro can be considered one of the most unequal cities in Brazil: a municipality that lives without parsimony with millionaire projects such as the City of Music, the Museum of Tomorrow and, at the same time, explicit misery, where more than 15 thousand people are on the street, according to the most recent survey of the State Public Defender Offices<sup>8</sup>. Finally, on the one hand, we have a population chronically lateralized by the State that target low-quality public policies that do not respond to the demands of this segment and, on the other hand, a city produced for the rich.

It is a population that faces, in turn, with neighborhoods that enjoy quality goods and services, such as museums, cultural centers, shopping malls, leisure spaces. And others in which the actions of the State are restricted to the violent action of the police and/or fragile and insufficient social policies, favoring the consolidation of the process of a true social *apartheid*, as it is the case of Maré.

## Some considerations about the Maré Set of Slums

The Maré Complex, considered one of the largest and most populous popular spaces in Rio de Janeiro, is located between Avenida Brasil and the Red Line, on the banks of Guanabara Bay. It is more another expression of the unequal forms of appropriation and occupation of the city.

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<sup>8</sup> For more information see: <https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2019/11/21/prefeitura-da-inicio-a-levantamento-para-realizar-o-1censo-da-populacao-em-situacao-de-rua-do-rio.ghtml>. Access on: Jul. 13<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The formation process of the neighborhood was consolidated between the years 1940 and 2000. In its landscape, it insisted, until very recently, the presence of stilt houses. This led to a considerable contrast with the surroundings, as the Maré Complex is reasonably close to Galeão International Airport and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

The population is distributed to 2.91 residents per household in their 16 communities: Marcílio Dias, Praia de Ramos, Roquete Pinto, Parque União, Rubens Vaz, Nova Holanda, Parque Maré, Nova Maré, Baixa do Sapateiro, Morro do Timbó, Bento Ribeiro Dantas, Conjunto Pinheiros, Vila dos Pinheiros, Novo Pinheiros, Vila do João and Conjunto Esperança. It should be noted that within some of these communities other spaces were formed, with the influx of new residents and house constructions, as it is the case of Marcílio Dias, which is now subdivided into Kelson and Mandacaru.

The neighborhood is marked by a disorderly process of occupation and the speed of vertical constructions, mostly devoid of roughcast or any type of finishing. There is great circulation of people and vehicles, an extremely developed trade, with shops, bars, beauty salons, as well as many churches. Marked by a set of characteristics that differentiate it from other spaces in the city, Maré stands out for its organizational capacity, for example, with two population censuses and an<sup>9</sup> Emprepreneurial Census carried out by local organization. The first one, produced in 2003, and the most recent one, started in 2012, performed visits in 92.01% of the 47,758 households in the slums. In this census it was possible to affirm the existence of 139,073 inhabitants, being considered the 9th most populous neighborhood in the city.

Considered as a space marked by violence and devoid of decent living conditions, according to the Maré Census (2013), there are different profiles in the ethnic-racial identification of residents, where 62.1% declared themselves as black or brown. The ethnic-racial profile also varies according to the slums. Nova Holanda has a higher concentration of self-declared black people, while Morro do Timbau has a higher number of white people, compared to the other slums. Most people who live in Maré, 61.8%, say they live on site since they were born, however, the northeast presence is considerable. The Maré Census (2013) points out that 35,884, almost 26% of the total number of residents were born in the Northeast, in the states of Paraíba and Ceará. This population, in general, is in subalternized socio-professional conditions in comparison with those of the other spaces of the city.

If we deal with the total income of the people living there, we identified that this is 49% lower than in the other neighborhoods of the city – considering people of the same education, age and “race”, according to a recent study.<sup>10</sup>

The struggle for education is historical among the residents of Maré, a fact that has resulted in the substantial increase in the number of public schools in recent years. The number of schools went from 22 municipal units in 2013 to 44 in 2018. With regard to educational infrastructure, 51 educational units are installed in Maré, 7 kindergartens, 14 Child Development Spaces (EDI), 1 Youth and Adult Education Center (CEJA), 24 Elementary School Units and 5 State Network Units that offer High School.

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<sup>9</sup> Available at: [http://mareonline.com.br/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/Censo\\_Empreendimentos\\_24\\_julho.pdf](http://mareonline.com.br/wpcontent/uploads/2019/05/Censo_Empreendimentos_24_julho.pdf). Access on: Jul. 16<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Data produced by research coordinated by researcher Marceno Neri (FGV) on “Inequality and ‘Cariocas Slums’”, Available in: <https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/desigualdade-o-rio-na-contramao-do-brasil/>. Access on: Jul. 16<sup>th</sup> 2020.

Despite the structural advances, low schooling is also an important factor. The Census reports that 30% of the residents of Maré dwellers attend the school and highlights the chronic situation of school dropout during adolescence, because 19.6% of the adolescents between 15 and 17 years do not attend school. However, in the age group from 6 to 14 years, Maré has a rate of 2% of children outside school, less than the average observed in the municipality, in 2010 by the census, of 3.1%. The percentage of non-literate people in Maré is 6% among people aged 15 years or older, which is more than twice the rate of illiteracy in the city of Rio de Janeiro, 2.8%. The Maré Census was performed in 2013 and the publication used as it is in the bibliography, is 2019, by the institution Rede da Maré, point out that 18.6% of the residents completed only elementary school and 18% completed high school.

While 8% never attended school, only 0.93% finished the undergraduate degree and 0.03% completed their master's degree or doctorate. Of the total, 53.47% of residents of Maré did not complete elementary school.

The absence of quality public policies crosses the daily lives of the population. The majority of the Maré households are deprived of Land title regularization, that is, there is no writing of the properties due to the occupation of the site. Some buildings, such as the Conjunto Nova Maré, for example, were built without slab, floor and with low quality materials. However, this same housing complex, according to Silva and Barbosa (2005), received an international award for the aesthetic appeal of its architectural form inspired by the buildings of Paris, France. It also stands out the fact that families still reside in houses made of cardboard and wood, very common in recent constructions on the edge of Av. Brazil and in the community of Marcílio Dias, which reminds us of the existing stilt houses until very recently. In these houses it is very common to live with rats, the absence of basic sanitation and the difficulties of access to public health, education and transport equipment. Another important element is that 0.3% still do not have piped water and, as for garbage collection, in 26.4% of the houses the residents take the garbage to a collection place and in 71.5% of the households, in which the garbage is collected at the door,<sup>11</sup> frequency is limited during the week.

An important fact is the constant changes of address that are frequent for various reasons, especially: the socioeconomic difficulties, which make families migrate from one state to another, such as the considerable population of the Northeast; the sensitive increase in the price of rent; and the trafficking war produced by armed civilian groups and the ostensive action of the police. The issue of violence, repression, contributes to the construction of an exclusively violent image about the slum. The idea is accentuated by the way the media portrays it, which criminalizes the residents. However, the violence that the State imprints in these territories, by not guaranteeing quality public policies, as in other spaces of the city, is very expressive. There is a real genocide going on to the poor, black and slum-dwellers people that is the expression of the way the state develops public policies in these territories.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information see: <https://www.redesdamare.org.br/br/info/12/censo-mare>. Access on: Jul. 16<sup>th</sup> 2020.

## State Violence: Public insecurity

The theme of lethal violence, as a public security problem, in the particular case of Brazil, begins to be debated in the field of human and social sciences in the mid-1980, along with the process of redemocratization of the country (Misse, 2006; Soares, 2003; Zaluar, 2007). The growth of the violence in this period of re-democratization, in addition to being related to inflation and unemployment, is also related, according to Caldeira (2000, p. 56), “[...] with the bankruptcy of the judicial system, the privatization of justice, the abuses of politics, the fortification of cities and the destruction of public spaces”. In this same vein, Adorno (2002) shows that, in addition to violence in Brazil being a phenomenon determined socio-historically, it is also associated with the crisis of the public security system, the intensification of social inequalities and the weakening of public policies of citizenship rights implemented in the 1980 and 1990.<sup>12</sup>

From another angle, (Zaluar, 2004) demonstrates, through empiric data, that during the process of re-democratization there was a change in “[...] transnational crime organization that affected mainly metropolitan regions and, in them, the popular neighborhoods and slums” (Zaluar, 2004, p. 210). According to Magaloni, Beatriz, Franco and Melo (2018), the inefficiency of the state’s performance in terms of guaranteeing the right to public safety in the slums and popular spaces, it is correlated with the emergence of the organization and strengthening of armed groups that commercialize illicit drugs in retail and establish forms of regulation of public space and social order. In the author’s assessment, as the state perceives the armed groups as a real threat, it declares a “war against crime”, which is reverberated in war against the territories and those who inhabit it.

Soares and Guindani (2007), when looking at the selective responses of the State and society to the manifestations of criminal violence, in contemporary Brazil, indicate the need to understand the process that many authors have designated as an “authoritarian way of developing capitalism”<sup>13</sup> in the country, which has bequeathed to us the tradition of the pact of elites and of the business transitions, whose counterpart has always been the impoverishment, of a sharp cut of management and race, of the subaltern classes. In other words, the slow crime, as an expression of structural violence, is intrinsic to the process of formation of racism and patriarchy in Brazilian society, being present in authoritarian logics and cultural imposition from the time of colonization to the present day (Guimarães, 2004). There is an explicit and historical expectation of more order and more social control over the unwanted poor, black people from slums and the outskirts, through ostentatious policing,

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<sup>12</sup> The studies indicate that a set of factors may have contributed to the growth of the rates of lethal violence, between the period 1980 to 2000, when it presents growth in other forms of violent crime, especially those enhanced by the policy of war on drugs, expanding and diversifying the group of people involved in selective and racist criminal policies. According to the literature, what characterizes the context of the years 1990–2000 is an intensification of the phenomenon in urban areas and explicitly, in full force of the democratic regime, and the formation of criminal organizations (Soares; Guindani, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> The authors indicate a list of theorists on the subject: Carlos Nelson Coutinho, José Paulo Netto, Florestan Fernandes, Otavio Guilherme Velho, Luiz Jorge Werneck Vianna, Simon Schwartzman, Raymundo Faoro. They highlight that the terminology was more varied than the semantic substance of the concept and oscillated according to the theoretical-political affiliation that the author privileged. They also highlight that other scholars of culture interpreted the historical model highlighting the phenomena of “ambivalence” and “syncretism”, by different and sometimes opposite angles: Sergio Buarque de Holanda, Gilberto Freyre, Roberto Schwartz, Roberto Da Matta, Luis Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, Ricardo Benzaquem de Araújo, Kant de Lima, among others (Soares; Guindani, 2007).

understood as synonymous with public security. This demand sensitizes the media and the institutions that make up the justice and security system, which are pressured to meet the cry of the Brazilian elite.

In this perspective, it is important to point out, in this article, how the<sup>14</sup> criminal policy systems in Brazil are reproducing the conservative and authoritarian biases of the autocratic State, ubiquitous in the social and political formation of the country. It is verified that a dominant ideological aspect, in the name of “Public Security” and very distant from the democratic logic that guides principles and guidelines of other public policies<sup>15</sup> in the field of Social Security, induces (and reproduces in) the persecution of “dangerous black young people” and in fighting war against territories (“risky slums”) that supposedly threaten the established order. In other words, the fragile democracy in force in Brazil, after the 1988 Constitution, has not yet been experienced by the slum dwellers. In this territory, physical and symbolic violence and violations of rights, practiced daily by public security agents, are still presented as a rule.

According to Soares (2006), public security policy, in general, is inefficient in prevention and qualified repression, research and understanding of the indispensable trust of the population. The police have no evaluation and planning practices and spaces of dialog with civil society that can create diagnoses on the problems of violence and effective ways of coping with them. The author analyzes the police as “[...] reactive, inertial and fragmentary machines, registered in a disjointed and inorganic institutional environment, governed by rigid and inadequate legal frameworks” (Soares, 2006, p. 100). In addition, public security institutions still presented significant<sup>16</sup> responses to the assimilation of the new standards and values of Human Rights and the Democratic State<sup>17</sup> of Law, as we will see below in the case of Fluminense police.

## **Police and armed violence in the Maré Set of Slums**

The territory that makes up the 16 Maré Set of Slums is one of the spaces of the city where structural and institutional racism is reproduced (Almeida, 2018) through armed violence that directly impacts the lives of the population. Even with all the social equipment and the significant process of struggles, the Maré slum residents have experienced for more than three decades a situation of extreme instability before the urban violence. Armed groups linked to international drug and arms trafficking began to exercise territorial control and regulate social relationships in various communities in Maré. Even in the late 1990's, groups of militiamen were also present in some communities, playing the role of controllers

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<sup>14</sup> Criminal policy systems, according to Delmas–Marty, Mirelle (1992), involve criminal and extra criminal policies for crime prevention, public security policies, the prison system and the socio-educational system (Guindani, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> The process of reconstruction of our incipient Brazilian democracy, which has been underway since the late 1980's, has been characterized by incongruities, especially in relation to the democratic logic that guided other public policies, especially in the areas of health and social assistance, as in the cases of the Unified Health System and the Unified Social Assistance System (Guindani, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> See Analysis on resistances to the implementation of the Single Public Security System (SUSP) in Soares (2006).

<sup>17</sup> The defense of human rights, including human freedom (physical integrity of citizens), political rights and civil liberties, is one of the most widely used indicators to measure the level of a democracy. These rights relate mainly to the administration of access to justice, with equality before the law, access to an impartial and independent judiciary, protection against arbitrary detention and torture, mechanisms for control against corruption, etc. (Azevedo, 2005).

of certain illicit activities, such as irregular transport and security services for the region's merchants.

The State, in turn, does not present itself through effective public policies that may break the cycle of violence in that territory. The policy of “war on drugs” incorporated the process of militarization of political actions in Maré and thus developed a series of violations of the rights of the perpetrators, which are constantly suffering from police interventions and other armed confrontations where they live and paralyze them in their day-by-day activities.

Under the argument of confronting armed groups that operate in the region, the State operates from a series of rights violations, from the establishment of public services to the violations of individual rights, through invasions of domicile, threats, physical, verbal and psychological aggressions, among others. The logic of action of public security policy is characterized by punctual actions, through police operations marked by intense armed conflicts. Police actions usually happen at school entrance and exit times, where many children and adolescents travel through the streets and are at risk of life, affecting access to the right to health and education.

Data from the Public Security Institute of the State of Rio de Janeiro (ISP, 2020) indicate a trend in the state of violent lethality fall in recent years. Violent deaths that accounted for 6,714 cases in 2018 decreased to 5,964 (11%) in 2019. However, in the same period, there was an increase of 18% of deaths by intervention of security professionals in certain regions of the city, such as the Maré neighborhood. In the city there were 1,810 deaths committed by police intervention, compared to 1,534 in 2018. This practice of police action in Rio de Janeiro impacts, in this sense, directly in the violation of fundamental rights of the poor, black people and slum-dwellers population, especially the right to life and access to justice.

According to information extracted from the Bulletin Right to Public Security in Maré, which exposes the data of armed violence in numbers, “[...] between 2016 and 2019, 132 lethal victims were counted, 121 people injured by firearms [...]” (Redes da Maré, 2020, p. 8) arising from police operations in the Maré slums.

In 2018, 16 police operations were carried out which resulted in the total in 19 people killed, 10 people injured, 10 days of school closure and 11 of health agencies (Redes da Maré, 2019, p.3). Of the 19 deaths by intervention of state agents (ISP index), only three had real expertise. This year, the rate of this type of death in Maré was 13.7 per 100 thousand inhabitants, while the rate of the state and the municipality are, respectively, 9.0 and 8.4 (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 8). Of the 16 operations, none was carried out in Roquete Pinto and Praia de Ramos that are controlled by paramilitary groups (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 5). There were 27 clashes between armed groups that accounted for 5 people dead and 7 injured but did not impact the functioning of schools and health facilities (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 3). In addition, 41 people reported violations of rights of Redes da Maré, 15 people reported verbal/psychological violence/threat, 12, physical violence/torture, and 8, private prison, among other types of violations (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 7). People of the male sex represent 96% of the victims, 79% are black people, and 72% are aged between 13 and 29 years. The lives of children, even, have been taken away by State agents (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 9).

In 2019, 39 police operations were carried out, 13 with the use of helicopter, which resulted in a total of 34 people killed (greater number since 2016) and 30 injured by firearms, in addition to having impacted the closure of schools (24 days) (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 6) and Basic Health Units (25 days), with impact on 15,000 visits that were no longer carried out (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 7). The increase in police operations and their lethality is represented in the rate of deaths by intervention of State agents, which in 2019 was 23.4/100,000 inhabitants, while in the state the rate was 10.5 and in the municipality of 10.9 for every 100,000 inhabitants (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 19). This year, 20 actions were also recorded among armed groups that totaled 15 people killed, 15 injured and 117 days of shootings in different Maré slums (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 5).

The reports of rights violations were higher in 2019, 30 of which were caused by armed groups and 110 by state agents, totaling 140 complaints. Of these 110, 89 people reported that the violations were committed by agents of the Military Police and 21 of the Civil Police (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 14). A preferred target of these violations of law by state agents, 58% of victims are women (Redes da Maré, 2019, p. 15).

The most affected groups were repeated as in 2018. People of the male sex represent 94% of the victims, 96% are black people, and 85% are aged between 15 and 29 years. A very significant fact in 2019 is that 100% of people killed in police operations were black or brown, opening up institutional racism embedded in public security policy.

According to the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition of *Boletim de Olho no Corona!*, produced by Redes da Maré, in the first half of 2020 there were 11 possible operations that resulted in 12 injured people and 4 people murdered. The bulletin draws attention to the fact that these actions have become even more damaging with the onset of a pandemic, bringing more complex impacts, since they limit the mobility of residents across the territory, interrupt the care of health units, cause panic and affect the mental and emotional health of the dwellers.

From the scenario of violations of rights instituted due to the pandemic of the new coronavirus, residents of the slums, the public, organizations and social movements requested the suspension of police operations. Minister Edson Fachin of the Federal Supreme Court on June 6<sup>th</sup>, in a preliminary ruling, ordered the suspension of police operations in Rio de Janeiro slums during the pandemic period, except in cases of exception. According to the minister, in these cases, care should be taken not to put at even greater risk the population, the provision of public health services and the performance of humanitarian aid activities carried out by residents and organizations working in these territories.

When comparing the impacts of armed violence in the period of social isolation between 03/16 and 06/20 this year, with the same period of 2019, according to a survey by Redes da Maré, police operations reduced from 16 to 4 and, as a result, the number of deaths due to these actions fell from 15 to 1, the number of firearm injuries reduced from 19 to 7, and the days without care in health units fell from 9 to 3. In this sense, when comparing the two periods, it is estimated that 14 lives were saved (Redes da Maré, 2020).

## **The right to life amid the “necro politics.”**

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019, a large police operation took place in Conjunto Esperança, one of Maré’s slums. On that occasion, a helicopter along with two armored cars, trapped four people linked to a criminal group, who entered a resident's house. In this house, when



confronted by the police, the young people threw their weapons on the ground and surrendered with their hand up. Even acting in this way they were executed by the police in the presence of the residents. Their bodies were dragged from the third floor of the house and placed inside the armored car. Soon after, in this same operation, the deaths of four more people were recorded, in the same street where the previous four homicides occurred. That is, in just one day, on a street, eight young people, mostly black, were murdered by agents who should protect their rights (Redes da Maré, 2019).

The fact narrated exemplifies the farce of constitutional rights and the illegality of the State. Democracy in Brazil is geographically and racial unequal, and with regard to public security policy this inequality is enhanced. The report demonstrates, among other violations of rights, a challenge to the right to life and expertise, without constraints on the part of the agents. Although the State carries out police operations in the slum territories outside the legislation, the truth is that these actions end up representing normality. It does not fit the case law, but its everyday practice makes them establish themselves as a model of public safety.

The state political power appropriates death as an object of public management. A management called by Mbembe (2018) “necro politics”, which is essentially linked to structural oppressions of race, class and gender. The control of life in the hands of the State is characterized not only by death itself, but also by generating conditions that favor it. Thus, the State decides who dies, how he or she dies and under what conditions the same dies.

The “necro politics” is directed mainly to the slums and popular spaces, where the democratic state does not prioritize the lives of the population, but rather its extermination. Police operations have used force as the first and almost only instrument of intervention in the slums. These interventions characterized by the disqualification, inconsequence and illegality of the action that negatively impact the lives of residents and does not guarantee the right to public safety, on the contrary, appear as the main instrument of violation of rights.

## **Conclusive reflections**

The Brazilian cities are today the urban expression of a society that has never managed to overcome its colonial heritage to build a society that would distribute its wealth less unevenly. Its construction was marked by the concentration of land, income and power, by the exercise of coronelism, favor policy and arbitrary application of the law. With the intensity of urbanization, differentiated spaces are produced, identifying their residents differently, being divided between center and periphery.

Socio-spatial segregation is one of the main marks of racial inequality engendered in Brazilian cities developed in a specific context of peripheral capitalism. The management of public policies by the State in segregated regions of the city, such as the slums and popular spaces, is guided by the illegality of actions and has violence as the main element.

From the data of armed violence in Maré, it is noticed that the lives of the almost 140 people living in Maré, especially young black people, are not protected, in practice, by any constitutional provision. It is urgent to build mechanisms that guarantee the collective and individual rights of the residents of Maré and other slums of Rio de Janeiro. Mechanisms that expand forms of access to justice, democratic spaces and social participation and collaborate to reduce police violence in the slums and the outskirts.

Within the limits of bourgeois democracy, a police model is possible that values the reduction of damage and institutional racism, provided that it focuses its function on guaranteeing the fundamental rights of all citizens and integration with people. A police highly trained to see society as a conflict environment in which the problem of violence and crime is complex, so public security must pass through the social and cultural sphere. Therefore, democracy requires police action that does not restrict itself to the function of guaranteeing public order only in repressive actions, but essentially with the protesting function of the citizen in an environment of conflict.

To build efficient mechanisms to reduce police violence; to prioritize the prevention and investigation of crimes against life; to act in the control of firearms, reducing their availability; to create social prevention programs of violence; to think about release from prison and adopt drug policies that protect those affected by systemic violence are essential measures to think about a model of public safety that prioritizes life. Such measures shall be accompanied by social control and transparency of information. To stop the tragedy of crimes against life is a necessary condition for building a democratic society.

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# **PART 2**

PUBLIC POLICIES, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE

# VII

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND GROWING SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN BRAZIL IN NEOLIBERAL TIMES

*Valdemar Sguissardi*

*Education in general and, in particular, higher education in a country cannot be approached without situating them in their close relationships with the socioeconomic context in which they are inserted (Sguissardi, 2015).*

### Introduction

Seven years ago, July 2013, when writing for a collection – which would be published in Brazil and Germany (Sguissardi, 2015) – on the subject of higher education (ES) in Brazil, having as axes of analysis social inequalities, the process of commodification of this level of education and the challenges of its state regulation of public character, concluded, with some hope, that if there was any positive reversal in the democratization of ES, from advances in the democratization of the country – reduction of social inequality, for example – this could possibly depend on the success of the popular mobilizations that were then only starting in the country.

Such mobilizations, which began motivated by left-wing fighting flags – yells for the reduction in the value of urban transport passes, and others – gradually had their direction taken by right-wing leaders, with the support of the mainstream media, with the support of the media, with the support of the government, and opposition to the federal government – the 4<sup>th</sup> Term of the Workers' Party, connected with a range of parties of center-right, center-left and left. Three years later, these extended demonstrations, with the strengthening of the Presidency of the Chamber of Congressmen and the consent of the Judiciary, led to the presidential impeachment on 08/31/2016. As a result of this – seen by many jurists as an effective coup d'état – he took power, until the end of the second term of the deposed president (Dilma Rousseff/2014–2018), a right-wing political group and, in October 2018, was elected, to take power in January 2019, a president with clear political traits of the far right. From the economic point of view, it was possible to characterize the almost two and a half years of the interim government (Sep/2016–Dec/ 2018) as being of sharp neoliberal traits, and a government of advanced principles and actions from January 2019.<sup>1</sup> To

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<sup>1</sup> The most important minister of the Bolsonaro government has always been presented, both by the President and by the press, and is, alongside the Minister of Justice, Sérgio Moro (former judge of Operation Lava Jato), the Minister of Economy Paulo Guedes. Paulo Guedes holds a degree in Economics from UFMG, Master and Doctor in Economics from *Chicago University*, where he then pointed out the neoliberal exponent Milton Friedman. Returning from Chicago and after a period of teaching at PUC-Rio, Paulo Guedes invited by the head of the Department of Economics of the University of Chile, who would become the Minister of Economy of General Pinochet, spent long years as a member of the economic team of this Government alongside his Minister of Economy. Among others of his experiences, in Chile, is his participation in the implementation of the Pension Reform of that country. Note that his first major performance, as Minister of Economy of Government

demonstrate it, both in this case and in that case, it would be enough to briefly present to the reader some of the main Constitutional amendments and laws approved by the National Congress (CN), from the impeachment of 2016 to 2020, and the content of one of the PEC's that are currently being processed in this same CN, the initiative of the executive or parliamentary power.

Also in December 2016, three months after this impeachment, the Constitutional Amendment (EC) n. 95 (Brasil, 2016), which instituted the New Fiscal Regime in the scope of the Fiscal Budgets and Social Security of the Federal Government, was promulgated by the CN, on the proposal of the Interim President Temer, according to which the freezing, for 20 years, of primary expenditure of the Federal Executive Branch was imposed, including those for health and education. These losses can only undergo annual readjustments according to the inflation of the period measured by the IPCA (Broad National Consumer Index). Particular attention is drawn to the fact that the annual amounts of the Federal Government's budget for the payment of interest, charges and amortization of public debt to the financial system, which usually amount to around 45% of the total, are not subject to such freezing, and these percentages may even be, increased in case of possible excess of collection.<sup>2</sup>

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017, Law no. 13.429 was passed, which established unrestricted outsourcing of work, that is, both for complementary activities - res (existing legislation) and for essential ones (Brasil, 2017a). On July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Law number 13.467, of Labor Reform (Brasil, 2017b) was approved, which amended more than 100 articles of the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), removing many of the workers' rights.<sup>3</sup> It is necessary to note that this loss of labor rights has been aggravated even more with the edition of Provisional Measure (MP) 905, of November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019, which created a new form of hiring workers, with which sub-employment is also promoted.<sup>4</sup>

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Constitutional Amendment (EC) number 103 was promulgated, which amends the current social security system and establishes a set of transitional rules. Both the EC 103, promulgated, and the PEC 287/2016 – an inconclusive

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Bolsonaro, was the defense of the Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) of the Pension Reform, very similar to the Chilean Reform, a reform that would end the Brazilian Social Security Model of "solidarity" and proposed to replace it a Pension model of "capitalization" or individual (see later in the text).

<sup>2</sup> One of the main consequences of the EC-95, for the field of education, is the infeasibility of several of the goals of the National Education Plan (PNE)–2014–2024, among which the one that provided for the destination, for this field, by 2024, of 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), percentage that today is around 5%.

<sup>3</sup> 1) Collective agreements (with union participation) on working hours are now dependent on individual agreements without trade union participation; 2) The holidays that could be divided into two periods can now be divided into three; 3) Intermittent work was instituted, i.e. non-continuous work contracts, paid per hour; 4) The trade union contribution became optional; 5) Pregnant and lactating women may work in an unhealthy environment provided that the risk – low or medium – is certified by a doctor of the company; 6) Restriction of access to free justice: the worker will have to pay the employer's fees and procedural costs, if he or she fails to hearings and loses labor actions; 7) Activities within the company will no longer be considered part of the working day such as rest, study, feeding, interaction among colleagues, personal hygiene and exchange of uniforms; 8) The job and wage plans do not need to be included in the employment contract or be approved by the Ministry of Labor, but only negotiated between employers and workers, and can be changed constantly; 9) the time spent by the worker, going back and forth at work, will not be part of the working day; 10) the end of the free assistance on termination of the employment contract.

<sup>4</sup> Among other changes: 1) The Green and Yellow Card was established: the workers hired through it will not have the rights provided for in the CLT and in the Collective Conventions, with wages of up to a minimum and a half wage, that is, they will be sub-employed; 2) FGTS will be reduced from 8% to 2% per month and the fine for dismissal without cause will fall from 40% to 20%; Holidays, 13<sup>th</sup> Salary and FGTS will be divided into up to 12 installments...

attempt by the Temer Government to reform Social Security – aimed to replace the solidarity social security model, seen in the country – in which the beneficiaries are financed by all the workers – pains of the asset –, by a regime called capitalization, in which each worker would be responsible for the formation of a “savings” that would guarantee his or her future pension, in addition to an increase in the minimum retirement age and other changes. This “savings” would be managed by public or private banks that would profit, for many years, and in a customary manner, in the financial market, while workers (and only those who are in charge) would also have, as a rule, corrections to their extremely limited savings.

After about five months of processing and debates in the CN, EC 103 was approved, without its most feared trait by the workers – the “capitalization” – but with profound changes in the current regime until then.<sup>5</sup> These changes are so profound and so damaging to workers in need of social security benefits that the Minister of Economy has always alarmed that his approval, in the terms in which it was, would generate, in 10 years, A savings of R\$ 800 billion in the coffers of the Union.

Among the PEC’s in progress in the CN, the initiative of the Executive Power/Ministry of Economy, it is worth making reference to PEC 188/2019-Senate, also known as the “Federative Pact”, which Nelson C. Amaral, in a detailed analysis of his 12 measures, considers the one that best expresses “The ultraliberal dimension of the group in the federal government” and would constitute “a disaster for Brazilian social policies” (Amaral, 2020, p. 197).

In his analysis, Amaral begins by stating that this PEC proposes a series of changes to the Federal Constitution of 1988 (CF-1988) by amending, including or excluding articles, paragraphs, as well as by revoking several of their provisions. The “ultraliberal” dimension of the group in power, proposed by this PEC, would prove, for example, to be

[...] By not wanting to establish multi-annual plans, unlink as much financial resources as possible to social policies, and transfer to states, the Federal District and municipalities the responsibilities to reduce social inequalities; on the other hand, when managing the resources of the public fund, collected from the Brazilian population, it transfers public resources to the private sector to carry out social actions and provide, with all possible releases, the financial expenses associated with the financial capital (Amaral, 2020, p. 198).

Then, based on the summary of Nelson Amaral’s analysis of this PEC 188 and almost *ipsis litteris*, some of the changes to CF-1988 suggested by this PEC: 1) End of linking of financial resources to health and education, independently, that is, there would be a joint link between the financial resources applied to health and education; 2) End of supplementary educational, school, transport, food and health care programs by the Federal

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<sup>5</sup> 1) Increase in the minimum retirement age: 62 years of age and 15 contribution to women and 65 years and 20 years of contribution to men (little diverse rule for public servants, and a few other professions such as teachers and police); 2) Significant change in the calculation of the benefit, which may not be less than the minimum wage but not more than R\$ 5,839.45 monthly today; 3) The rates will become progressive, that is, the ones who earn the most will pay more, going from 7.5% to 22%; 4) Change in the rules of the pension for death: 50% of the amount of retirement, plus 10% per dependent until 100% (there are exceptions); 5) there is limitation when there is accumulation of benefit; 6) a large set of transition rules was established.



Government, which must be implemented by the states, Federal District and municipalities, with resources from the contribution of the Wage-Education which, according to this PEC, would be fully transferred to these institutions; 3) End of the obligation for federated entities to expand the public education network, and public resources may be applied in private schools; 4) When the public debt exceeds capital expenditure, there may be a reduction in wages and workload of public servants of the federal states – Federal Government, states and Federal District and municipality –, a reduction that may reach 25%, in addition to that, it is established by this PEC that the salaries of public servants will no longer have mandatory annual readjustments; 5) Additional rules are proposed to those of EC 95/2016, regarding the freezing of compulsory primary expenditure, that is, when they reach 95% of the total, their adjustment for the inflation of the previous period will be suspended as foreseen by that EC; 6) Articles 46 to 60 of Law 12.351 of 12/22/2010, which defined the Social Fund of Pre-salt and which allocated part of the financial resources of oil and natural gas exploration for health and education, and therefore, the percentages established by Law 12.858 of 09/09/2013, which allocated 75% of resources for basic education and 25% for health; 7) Article 5 of Complementary Law 141, of 01/13/2012, thus removing the link of resources applied in population health actions to GDP growth; 8) alongside constitutional social rights – health, education, food, work, housing, etc. – It is proposed the creation of the “right to intergenerational fiscal balance” which, eventually, can be used, by the rulers, to block the full satisfaction of those rights; 9) the obligation to draw up multiannual plans is required; 10) Forms of intervention are proposed in the current autonomy of federated entities, such as in the distribution of resources associated with oil and natural gas, which would be linked to “[...] indicators of results of the states, Federal District and municipalities”, etc. (Amaral, 2020, p. 198–201).

A number of other PEC's and provisional measures were under way in 2019 and early 2020, dealing with the most different issues, including those related to tax reform, which should further accentuate the neoliberal brands intensified liberals of power holders since the impeachment of 2016 and their socioeconomic policies.

In this text, aforementioned, of July 2013, as highlighted in the header, it was written that, “Education in general and, specially, higher education in a country cannot be approached without situating them in their close relationships with the socioeconomic context in which they are inserted (Sguissardi, 2015).

Both in 2013 and today, this methodological guideline remains valid and with total theoretical/explanatory relevance. Then, they examined the relationships between social and educational inequalities; the private/commercial and oligopolized expansion of ES; and the vicissitudes of public regulation within a semi-public or semi-private state. In this text, it is intended to show how, from the presidential impeachment (Aug/2016) to the passage of 2019/2020 – as it has been happening for decades or since the Empire – ES continues to maintain a very close relationship with the immense social inequality in the country and thus eventually, to the extent of the country's social inequality. the reproduction and contributing to, in its way, aggravate the absence of effective democracy in Brazilian society, which is reflected, especially, by this increasing inequality.

Before everything, it is necessary to emphasize which is not democratic in society where the social inequalities and infinite differences of opportunities, for example, of access to the ES of individuals belonging to their different social classes are immeasurable. If we

engage only in the educational field, not half of the Brazilian population aged 15 to 18 years does not even complete high school, and about 80% of young people aged 18 to 24 have access to any of the approximately 2,500 institutions in ES, of which, more than 2,000 are simple isolated colleges distributed throughout the national territory, and many of them are free or charging seemingly modest prices. As you will see, the access of only about 1/5 of the population of the adequate age group to higher education depends much less on family or personal disposition/will than on absolute lack of socioeconomic conditions of the vast majority of the population.

## A sample of the immense Brazilian social inequality

Six Brazilians concentrate the same wealth as the poorest 100 million in the country, about half of the Brazilian population (*The distance that unites us*, Oxfam–Brasil).

In 2019, Brazil was one of the five most populous countries in the world (about 210 million inhabitants) and one of the ten largest gross domestic product (R\$ 7.3 trillion or about US\$ 1.5 trillion), but at the same time it was among the top ten, among the around 200 countries in the world, in social inequality, of which income concentration is one of its main aspects, as will be seen below.

As for the current ethnic-racial composition of the Brazilian population and its evolution (abbreviated) since the official end of the slave regime (05/13/1888), the data in table 1 below are observed.

It is important to note the changes that occurred in the last 19 years, from 2000 to 2019: If, in 2000, the white self-declared population was 8.4 points per cent more numerous than that of the afro descendants (black and brown); in 2019, it is the self-declared afro-descendants that overlap whites by 13.4 percentage points. A change of 21.8 percentage points.

**Table 1** – Ethnic-racial composition in Brazil according to the Demographic Census of 1890, 2000 and PNAD 2019

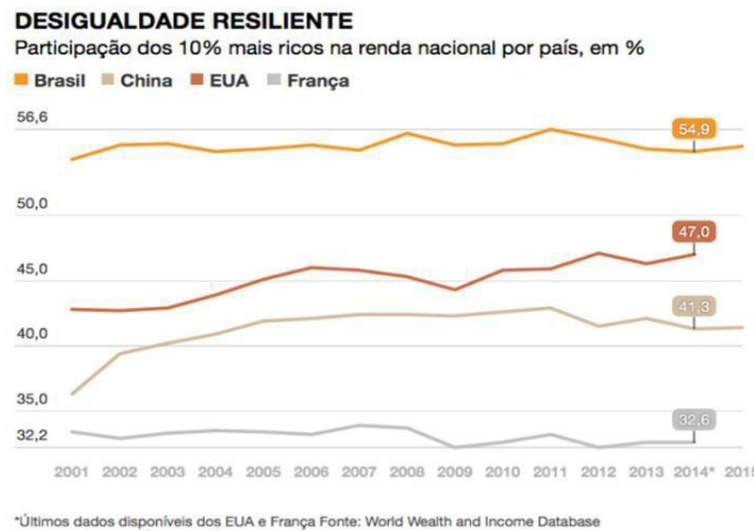
Year	Population (Million)	White %	Black %	Brown %	Indigenous %	Yellow %
1890	14	44.0	14.6	32.4**	9,0*	–
2000	170	53.4	6.1	38.9	0.4	0.5
2019	210	42.8	9.4	46.8	0.4	1.1

**Source:** Assembly of the author from data from the Revista *Retratos*, IBGE, n. 11, of May 2018. For 2019, the data are from PNAD (self-declaration).

\* In the 1890 census, the term cabocla would have been used in reference to ethnicity-in-breed. \*\* In the 1890 census, instead of brown, the term mestizo was used.

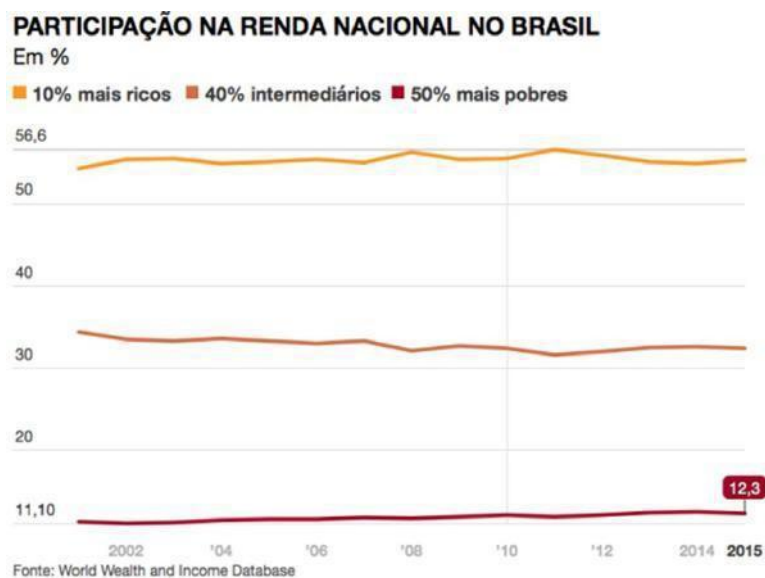
The concentration of income, as an essential trait of social inequality, can be demonstrated in several ways. The charts below – the 1, which includes the participation of the country's richest 10% with those of the US, China and France; and 2, which shows the participation in national income of the richest 10%, the intermediate 40% and the poorest 50% – would suffice to show such a concentration.

**Chart 1 – Resilient inequality: participation of the richest 10% in national income by country, in percentage**



Source: Costa (2017)

**Chart 2 – Participation in national income in Brazil in percentage**



Source: Costa (2017)

Another way to demonstrate social inequality and the concentration of its own is through staggered presentation of per capita household income, based on data from the Synthesis of Social Indicators (SIS) of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), as done with tables 2 and 3 below.

**Table 2 – Per capita household income in Brazil from 2012 to 2018**

Household income per capita	Number of People						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No income	1,975,290	1,793,241	1,607,704	1,824,543	2,248,477	2,473,068	2,492,916
Greater than 0 and lower than or equal to 1/4 S.M.	21,530,661	20,124,149	17,684,744	19,056,338	21,667,142	21,433,256	22,020,758
Greater than 4 and lower than or equal to 1/4 1/2 S.M.	39,703,329	37,857,310	36,977,192	37,707,222	38,428,516	36,683,842	36,562,768
Greater than 1/2 and lower than or equal to 1 S.M.	59,258,700	60,372,447	61,494,678	61,629,008	60,913,286	58,735,365	58,791,269
Greater than 1 and lower than or equal to 2 S.M.	45,629,199	47,819,760	49,637,861	50,073,569	48,648,866	53,789,229	52,974,465
Greater than 2 and lower than or equal to 3 S.M.	13,431,972	13,947,430	15,273,188	14,799,071	14,717,304	15,044,497	15,788,468
Greater than 3 and lower than or equal to 5 S.M.	8,691,276	9,763,201	10,048,150	10,136,350	9,811,536	9,686,183	10,594,893
Higher than 5 S.M.	7,308,573	7,770,711	8,440,446	7,500,899	7,971,873	8,037,471	8,725,206
<b>Total</b>	<b>197,529,000</b>	<b>199,249,000</b>	<b>200,963,000</b>	<b>202,727,000</b>	<b>204,407,000</b>	<b>206,089,000</b>	<b>207,743,000</b>

**Source:** Summary of Social Indicators – SIS, IBGE. Available at: [www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/populacao/9221-sintese-de-indicadores-sociais.html?edicao=18830&t=download](http://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/populacao/9221-sintese-de-indicadores-sociais.html?edicao=18830&t=download) (Elaboração de Nelson C. Amaral)

**Table 3** – Per capita household income in Brazil from 2012 to 2018

Household income per capita	Percentage						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No income	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.2
Higher than 0 and lower or equal to 1/4 S.M.	10.9	10.1	8.8	9.4	10.6	10.4	10.6
Higher than 1/4 and lower or equal to 1/2 S.M.	20.1	19.0	18.4	18.6	18.8	17.8	17.6
Higher than 1/2 and lower or equal to 1 S.M.	30.0	30.3	30.6	30.4	29.8	28.5	28.3
Greater than 1 and lower than or equal to 2 S.M.	23.1	24.0	24.7	24.7	23.8	26.1	25.5
Higher than 2 and lower or equal to 3 S.M.	6.8	7.0	7.6	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.6
Higher than 3 and lower or equal to 5 S.M.	4.4	4.9	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.7	5.1
Greater than 5 S.M.	3.7	3.9	4.2	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.2

**Source:** Summary of Social Indicators – SIS, IBGE. Available at: [www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/populacao/9221-sintese-de-indicadores-sociais.html?edicao=18830&t=download](http://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/populacao/9221-sintese-de-indicadores-sociais.html?edicao=18830&t=download) (Elaboração de Nelson C. Amaral)

In addition to the absolute figures (Table 2), note the breakdown of per capita household income over the course of these seven years by the percentages represented by them (Table 3).

However, it should be noted that the minimum wage in force in February 2018, of R\$ 954.00, corresponds to less than 1/3 of the ideal minimum wage that according to the Interunion Department of Statistics and Socio-economic Studies (Dieese) should be R\$ 3,683.67 or 3.86 times that. According to the Federal Constitution of 1988, the SM should supply the sixth basic and needs of housing, health, education, clothing, hygiene, Transportation, leisure and social security (Brasil Econômico, 2018b).

Based on the data from table 2 and divide the population among people of all ages who lived (survived) with up to one SM and those who lived with more than one SM, we will have:

**Table 4** – Per capita household income in Brazil from 2012 to 2018

Household income per capita	Percentage						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>No incomes, greater than 0 and lower or equal to 1 S.M.</b>	62.0	60.3	58.6	59.3	60.3	57.9	57.7
<b>Greater than 1 and lower than or equal to 5 S.M.</b>	34.3	35.9	37.3	37.0	35.8	38.1	38.2
<b>Greater than 5 S.M.</b>	3.7	3.9	4.2	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.2

**Source:** Summary of Social Indicators – SIS, IBGE (Author's elaboration based on data from table 3).

If taken as the basis of the ideal SM (Dieese) and added the data of the last two rows of table 3 above, it would have only 7% to 8% of the population with a per capita income higher than the constitutional SM.

## Pnud – IDH

Among the 189 countries in the world that have measured, by the United Nations Development Program (Undp), its Human Development Index (HDI) – based on health, education and income indicators – Brazil occupied, in 2018, the 79<sup>th</sup> position, with an HDI of 0.761. In South America it was ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, tied with Colombia, far from the first three months: Chile (42<sup>nd</sup>), Argentina (48<sup>th</sup>) and Uruguay (57<sup>th</sup>) (G1.globo.com, 2019).

However, the situation in the country is much more serious when UNDP data on HDI “adjusted to inequalities” from a list of 150 countries are verified. In this case, Brazil, with an index of 0.574, becomes 102<sup>nd</sup>.

In South America, the country was the second most lost in HDI [2018] due to the adjustment made by inequality, behind only Paraguay (which was from the 98<sup>th</sup> position, with 0.724, to the 112<sup>nd</sup> position, with 0.545) (G1.globo.com, 2019).<sup>6</sup>

Undp also assesses gender disparities – via Gender Development Index – in 166 countries. “The HDI for women showed that Brazilians are in better health and education conditions than men, but they are below when the subject is gross income.” (G1.globo.com, 2019). Women have an average of 8.1 years of study against 7.6 of men, “[...] however, the per capita gross national income of women is 41.5% lower than that of men. In dollars, this amount is equivalent to US\$ 10,432 per year against US\$ 17,827 for men” (G1.globo.com, 2019). This should be added to the higher rate of female unemployment and underemployment compared to male, as it will be seen below.

## Gini Coefficient

Another way to measure the social inequality of a country is by measuring the Gini coefficient or Index. Its indicators are the income, wealth and education. The closer to 1, the greater the inequality and vice versa.

According to Daniela Amorim, from *O Estado de S. Paulo* (2020), the unequal income from the labor market reached a record level in 2019. In annual terms, the inequality pointed out by Gini Index, from 2015 to 2019, reaching the index of 0.629 compared to 0.6279 in the previous year, 2018.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> When making this type of classification, the Undp presents indicators to measure income distribution among the population: “participation in the income of the poorest 40%, participation in the income of the richest 10% and participation in the income of the richest 1%. With this information, the report pointed out that **almost a third of all the wealth in Brazil is concentrated in the hands of the richest 1%.** It is the second largest concentration of income in the world, only behind Qatar.” (G1.globo.com, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> “The survey takes into account the microdata on income and occupation of the National Continuous Household Sample Survey (PNAD), calculated by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)” (Amorim, 2020).

## Unemployment and underemployment

Unemployment and underemployment data for 2018 remained stable until mid-2019. These, therefore, will be taken as a reference.

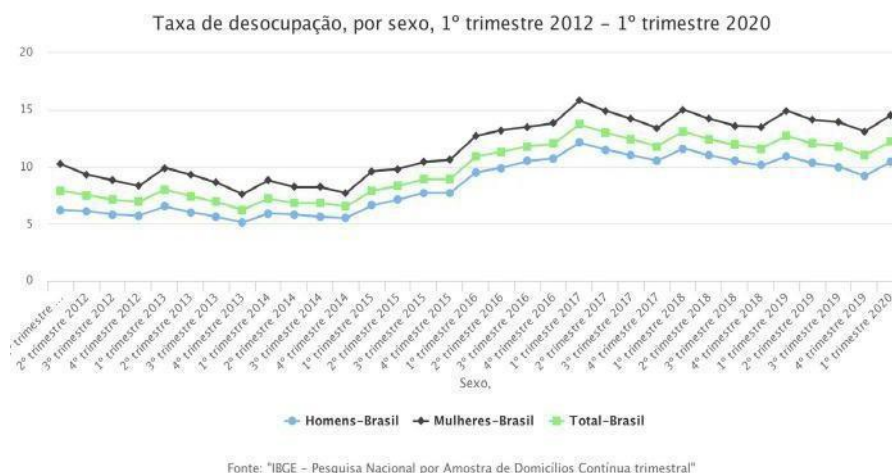
According to IBGE data, reported by Brasil Econômico website (2018), in the middle of this year there would be no work for 27.6 million people in Brazil, that is, for about 28% of the economically active population that was a little more than 100 million people. This number “[...] is part of the rate of underutilization of the labor force composed of unemployed and overcome by insufficient hours” (Brasil Econômico, 2018). There are significant regional differences: while in the state of Piauí this rate was 40%, in Santa Catarina was 10.9%.

The “disheartened”, that is, those who gave up trying a wave of nail, amounted to 4.4% of the workforce, or about 4.5 million people, the highest rate in the historical series since 2012. In the state of Alagoas, Brasil Econômico website reports (2018), this rate reached 16.6%, almost four times the national average. In Santa Catarina this rate was only 0.7%.

Unemployment in the second quarter of 2018 was 13 million people (12.4%). However, the distribution of rates by state and region are very unequal: in the state of Amapá it was 21.3%, in Alagoas, 17.3%, and in Santa Catarina, 6.5%, and Mato Grosso do Sul, 7.6%, that is, those far above and this far below the national average of 12.4% (Brasil Econômico, 2018).

Chart 3 below, with data from Continuous IBGE/PNAD, shows the evolution of the unemployment rate in Brazil, from Jan–Feb–Mar 2012 to Jan–Feb–Mar 2020. The lowest rate occurred in the last quarter of 2013 and the highest in the first quarter of 2017, expected to be exceeded from the second quarter of 2020 due, especially, to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Chart 3 – Disoccupation rate, by sex, from the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2012 to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020**



**Source:** IBGE – National Survey by Quarterly Continuous Household Sample (2020).

As it can be seen, the data from Chart 3 above confirm the UNDP’s data when assessing gender disparities – via Gender Development Index. In the 8 years or about 30

quarters, the indices of female disoccupation are, with small variations, 40% higher than the indices of male disoccupation.

In the second quarter of 2018, women were the majority of working age: 52.4% of the total and in all regions. However, out of every 100 employed, 56.3 were men, and in the North they were 60.2%. Of the total unemployed (12.4%), the male unemployment rate was 11% and the female unemployment rate was 14.2%, that is, 29% higher than the male.

Another and more striking aspect of social inequality is the unemployment among black people and brown people that is significantly higher than that of white people. In 2018, the second quarter of the 12.9 million unemployed, 52.3% were brown people, 35% white people and 11.8% black people. In this period the labor force was thus composed of: 47.9% were brown; 42.4% were white; and 8.5% were black. Ethnic/racial inequality also reveals itself in the unemployment rate: for an annual average of 12.4% in 2018, the rate of white self-declared was 9.9%; of black people, 15%; and of brown people, 14.4% (Brasil Econômico, 2018).

Other data show how gender and ethnic/racial issues are constitutive of Brazilian social inequality.

The data referred to when it came to HDI, it is worth noting that, when gender and skin color are juxtaposed, new differences arise. For example, in 2018, 23.5% of white women had high school education, more than twice that of black and brown women who were only 10.4% possessed it.

These differences are accentuated when the variable analyzed is the salary: according to IBGE, “even if working and studying more, women continue to receive **lower wages than men** [...] they earn, in average, 76.5% of the income of men” (Brasil Econômico, 2018a). This difference would be even greater when considering the labor market for holders of complete higher education diplomas: women's wages would be only 63.4% of men.

Add to this the so-called double women's working day: women spent on average 18 hours a week on household chores and personal care against 10 hours of men (73% more).

Finally, as for violence, according to the Atlas of Violence (Ipea, 2020), for a total of 56.6% of Afro-descendants in the population, in 2018, its members accounted for 75% of the deaths due to murder (57,956) in the country in this year. And of the total number of women murdered, also that year (4,519 or one every two hours), of which more than 30% per femicide, 68% were black.

## Social inequality and higher education in Brazil

There will only be democracy in Brazil on the day when the machine that prepares democracies is set up in the country. This machine is that of public school (Anísio Teixeira).

Both intellectual educators and international organizations of different fields, throughout history and, in particular, of the last centuries, have been urging public education to advance democracy. This applies specifically to basic education, but since at least the beginning of the 19th century, with the University of Humboldt, this vastness could also be extended to ES.



However, if we take a careful look at the history and evolution of basic and higher education in Brazil, we will see that neither that, nor – especially – this, was taken as a priority in the construction of democracy, whether of the country as a nation.

In the case of basic education, it was only in the Federal Constitution of 1988 that its first phase – of elementary school – was recognized as a subjective right, that is, that compromises the State in its different instances with its universal offer. High school does not enjoy this prerogative. And much less the ES. This, in fact, started in the country, in the form of colleges, right after the arrival of the imperial family in 1808, fleeing the Napoleonic troops, to the colony of Portugal, only began to organize itself in the form of university, more than a century later, in 1920, with the University of Rio de Janeiro (today, centennial Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). It can be said that ES in Brazil, from the Empire and even throughout the Republic until the very recent years was always marked by elitism, “[...] either to ensure the qualification of state officials, or to ensure the supremacy of the ruling class(s) in the accumulation of capital and maintenance of power control” (Sguissardi, 2014, p. 208).

The massification of ES that occurred in the US in the early twentieth century and the great advances that occurred even in neighboring countries, such as Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, before and after World War II, were not accompanied in Brazil that, only in recent years, sees the percentage of 15% to 20% of net enrollment rate<sup>8</sup> in ES be reached. In a country where little more than 50% of its young people aged 15 to 18 can complete high school, second phase of basic education, and in which about 85% of higher education institutions (HEIs) are private, of which about 60% are for profit, and where ES is not seen by the powers constituted as a priority, it is not surprising that almost 80% of young people aged 18 to 24 are outside any of its more than 2,500 HEIs.

In a Diagnostic Study of the Expansion Policy of (and Access to) Higher Education in Brazil – 2002–2012 (Sguissardi, 2014), for the National Council of Education, it was stated that:

The opposition of public and private-trade interests, (...) in the state's language, most likely explain why the right to ES remains a fundamental right of protection more fragile and why its coverage of the area is so small and its quality so uneven: high to a minority and low to the majority of those who, supposedly privileged, attend it (Sguissardi, 2014, p. 208)..

Today, however, in view of the reality exposed in the introduction of this text on the accentuated or extreme neoliberal traits of the shift governments since the impeachment/coup of August/2016, it can be said that private interests are accentuated within the State and explain the lack of expansion of public ES and the continuity of the expansion of the private sector at the national level.

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<sup>8</sup> “The net tuition fee (TLM) in higher education is an indicator of access to the educational system by a population considered at the reference age to attend a given level of education. In its classical definition, TLM considers only the percentage of the population of an age group enrolled in a level of education in relation to the total size of the population in this age group” (Brasil, 2020). In the case of ES, the age group considered appropriate is from 18 to 24 years.

The data from the Inep/MEC Higher Education Census from the years up to 2018, the continuous PNAD and other studies will serve to establish aspects of this relationship intended as the objective of this study.

## The evolution of higher education during the dictatorship and in the three post-dictatorship presidential mandates

Table 5 shows the evolution of ES enrollments in Brazil during the period of the military dictatorship – 1964–1985. In 1964 there were only 164 thousand enrollment, 61% of which were public and 38% private. In the first 10 years – 1964–1974 – there was a growth of 559%, reaching almost one million enrollments (937,593), but reversing practically the public/private percentages: 36.4% public and 63.5% private. The following decade – 1974–1984 – was of poor growth: only 49%, or less than 10 times that of the previous decade, with a small increase in the public percentage: 40.9% against 59.1%. However, in the total of these two decades, for a total increase of 882.9%, public enrollment grew 552.3% and private enrollment, almost three times more, 1,412.5%.

**Table 5** – Evolution of Brazilian ES enrollments by administrative category (public and private) – 1964–1984

Year	Total	Public enrollments		Private enrollments	
		Total	%	Total	%
<b>1964</b>	142,386	87,665	<b>61.6</b>	54,721	<b>38.4</b>
<b>1974</b>	937,593	341,028	<b>36.4</b>	596,565	<b>63.5</b>
<b>1984</b>	1,399,539	571,879	<b>40.9</b>	827,660	<b>59.1</b>
<b>1964/1974 <math>\Delta\%</math></b>	<b>558.5</b>	<b>289.0</b>	–	<b>990.1</b>	–
<b>1974/1984 <math>\Delta\%</math></b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>67.7</b>	–	<b>38.7</b>	–
<b>1964/1984 <math>\Delta\%</math></b>	<b>882.9</b>	<b>552.3</b>	–	<b>1,412.5</b>	–

**Source:** BRASIL. MEC/Inep. Statistical Synopsis of Higher Education, 2010. Table organized by the author in Sguissardi (2014).

Table 6 shows the evolution of both the number of public and private ES institutions and enrollments in the post-dictatorship period, the Sarney governments (1985–1989), Collor de Mello (1990–1992), Itamar Franco (1992–1994) and Fernando H. Cardoso – FHC (1995–1998).

This 14-year period was marked by a low growth in both the number of institutions and enrollments, although these were significantly higher than those. During the Sarney, Collor de Mello and Itamar Franco governments (1985–1994), the growth rate of institutions was negative, with the enrollment rate growing only 21.5%. The public and private enrollments had very close rates, with slight advantages for the public: 24% against 19.7%.

**Table 6** – Evolution of the number of institutions and enrollments of ES by administrative category (public and private) – 1985–1998

Year	Number of Institutions					Number of Enrollments				
	Total	Public	%	Private	%	Total (thousand)	Public (thousand)	%	Private (thousand)	%
1985	859	233	27.1	626	72.9	1,367	557	40.7	810	59.3
1994	851	218	25.6	633	74.4	1,661	691	41.6	970	58.4
1998	973	209	21.4	764	78.6	2,125	804	37.8	1,321	62.2
1985–1994 $\Delta\%$	00.9	06.4	–	01.1	–	21.5	24.0	–	19.7	–
1994–1998 $\Delta\%$	14.3	04.1	–	20.7	–	27.9	16.5	–	36.2	–
1985–1998 $\Delta\%$	13.3	10.3	–	22.0	–	55.4	44.3	–	63.1	–

**Source:** BRASIL. MEC/Inep. Statistical Synopsis of Higher Education, 2010. Table organized by the author in Sguissardi (2014).

It is in the first FHC government (1995–1998) that, with total growth of institutions of 14.3% and enrollments of 27.9%, the growth of public institutions was negative (–04.1%) against a significant growth in private institutions (20.7%), and the public enrollments (16.5%) was lower than the private ones (36.2%).

It is evident in the period that there is a low growth in the number of institutions (13.3%), especially due to the decrease in the number of the public (–10.3%), and a median growth in enrollments, in which the primary enrollment increases by about 20 percentage points more than the public, in addition to private institutions having had a 22% increase in their number.

## The evolution of the number of HEIs and enrollments from 1999 to 2018 and the process of private/commodification of higher education in Brazil

Although it is recognized, in the Federal Constitution of 1988, the possible existence of “schools” for profitable purposes, it will be the responsibility of Decree 2.207/97, in its Article 3<sup>rd</sup>, when it states that “the entities that maintain their interests for economic purposes submit to the legislation governing commercial companies, especially in the part concerning tax and tax related and labor charges” and, specifically, to Decree 2.306/97, the legal definition of the existence of higher education institutions and their for-profit maintainers, as defined in article 7<sup>th</sup>:

The private educational institutions, classified as private individuals in a strict sense, for profit purposes, even if of a civil nature, when maintained and administered by an individual, are subject to the regime of market legislation, regarding tax and tax related and labor charges, as if they were commercial, compared to their sponsors and administrators to the merchant on an individual behalf.

As shown in Table 7 (below), in 1999, only after a little more than a year of Decree 2.306/97, of the 905 private HEIs – 82.5% of the total of 1.097 HEIs of the country – 136 (12.4% of the total HEIs of the country) had already changed their statutes (with approval from the Ministry of Finance) from non-profit HEI to profitable HEI.

The approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law 9.394/96) and Decrees 2.207/97 and 2.306/97 were determining, on the one hand, of the very important increase in the number of HEIs that go from 1.097, in 1999, to 2.365, in 2010, With the triple growth of private HEIs in relation to the public; on the other hand, the exceptional growth, among the first HEIs, of the profit-making HEIs that from 136 (12% of the total country) in 1999, went to 946 (40%) in 2010. In 11 years, the private/commercial HEIs have increased by 696% against only 48% of non-commercial and 44.8% of public.

**Table 7** – Evolution of the number of HEIs by administrative category: public (federal, state, municipal) private (for-profit – CFL; non-profit – SFL) and Special\* – Brazil – 1999–2018

Ano	Número de Instituições																
	Total	Públicas						Privadas						Especiais			
		Total	%	Fed.	%	Est.	%	Mun.	%	Total	%	CFL	%	SFL	%	Qt	%
1999	1.097	192	17,5	60	5,4	72	6,5	60	5,4	905	82,5	136	12,4	769	70,1	-	-
2010	2.365	278	11,7	99	4,2	108	4,5	71	2,9	2.089	88,3	946	40,0	1.143	48,3	-	-
2018	2.537	299	11,8	110	4,3	128	5,0	61	2,4	2.238	88,2	1.303	51,4	935	36,8	25	0,9
1999-2010 Δ%	116,7	44,8	-	65,0	-	50,0	-	18,3	-	132,0	-	696,0	-	48,6	-	-	-
2010-2018 Δ%	6,7	7,6	-	12,0	-	18,5	-	-14,1	-	6,6	-	37,7	-	-18,0	-	-	-
1999-2018 Δ%	131,3	55,7	-	83,3	-	77,8	-	1,6	-	147,3	-	958,1	-	21,6	-	-	-

\* Normative Ordinance number 40, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Special (art. 242 of the Federal Constitution) – an official educational institution created by state or municipal law and existing on the date of the promulgation of the Federal Constitution, which is not totally or preponderantly maintained with public resources, therefore not free.

**Source:** Microdata from the Census of Higher Education 1999, 2010 and 2018. Available at: [www.inep.gov.br/microdados](http://www.inep.gov.br/microdados) (contribution of Nelson Cardoso Amaral).

**Table 8** – Evolution of the number of ES by administrative category: public (federal, state, municipal) private (for-profit – CFL; non-profit – SFL) and Special\* – Brazil – 1999–2018

Ano	Número de Matrículas																
	Total	Públicas						Privadas						Especiais			
		Total	%	Fed.	%	Est.	%	Mun.	%	Total	%	CFL	%	SFL	%	Qt	%
1999	2.369.945	832.022	35,1	442.562	18,7	302.380	12,7	87.080	3,7	1.537.923	64,9	202.596	8,5	1.342.026	56,6	-	-
2010	6.379.299	1.643.298	25,7	938.656	14,7	601.112	9,4	103.530	1,6	4.736.001	74,3	2.066.473	32,4	2.697.589	42,3	-	-
2018	8.450.755	2.077.481	24,6	1.324.984	15,7	660.854	7,8	91.643	1,1	6.373.274	75,4	4.241.339	50,2	2.132.574	25,2	25.050	0,2
1999-2010 Δ%	169,2	97,5	-	112,1	-	98,8	-	18,9	-	207,9	-	919,9	-	101,0	-	-	-
2010-2018 Δ%	32,5	26,4	-	41,1	-	9,9	-	-11,5	-	34,6	-	105,2	-	-20,9	-	-	-
1999-2018 Δ%	256,6	149,7	-	199,4	-	118,6	-	5,2	-	314,4	-	1.993,5	-	58,9	-	-	-

\* Normative Ordinance number 40, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Special (art. 242 of the Federal Constitution) – an official educational institution created by state or municipal law and existing on the date of the promulgation of the Federal Constitution, which is not totally or preponderantly maintained with public resources, therefore not free.

**Source:** Microdata from the Census of Higher Education 1999, 2010 and 2018. Available at: [www.inep.gov.br/microdados](http://www.inep.gov.br/microdados) (contribution of Nelson Cardoso Amaral).

The great leap in the expansion of HEIs in the country, as shown in Table 7, took place between 1999 and 2010. In the following eight years, the total index was only 6.7%, and it was slightly higher among the public ones (7.6%). The phenomenon that draws the most attention is that of the smaller increase in the total of private HEIs (6.6%), but with six times the growth of the HEIs for profit (37.7%) and an important reduction in the number of non-profit HEIs (–18%). This was due, as to a lesser degree in the previous phase (1999–2010), especially to the acquisition and incorporation of non-profit HEIs by profit-making HEIs.<sup>9</sup>

In the period 1999–2018, the following figures are also highlighted: 131% increase in the total of HEIs; 55.7% of public HEIs; 147.3% of private HEIs, but of these, 958.1% of those for profit against only 21.6% of non-profit ones.

Table 8 shows that the expansion of enrollments, in the period 1999–2018, was even more significant percentage rates than in the case of HEIs, both in the increase of total enrollments and in the total public enrollments (especially in federal and private HEIs) (especially for profit-making HEIs). This was due, in the case of federal HEIs, to the Program called Reuni (Program to Support Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities) implemented from 2007 to 2012, which practically doubled the number of enrollments of federal HEIs in this period. In the case of private for-profit HEIs, it was due, in a special way, to the expansion of the offer of courses, by the cheapening of tuition and by the increase of the offer of distance education (EAD).

Table 8 highlights some data: 1) The increase in enrollment in practically all cases was substantially higher than that of the HEIs; 2) The period of much greater expansion was 1999–2010 compared to that of 2010–2018; 3) for a growth in enrollment in the period 1999–2018 of 256%, the public, even federal enrollments reached 199%, reached 149%, while private enrollments reached 314%, and of these, those of for-profit HEIs reached almost 2,000% (1,993.5%) compared to only 58.9% of private non-profit HEIs.

## **Undergraduate enrollments by sex and color/race**

In the study of the evolution of higher education, two variables deserve to be observed: sex and color/race. In the case of the first, the censuses of higher education of the National Institute of Studies and Research (Inep), of MEC, have provided data for the three years that we take as references: 1999, 2010 and 2018. As for the second, color/race, we only find data from Inep for the year 2018 and some other sparse data from other sources.

Regarding gender, as already pointed out when it came to social inequalities, women tend to have higher education than men. In the case of higher education, Table 9 below shows that, in the period 1999–2018, female enrollments were higher than male enrollments in a range of 11.2–14 percentage points.

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<sup>9</sup> For a detailed view of these processes of purchase, merger, incorporation of small HEIs by medium-sized HEIs and by small and large-sized HEIs, see Sguissardi (2014).

**Table 9** – Enrollments of Undergraduate Courses by Gender of Enrollees – Brazil – 1999–2018

Year	Total	Enrollments in male	Undergraduate %	Courses Female	%
1999	2,369,945	1,051,552	<b>44.4</b>	1,318,393	<b>55.6</b>
2010	5,449,120	2,432,816	<b>44.6</b>	3,016,304	<b>55.4</b>
2018	8,450,755	3,633,659	<b>43.0</b>	4,817,096	<b>57.0</b>

**Source:** Statistical Synopsis of Undergraduate Higher Education, 1999; INEP, 2000; Census of Higher Education, 2010; INEP, 2011; National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira, 2019 (Our elaboration from INEP” data).

As for the color/race variable and enrollment in higher education, although the participation of brown people and black people was close to that of the white people in the population composition, in 2005, their attendance to higher education was about three times lower: only 5.5% of black people and brown young people aged 18 to 24 were enrolled in this level of education, compared to 17.8% of white young people in this age group.

With the entry into force of Law 12.711/2012, of Social Quotas,<sup>10</sup> in public universities (especially federal), in addition to other affirmative actions, as grants, cost-support for maintenance, there was a significant increase in the participation of afro-descendants in higher education in public institutions: In 2015, 12.8% were already young people aged 18 to 24 years old who were educated in this level of education compared to 26.5% of whites.

According to IBGE data, between 2000 and 2017 the chances of obtaining an undergraduate degree for young black and brown people in undergraduate degree would have multiplied almost five times, from 2.2%, from the population from 18 to 24 years, to 9.3%. This proportion among the young white people increased from 9.3% in 2000 to 22% in 2017 (Sguissardi, 2019).

**Table 10** – Enrollments of Undergraduate Courses by color/race of enrollees (self-declared) – Brazil – 2018–2018

Category	Enrollments in Administrative Total			Courses Black or Brown	Undergraduate %	Not declared	%
	White %						
Brazil	8,450,755	3,533,562	41.8	3,027,572	35.8	1,660,792	19.6
Public	2,077,481	835,915	40.2	840,360	40.4	333,947	16.7
Federal	1,324,984	500,664	37.8	606,617	45.8	175,067	13.2
Private	6,373,274	2,697,647	42.3	2,187,212	34.3	1,326,845	20.8

**Source:** National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira, 2019 (author's elaboration).

The Census of Higher Education 2018, from Inep (2019) brings data that allow to verify the frequency to higher education by color/race. Although the percentage of “undeclared” is almost 20% (13.2% in federal HEIs and 20.8% in private HEIs), it is

<sup>10</sup> This law requires universities, institutes and federal centers to reserve 50% of the vacancies offered in their selection processes to candidates entitled to quotas. The Quotas Law was enacted in 2012, but some universities (UnB, UERJ, UEMS and UNEB), about 10 years earlier, had already passed internal legislation with a sense quite similar to what would become the subject of this new law.



possible to raise the hypothesis that the Law of Quotas and other affirmative actions contributed to a significant advance in relation to the participation of black and brown people in the whole of the enrollments of higher education. In this table, the percentage of 1.6% of the yellow color/race and 0.60% of the indigenous are not considered.

For the following observations, it is necessary to remember that in 2018, the white people comprised about 43% of the Brazilian population; the black and brown people, 55%. Of the total of 8,450,755 enrolled in higher education, 41.8% declared themselves white and 35.8% black and brown people. Of the total of 2,077,481 enrolled people in public HEIs, the self-declared black and brown people (40.4%) slightly outnumber the self-declared white people (40.2%). Of the total of 6,373,274 enrolled in private HEIs, the self-declared white people (42.3%) exceeded the self-declared black and brown people (34.3%) by 8 percentage points. Finally, of the total of 1,324,984 enrolled in federal HEIs, self-declared white people (37.8%) were exceeded by self-declared black and brown people (45.8%) also, in the opposite direction, by 8 percentage points. In this case, if the 13.2% of “non-declared” were divided in proportion to the data of the self-declared, percentages would be reached quite close to those that reach each ethnicity in the population composition.

As it can be observed, the equal conditions of access to higher education, one of the conditions of democratization of this level of education, is still far from what is expected, although here it is seen, through the Law of Quotas and other affirmative actions, forms and paths to move forward in this direction.

## Evolution of the Net Tuition Rate in Higher Education

One of the ways to verify the evolution of ES coverage is to observe the so-called net enrollment rate in ES of the population aged 18 to 24 years. The table below, which brings data from the PNAD (from 1992 to 2010) and the Census of Higher Education of the Inep (2011 to 2018), allows to verify such evolution.

**Table 11** – Evolution of the Net Enrollment Rate in Higher Education – Brazil – 1999–2018

YEAR	Population from 18 to 24 years	Enrolled from 18 to 24 years old	Net rate of Enrolled people
1999	19,977,857	1,567,917	7.8
2010	23,873,786	3,188,000	13.4
2018	22,786,000	4,323,580	19.0
1999–2010 Δ%	19.5	103.3	71.8
2010–2018 Δ%	-04.5	35.6	41.8
1999–2018 Δ%	14.0	175.7	143.6

**Source:** PNAD (1999, 2010 and 2018). Available at: <[www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/educacao/9127-pesquisa-nacional-por-amostra-de-domicilio.html](http://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/educacao/9127-pesquisa-nacional-por-amostra-de-domicilio.html)> e Sinopse Estatística do Censo da Educação Superior. Available at: <[www.inep.gov.br/sinop-ses-estatisticas-da-educacao-superior](http://www.inep.gov.br/sinop-ses-estatisticas-da-educacao-superior)> (Elaboration of the autor and Nelson C. Amaral)

Table 11 data show that, despite a significant increase in the net rate in the period 1999–2018 in relation to the moderate growth of the population in the age group from 18 to 24 years (14% versus 143.6%), such an index (19%) is far from the target predicted by the National Education Plan 2014–2024, which is 33%.

On the other hand, the gross enrollment rate,<sup>11</sup> in 2018, of 37.4%, indicates that almost half of those enrolled in higher education in the country, that year, were outside the age group considered adequate for this level of education. And this, to a large extent, is due to grade-age disadjustments.

The most serious fact in this sense is in relation to the African population (black and brown people) [...] at the age of attending higher education [18–24 years], 52% of the blacks and brown people are still pursuing basic education (and often working), versus 29.1% of the white youth people (Sguissardi, 2019, p. 21)

## Financing of higher education and *Future-se*

Since the impeachment/coup of President Dilma, public and private higher education, especially in its post-graduate level and research dimension, has ceased to have the degree of priority that had been having in the previous governments to this legal-political event of 2016. This can be assessed if the measures related to funding are examined, either from the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications (MCTIC), to which the National Research Council (CNPq) is linked; or from the Coordination of Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), responsible for the funding, regulation/evaluation and control of more than 4,400 graduate programs of all public and private higher education HEIs; or from the capital and expense of federal HEIs.

In the case of MCTIC, the budget cuts reduced the funds for the year 2020 to ¼ of their 2016 budget. Knowing that CNPq<sup>12</sup> “is responsible for financing more than 20 thousand research projects or 1/3 of the approximately 60 thousand research projects financed by different national and foreign funding agencies” (Sguissardi, 2020, p. 155), it can be said that loss similar to that of the execution of these projects will affect the published scientific production that stems from such projects, that is, “without participation of CNPq in the short and medium term this production would hardly probably see the light of the day” (Idem, *ibidem*).

The Budget Law for 2020 provided for a 40% reduction in Capes' resources for its operation and payment of grants and aids in relation to the 2019 budget (from about R\$ 4 billion to about R\$ 2.3 billion). See chart 4 below. “In 2020, Capes' budget will be around 25% of 2015,<sup>13</sup> when the number of graduate programs was 2,057 against the current approximately 4,300 and that of masters and doctoral students was 163,671 against the current 400,000” (Sguissardi, 2020, p. 156).

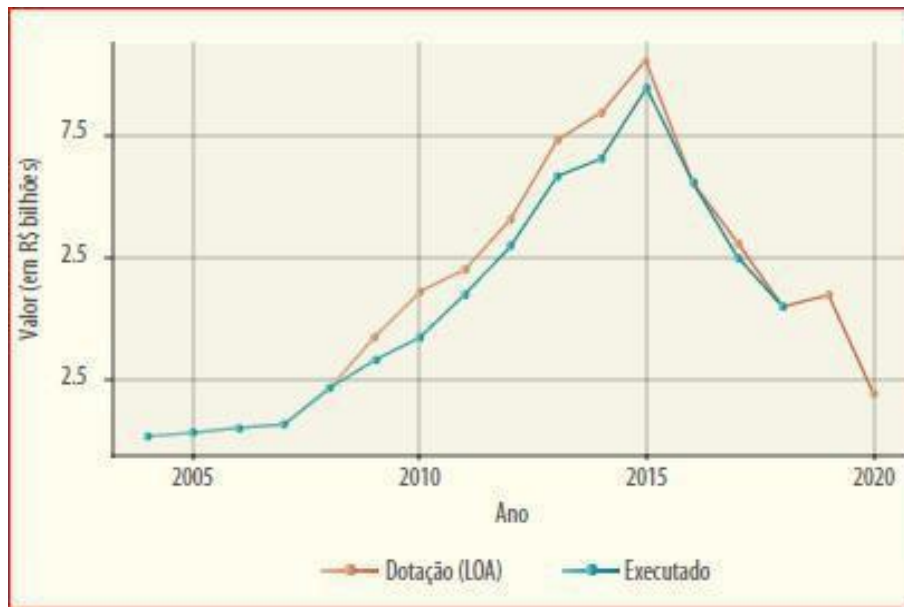
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<sup>11</sup> “The gross tuition fee (TBM) is defined as the total number of people attending undergraduate courses (regardless of age) in relation to the total age population considered adequate to attend this level of education” (BRASIL, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ciencia/2019/08/sob-risco-de-colapso-cnpq-financia-um-terco-da-ciencia-nacional.shtml>. Access on: Sep. 12<sup>th</sup> 2019.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.nexojornal.com.br/grafico/2019/09/05/Qual-%C3%A9-o-or%C3%A7amento-da-Capes-e-o-que-ele-representa-para-o-Brasil>

**Chart 4** – CAPES' budget corrected by IPCA (IBGE) based on June of each year.



**Source:** <https://sintepiaui.org.br/noticia/442/O-orcamento-da-CAPES-para-2020-com-a-LOAS-do-novo-governo>. Access on: April 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. Art: Diagrama Editorial (SGUISSARDI, 2020, p. 156).

Chart 5 shows the evolution of resources from the three main sources of research and graduate funding in the country from 2000 to 2020. In 2020, resources will be smaller than those of 2006 and will account for only 31.5% of those of 2015.

**Graph 5** – Budget of the main funds to support scientific and technological research in Brazil (FNDCT, CNPq and CAPES): 2000–2020 – [Total values provided for in the Annual Budget Law Project (PLOA) of each year, excluding contingency reserves].



**Source:** <http://www.abc.org.br/2019/09/11/liquide-se/>. Access on: April 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. Art: Diagrama Editorial (SGUISSARDI, 2020, p. 156).

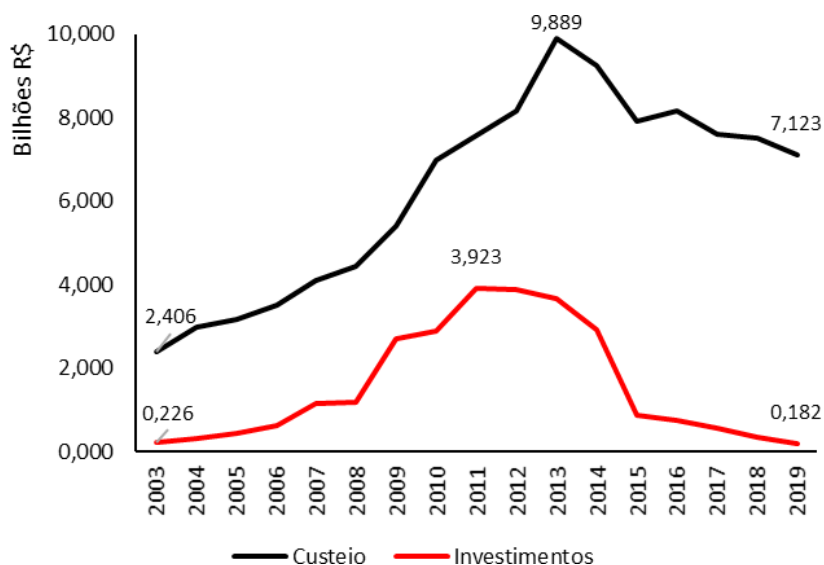
Table 12 and Chart 6 show the evolution of the funding and capital/investment resources of federal universities (including university hospitals) from 2003 to 2019. In the case of costing, there was constant growth in the period 2003–2013; and in the case of capital/investment, in the period 2003–2011. The reduction of resources for funding begins in 2014 and reaches its lowest value in 2019, that is, –28% of the value of 2013. The reduction, initiated in 2012, but drastically aggravated from 2015, is that of the capital/investment resources that reach, in 2019, only 4.6% of the value of 2011 or a reduction of 95%.

**Table 12** – Evolution of the Federal Government’s spending with federal universities in costing and capital/investment, including university hospitals, 2003–2020. Values (R\$ 1.00) at prices of January 2020 (IPCA).

	<b>COSTING</b>	<b>INVESTMENTS</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>2,406,419,011</b>	<b>225,902,062</b>
2004	2,984,837,531	313,934,183
2005	3,167,364,854	428,912,289
2006	3,511,129,594	612,907,746
2007	4,093,093,831	1,161,226,589
2008	4,449,583,936	1,172,993,609
2009	5,396,034,453	2,693,813,334
2010	6,995,387,052	2,873,072,680
2011	7,566,516,281	<b>3,923,391,801</b>
2012	8,180,429,356	3,870,578,933
2013	<b>9,888,804,484</b>	3,676,725,381
2014	9,247,946,807	2,933,436,580
2015	7,931,202,805	864,037,764
2016	8,174,818,013	755,018,987
2017	7,598,729,143	548,093,079
2018	7,521,178,890	344,139,145
2019	<b>7,123,033,264</b>	<b>182,274,168</b>
2011–2019 Δ	<b>-05.8</b>	<b>-95.4</b>
2013–2019 Δ	<b>-28.0</b>	<b>-95.0</b>
2003–2019 Δ	<b>196.0</b>	<b>-19.3</b>

**Sources:** Chamber of Congressmen, 2020 (Elaboration of Epitácio Macário – UECE and the author).

**Chart 6** – Evolution of the Federal Government’s spending with federal universities in costing and capital/investment (including university hospitals), 2003-2020. Values (R\$ 1.00) at prices of January 2020 (IPCA).



**Sources:** Chamber of Congressmen, 2020 (Elaboration of Eptácio Macário – UECE ).

## Future-se

In addition to the drastic reduction in the funding of federal HEIs, the federal government’s primary responsibility, via the Ministry of Education (MEC), as seen above, both for its “system” of 63 universities and 40 Federal Institutes, as for the agencies that finance and regulate/evaluate and control graduate and research linked to higher education in the country; giving consideration to the designs of Constitutional Amendment 95, which froze for 20 years the primary expenditure of the Federal Executive Branch, among which those devoted to education; and in the same “ultraliberal” perspective of PEC 188/2019–Senate (briefly explained in the introduction of this text), the masterpiece of the government, which was inaugurated in January 2019, in terms of the proposal for intervention in the federal HEIs has been the proposal called “Future-se”.

Against the backdrop of the neoliberal principles of competition and to prevail in all areas of the State, the Market and the sectors of society; the knowledge as goods, *commodity*, goods-value and the institutions of higher education and research as value-producing companies in which these “virtues” of competition and competitiveness apply; all this, combined with an anti-intellectualism, anti-scientism and anti-humanism, was connected to production by the MEC, under the command of the second Minister of Education of the Bolsonaro Government, identified with the neoliberal conceptions of the Minister of Economy (Paulo Guedes), from July 2019, in 1<sup>st</sup> version, in October, in 2<sup>nd</sup> version, in January 2020, in 3<sup>rd</sup> version, and, in the end of May 2020, in 4<sup>th</sup> version, the proposal of “Future-se”, then transacted in the Bill of Law (PL) n. 3076/2020 forwarded to the National Congress,.

Briefly, this proposal for reform of federal HEIs aims to transform the structure and functioning of these institutions that, according to the Federal Constitution of 1988, “[...] enjoy didactic-scientific autonomy, administrative autonomy and financial and patrimonial management, and will obey the principle of indissociability among teaching, research and extension”, and that, according to the Law of Directives and Basis of National Education (Law 9.394/96), have ensured by the United Nations, annually, “sufficient resources for the maintenance and development of higher education institutions maintained by it” in institutions that would prioritize three axes of operation: I – Research, technological development and innovation; II – Entrepreneurship; III – Internationalization.

From all its four versions can be deduced: (a) a clear tendency to replace the current autonomy of financial management of federal HEIs with a supposed financial autonomy, and to replace, at least partially, the current attributions of the rector in the administration and financial management of these institutions by voluntary membership? – “Future” was” via “conclusion of a contract of result” between each Ifes and the MEC (Federal’s Government); b) that the reiterated call for technological research that produces innovation,<sup>14</sup> which, in the spirit of “Future“, could be defined as[...] Profitable invention *safely and short-term*” for the market (OLIVEIRA, 2019, p. 2, author’s emphasis) and the abusive use of the terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship<sup>15</sup> make evident the entrepreneurial conception that led this reform proposal; c) that, depending on the weight of “Future-se” in all the research activities of the Ifes, it can be said that the teaching and research activities in the areas of social sciences, humanities, arts, as well as the basic research itself and the university extension are at serious risk of underfinancing, discredit and discouragement (Sguissardi, 2020).

Finally, it should be said that PL 3076 – 4<sup>th</sup> Version – No longer defend the use of Social Organizations as the backbone of the financial administration of the HEIs in which several types of contracts would be supported, such as previous versions, to now strengthen the presence and attribution of Institutional Support Foundations (private and already existing). In the evaluation of Roberto Leher,

However, the PL, like the scorpion of the fable, cannot hide its bolsonarist nature: it is inscribed in the cultural war, it is hostile to science, to university autonomy and to the freedom of chair and reaffirms the specific definition of the refunctionalization of institutions in “organizations” that are both predatory and innovative in a productive environment in which, as a rule, research and development (R&D) is scarce, devoid of origin and waning. Through these adjectives (entrepreneurial and innovative), it aims to change the social function of universities before the problems of the peoples, the democratic challenges – political and economic – of the nation and the logical and epistemological problems of knowledge. Upon trying to imprison the university as a utilitarian organization, it aims to radically suppress the freedom of professorship (Leher, 2020).

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<sup>14</sup> The word innovation was used 32 times in the PL proposal on its 16 pages.

<sup>15</sup> These terms were used 36 times in the PL proposal.

Leher also replies why a PL of this nature is proposed and the way it was:

PL is made to shape the budget of MEC to the restrictions of the “iron law” instituted by EC 95/2016 which, due to the crisis, will be even more draconian [...] That is, due to the restrictions established by EC 95, the alternative [offered by Future-se...] it is a market capture, as if it were desirable and possible” (Leher, 2020).

As if that were to keep the university autonomous in teaching, research and extension...

## Final considerations

In this text, succinctly, it was intended to show, with a series of empirical research and various examples, the validity of political and neoliberal-economic conceptions and practices in the country that contribute decisively to the production and increase of social inequality, as well as to somehow delay the democratization of higher education.

As for the neoliberal and “ultra-liberal” conceptions and practices, the cited examples of the Constitutional amendments and laws approved by the National Congress, from the impeachment/coup of 2016 until the present date of 2020, and the content of at least one of the PEC’s in progress in the CN, on the initiative of the Executive and parliamentarians, it is believed that they are sufficient to demonstrate the strengthening of the exploitation power of the ruling political-entrepreneurial class the destruction of the rights of hard-fought workers over decades of their claims. Labour and social security reforms are representative of what comes from being said.

As for the scenario of the extreme and growing Brazilian social inequality, the statement of the Oxfam-Brazil report, set out above in the above-mentioned item, illustrates well what other indicators of national and multilateral organizations point and detail about the serious reality of this inequality, with a tendency to worsen even more if the current extreme neoliberal policies in the country continue.

Many other aspects, besides those exposed, could be highlighted to show the severity of Brazilian social inequality. However, the highlights that was were given to household income per capita (2012–2018), the unequal occupation and income among men and women, among the white and afro descent people, among others, served to illustrate why Brazil is just behind Qatar, as a country that presents “[...] the second largest concentration of income in the world.”

With the second item of this text – “Social inequality and higher education in Brazil” – aimed to present some elements that demonstrate what was proposed as the objective of this article, that is, to show that this level of education continues to maintain, in recent decades, and especially since the 2016 presidential impeachment, a very close relationship with the immense social disloyalty in the country and, eventually, to reproduce it and contribute to, in its way, aggravate the absence of effective democracy in the Brazilian society, which is translated, in particular, for this growing inequality.

The presentation of this objective for this brief study was then emphasized, that a society in which the social and infinite differences of opportunities, for example, of access to

the ES of individuals belonging to their different social classes are immeasurable. And that access to the ES of only 1/5 of the population aged 18 to 24 years did not depend heavily on family or personal disposition/will, but rather on the absolute absence of socioeconomic conditions of the vast majority of the population.

This is easily demonstrated by the data presented in item 1 – a sample of the immense Brazilian social inequality – but, especially, by the evolution of the net enrollment rate in the ES (Table 11), by the indices listed by the private-mechanization process of higher education (Tables 7 and 8), among others. Table 11 shows that if, in 1999, the HEIs for profit purposes were 12.4% of the total, in 2018, they were already 51% or

1,303 of the 2,537 HEIs of the country. And that added to the 935 (36.8%) private non-profit HEIs make up 2,238 or 88.2% of the total HEIs of the country. Since public and free HEIs are only 11.8% (already 27.1% in 1985 and 17.5% in 1999) of the total and high competition in their selective entrance examinations, they are for the majority of the population aged 18 to 24 years, most of them from the public middle school, the other 2,238 private HEIs with or without profit, but paid and generally less quality than public HEIs.

Although the proportion of public and private enrollments differs from the proportion of the number of institutions, since among public HEIs predispose those organized as universities (Table 8), also in this case, the trend of lower growth in the number of public enrollments than private enrollments has occurred over the past few decades: in 1985, public enrollments were 40.7%; in 1999, 35.1%; and in 2018, 24.6%. The opposite occurred with the private enrollments, which increased from 59.3% in 1985 to 75.4% in 2018, with emphasis on enrollment in IES for profit, which increased from 8.5% in 1999 to 50.2% of the total in 2018.

It is worth mentioning two facts: 1) that women for several decades have been a significant majority in higher education (Table 9), which, as seen, has not prevented the fact that in the labor market they have indentations of unemployment and income of about 40% lower than men; 2) that black people and brown people, with the Law of Quotas and other affirmative actions, are beginning to see recognized their right of equal access to ES, to begin with the federal HEIs (Table 10), although there are no studies to verify whether there are advances in permanence (choice of professions) and dispute of the graduates in the labor market.

Finally, the relationship of higher education, in particular public higher education, graduate and research with the reproduction, reduction or expansion of social inequality can be measured by priority or non-priority given to budgetary decisions and proposals for reform. Among these are the budget cuts of MCTIC (which included CNPq) and CAPES (Charts 4 and 5), the expenses of the Federal Government of costing and capital for federal universities (Table 12) as well as proposals such as PL 3076/2020 (Future-se).

To conclude and paraphrasing the statement of Master Anísio in the epigraph of item 2 of this text, it will be said that there will only be effective advances in the democratization of the country on the day that its immense social inequality is reduced, if the basic education, including high school, is universalized. and democratize access, permanence in higher education and access to the labor market, of the graduates, without discrimination of any kind.



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# VIII

## PATRIMONIAL FUNDING AND DESTABILIZATION OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY THE CAPITAL AGENDA FOR BRAZILIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Introduction

The chapter aims to present a set of reflections carried out by researchers from three public universities: University of Brasília, Fluminense Federal University and State University of Rio de Janeiro. In these universities, working in the Group of Studies and Research in Education and Social Work/GEPESS/UFF and in the Group of Political-Social Studies /POLITIZZA/UNB and in dialog with the struggles carried out by the trade union movement in defense of the valorization of teaching work and public university, we studied a set of profound changes in higher education conducted by the capital agenda.

In a first moment of the text, we problematize the main structural elements of higher education in a country marked by its capitalist dependence on the world economy. If in capitalism education is born with the functions of forming a labor force, spreading the bourgeois conception of the world and setting itself up as a field of profitable exploitation for capital; in dependent capitalism, such functions assume very specific contours under the leadership of an extremely aggressive and conservative bourgeoisie, as discussed by the late militant intellectual Florestan Fernandes.

In the item “Brazilian higher education in the context post 2016: precarization of training and the working conditions in federal universities” we present as the conception of education as a lucrative field for the capital, historically led by the Brazilian bourgeoisie, was expanded in the first decades of the new century. A process inscribed in the reordering of the accumulation and domination of contemporary capitalism in the central countries and which reaches more aggressive contours in the countries of the capitalistic periphery, due to the contrary nature of the Brazilian State and higher education. The result of this process is expressed in the precariousness of vocational training and working conditions in public universities, particularly federal universities and, also, by stimulating equity funds. The examination of the political and academic significance of these funds is carried out in the last item of the text. Presented by capital as sources of funding for social policies, the funds operate, in fact, the search for profitability carried out by the investment of resources received through donations in the financial market, as well as by the privatization of the patrimony of public institutions of higher education.

The challenges facing those who advocate public and free education today are immense. It is necessary to grasp the new strategies of bourgeois domination and expropriation of the rights granted by workers, such as education, so that together we forge the struggles for public university as a privileged locus of production of critical and creative knowledge in line with the historical demands of the working class.

## **Public university in dependent capitalism**

School education in bourgeois sociability plays a fundamental role in the production and reproduction of capital from the formation of the labor force, the diffusion of the bourgeois conception of the world and as an area of exploitation for the profitability of capital. Based on these considerations, we seek to analyze how these objectives are manifested in dependent capitalism and how they are presented in the conformation of the dependent pattern of higher education, as Fernandes analyzed (1981, 1979).

What makes man a social being is his ability to perform work. Unlike the other animals that carry in their genetics the information necessary to perform their functions, we need to transmit, through some form of communication, the knowledge acquired and accumulated by humanity. The collective actions and their results are not transmitted naturally and to this process of socialization of knowledge and collective making of humanity we call education. We can observe, with this, that education has a direct relationship with what makes man a social being, that is work. Bertoldo (2015) identifies the conception of education in two processes: Education in a restricted sense – including school education, but not only – and education in a broad sense:

Education in a restricted sense, such as school education (formal) and other forms of education that take place in informal spaces (church, unions, etc.), is that created from social development, to respond to certain needs demanded by men, a particular context of human history. The way it is presented will depend on the specific historical moment of human production. In this sense, education in antiquity is different from the Middle Ages, in the same way that it is presented in modernity and so on. [...] In this sense, education in a broad sense, within the Marxian ontology, can only be apprehended from the work ontological structure. This is because it has its origin in the process of human self-construction, which explains that as long as there is man there will be education, because it only ceases with the extinction of humanity. It is then about taking education in its very essence, so that we can characterize it and identify it from its genesis. This will make the necessary distinction between education in a specific sense and education in a broad sense (Bertoldo, 2015, p. 131).

Starting from the conception of work as an educational principle, Saviani (2003) analyzes the ways to produce and socialize knowledge in different moments of human history. The author points out that, before society divided into classes, there was no separation between work and education, since the educational process occurred in the work itself. In the same sense, Rodrigues (2016) identifies the emergence of formal education or

education in the strict sense associated with the historical scenario of class society. It is from the private appropriation of the land, the main means of production at the time, that the social division of labor arises, generating the separation between work and education, since the class of owners begins to live from the work of others and to control and systematize, according to their conception, knowledge that was collectively constructed in this work process.

Saviani (2003) analyzes that the social division into classes will also generate a division in the educational process, thus creating a separation between the proprietary class, which had an education centered on intellectual activities, philosophic and physical exercises of recreational or military character and the non-property class, carrying out its educational process in the very realization of the work. The author points out that the origin of the schools was based on the education offered to the class owner, which perpetuated the division between work and education. It is in this context that the division arises between those who “think”, those who appropriate the collectively acquired knowledge and spread their values as universal, and those who “execute”, the majority of the population who is expropriated from the collectively produced riches through their own work.

School education arises, therefore, from demands created by man himself in the historical development and, in certain periods, present different forms, according to the historical and spatial configuration of the classes struggle. Even if school education goes through successive transformations, depending on the historical demands of the modes of production and reproduction,

[...] duality is not an invention of the educational system and not even the capitalist mode of production. As master Mario Manacorda taught us, the structural duality of education goes through the centuries, from the constitution of class-divided societies, so we cannot naively wait for the overcoming of the structural duality of education within class societies. Consequently, it is not credible that presidential elections eliminate social inequalities arising from class structure (Rodrigues, 2005, p. 265).

In this sense, the school education in capitalism is not exempt from traditions and, in this case, specifically, the contradiction presented is fundamental to understand the economic, political, social and ideological functions of school education in the mode of sociability of capital, since, given the need to expand and develop their productive forces, the ruling classes need to socialize, in some way, part of this knowledge, however, always seeking to improve ways of fragmenting and limiting this process more and more. School education, conceived from this duality proper to class society, is fundamental to the expansion of the capitalism itself. In basic education it seeks to socialize knowledge strictly limited to and compartmentalized to the working class for production, and, in higher education, produces a more specialized workforce, according to the needs of capital, in addition to the formation of contexts of the ruling and research classes that assist in the advancement of sciences to capitalist development (Prestes, 2018).

The role of the State in this process of conducting education policies linked to the need for capital is fundamental. Minto (2006) discusses the relationship between the public and the private from a historical perspective, considering that these conceptions must be



analyzed from each concrete reality. In Brazil, for example, assuming as analytical categories the public/private relationship, where the public refers to what is directly state and the private to what refers to the sectors of the bourgeois classes confuses more than it helps in understanding this dynamic, because, this procedure does not consider the role of the (bourgeois) State as a driver of the policies of interest of the classes of the former, omitting the antagonism between the classes.

Because it has a direct relationship with the production and reproduction of social life, school education accompanies the capitalist development of a region/nation determination, assuming different roles in the historical development, varying according to time and space. It is a contradictory space that also reproduces the tensions and conflicts that arise in the class struggle. It is necessary, therefore, to reflect the particularities of higher education in a dependent capitalist country, such as Brazil.

The unequal and combined dynamics of<sup>1</sup> capitalism addressed by Lenin (2011) and Trotsky (1977) will be recovered in various works by Florestan Fernandes for the analysis of the development of capitalism in Brazil. This development took place in the framework of the articulation of the composite pattern of bourgeois domination<sup>2</sup> and the dual pattern of expropriation of the economic surplus<sup>3</sup> as key elements to reflect the role of education in our country.

[...] Brazil did not live, either as a colony or later, the historical experience of the illustrated university; and the conditions of the slave economy contributed significantly to reduce to a minimum the creative functions of the isolated higher education. On the other hand, the political perspective of the manor did not establish vital connections among higher education, the development of culture and the potentialities of a national and democratic revolution (Fernandes, 1984, p. 32).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The theory of unequal and combined development allows us to grasp the dialectical and contradictory relationship between countries and/or regions circumscribed in capitalist development, so that, contrary to what preaches the ideology of development, the dependent countries are not in a race to develop the central countries, but they play this role in an integrated way with the logic of capital.

<sup>2</sup> Unlike other bourgeois who built their own institutions and achieved hegemony through popular alliances for the dispute of power with previous institutions, the local bourgeoisie did not acquire these mechanisms and emerged in the dependent capitalist reality imposing itself on the political plane, through agreements on the top with oligarchic elites, deliberately excluding most "of those from the bottom". Thus, the oligarchies not only did not lose their power, but were modernizing to suit the needs of capital. To this unity between the local bourgeoisie and the oligarchies, which together with the imperialist bourgeoisie maintains the relationships of domination in power, Fernandes characterized as standard composite of bourgeois domination.

<sup>3</sup> The composite pattern of bourgeois domination and the dual pattern of the economic surplus are the two main categories that help us understand what Fernandes (1981) calls dependent capitalism. For the author, the pattern of imperialist external domination had repercussions mainly on the maintenance of the production of raw materials of primary goods within the already established logic of export-import conditioning and aggravating the archaic economic structures. This element contributed to the national non-integration of dependent countries (in all dimensions), having the transfer of the economic surplus a decisive role for the intensification of this pattern and strengthening the association between the imperialist nations and the local elites that, as shown to us, was formed from particular interests and saw in the subordinate and dependent association a less "risky" means of profit.

<sup>4</sup> School education in Brazil has a very strong mark of oligarchic and elitist education, an axis that also characterizes the process that Fernandes (1981) called as a permanent colonial trait.

School education in Brazil has a very strong mark of oligarchic and elitist education, an axis that also characterizes the process that Fernandes (1981) called as a permanent colonial trait.<sup>5</sup> Although during the historical process changes have occurred in the organization of education, especially in higher education, this structuring character of exclusion of workers from access to education remains, mainly due to the perception of education as privilege and exalted privatism, as identified by Fernandes (1979).

The Brazilian standard of higher school never laid roots in conceptions, processes or educational values that were vital for the revolution of the modern world, in Europe and the United States. On the contrary, it was attached to a composition of educational or institutional archaic waste with interests of the state or class, which could only have some dynamic meaning in the historical context of the formation of the dependent capitalism in Brazil. Not only was it set up to serve dependency relationships; it supported a typically preserved orientation, which emptied the contribution of higher schools to the cultural transplant of more or less disturbing historical significance (Fernandes, 1979, p. 113).

Throughout his works, Fernandes improved the category of cultural heteronomy, organically linked to the concept of dependent capitalism. Limoeiro-Cardoso (1996) points out that, since his first writings, the author gives a centrality to the cultural dimension in the interpretation of the social-Brazilian economic formation and its limits as a “nation”.

From his theoretical deepening in historical and dialectic materialism and the intensification of the class struggle in the country, Fernandes identifies in his research that in different countries that had a greater “national autonomy”, in the sense of cultural development, still maintained their dependent character, this led him to conclude that the cultural heteronomy was not the main obstacle of rupture with the absence, and it was also a consequence of this. If people with their own, rich and complex culture are also in a heteronomic condition, cultural dependence cannot be so central to the dependent condition, even less responsible for it, even though it may be very important (negatively) in the fight against it. With this, culture is not absent from the concerns of Florestan. But it appears more and more thematic as ideology and gives space to more properly economic and political reflections. Consistent with this new perspective, the social classes and their relationships begin to gain prominence and centrality in their analyzes (Limoeiro-Cardoso, 1996, p. 108).

The problem of cultural heteronomy is an important issue to understand the educational challenges in Brazil. Fernandes (1974) reinforces that heteronomy is not only the

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<sup>5</sup> “Florestan Fernandes analyzes capitalist accumulation in dependent capitalist countries considering that the absence of an original accumulation strong enough to sustain an autonomous development led to the transition from colonial economies to capitalism by subaltern inclusion in the world economy and by the maintenance of them Political and sociocultural bases of the colonial system associated with the impulse of industrialization and urbanization, thus characterizing the permanent colonial trait or condition in constant process of revitalization” (Lima, 2017, p. 354).

absorption of external ideas and values, but rather the internalization and schematization of these values for the national reality, constituting one of the sides of the bourgeois project of sociability in the dependent capitalism. The very difficulty of conducting research that thinks the Brazilian reality in its particularity, but related to the mode of sociability of capital, evidences this heteronomical trait.

The tendency to seek in Europe or in the US to satisfy all centers of interests and values feeds a process of intellectual and moral alienation of immense proportions. Contrary to what is commonly assumed, the crucial fact is not here in the external origin of thought categories and ways of acting, but in the way of interconnecting them, which takes as a permanent reference point the foreign civilizing nuclei, in which they were produced. This results in a state of fundamental dependence. With this, the process of internal development is entered with evaluations and subjective provisions that directly concur to perpetuate and strengthen the heteronomical condition of Brazilian society (Fernandes, 1974, p. 172).

In Brazil, therefore, universities derived from the Brazilian standard of higher school associated with cultural heteronomy, as Fernandes (1979) analyzed:

There is, of course, a structural limitation, that is, a limitation that is standardized and general, that appears in all Brazilian higher schools. This forces us to talk about something very complex for this discussion: it is about the Brazilian standard of higher school. [...] The Brazilian high school is constituted as a school of shallow cultural elites that could only (or felt the need to) explore their higher education in very limited directions. As the mass of knowledge came from abroad and society only valued the formation of liberal professionals, higher school became a school of elites, of magisterial and unfunctional education: it was to be a school of dogmatic transmission of knowledge in the areas of technical-professional knowledge, economically, socially and culturally valued by the dominant extracts of castes and ornamental society (Fernandes, 1979, p. 56).

To understand how the dependent pattern of higher education and the cultural heteronomy inherent to dependent capitalism are manifested today are urgent and necessary tasks. Based on the understanding that exalted privacy and the conception of education as a privilege are structural elements of higher education in dependent capitalism, we will seek to identify, next, its current manifestations, in Brazil.

### **Brazilian higher education in the context post -2016: precarization of training and the working conditions in federal universities**

The reordering of the pattern of accumulation and domination of contemporary capitalism in the central countries reaches more aggressive contours in the countries of the

capitalist periphery, mainly from the 2000, through its repercussions on the state, on the conditions and relationships of labor, on the culture, the structure of political and economic power founded on the bourgeoisie sociability. In a country marked by the dependent capitalist insertion in the world economy, the ultra-conservative agenda of capital established in the new century gains quite definite contours.

In the Brazilian context, the neoliberal counter-reforms<sup>6</sup> of the State initiated in the 1990's have advanced, responding to the insatiable demands and demands of capital, from the axes flexibilization, deregulation and privatization. Such scenario has exposed the Brazilian Higher Education Policy to a set of neoliberal counter-reforms guided by the conception of education as a non-exclusive service of the State, to the detriment of the guarantee of the right to education, with emphasis on productivity, in the entrepreneurship of education and in large-scale certification (Lima, 2007), changing the logic of form and working conditions in public universities.

Before the counter-reforms within the scope of higher education policy, some traits are essential and need to be rescued: a) the expansion of privatization, started with the dictatorship,<sup>7</sup> transforming higher education into an area of investment (and profitability) amplified of capital, including post-graduate degree; b) the commitment of the tripod teaching, research and extension, differentiating its achievement with the growth of distance learning, the cuts of public resources in public universities, as well as fragmenting the logic of this triad, which has changed the meaning of the university and suppressing its universalist character; (c) the subordination of the formation and production of knowledge to the market, since university life is organized in the function of capital, through the market, in order to meet its strict interests and demands; and d) the reduction of university autonomy , which gives this a very specific sense,<sup>8</sup> introducing terms such as university quality, university evaluation and university flexibility, as well as incorporating the logic of social organization, to the detriment of the conception of a university institution;<sup>9</sup> e) the precariousness and intensification of teaching work, with the flexibilization of the career, the work overload guided by the business logic of academic activities and the production of knowledge, resulting in developments for the health of this worker

This process will transform the public university from a knowledge translator to an operational university (Chauí, 1999), losing its universal character and being structured by norms and standards entirely alien to knowledge and intellectual formation, thus manifesting the actuality of the dependent pattern of higher education inherent to dependent capitalism, as previously analyzed. Its presupposition is competitiveness and particular strategies, reflecting individualism and individual merit, which contributes to the division of the public

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<sup>6</sup> According to Lima (2007), the term counter-reform of higher education expresses the profound neoliberal changes that are underway in Brazilian educational policy, unlike reforms that substantially alter the living conditions of workers (even if at the limits of capitalism), they destroy rights and submit education to the level of marketable (and profitable) service, as a niche for the exploitation of capital.

<sup>7</sup> The University Reform of 1968 expanded higher education and university functions, based on a process determined by the naturalization of privatization and repression (Duarte, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Autonomy here is signifying the institution's business management and predicts that, in order to meet the goals and achieve the indicators imposed by the management contract, the university has "autonomy" to "capture resources" from other sources, making partnerships with private companies (Chauí, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> The institution has society as its principle and its normative and valiative reference; while the organization has only itself as a reference, in a process of competition with others, whose particular objectives are guided by the ideas of effectiveness, management, planning, control (Chauí, 1999).

and private border, which will be expanded from the action of equity funds, as we will analyze later.

In the early years of the new century, it is important to note that the higher education policy is aimed at: 1) public-private partnerships, both in the financing of research and activities of market interest, as well as in the interference in the daily functioning of academic life and in the production of knowledge in universities;<sup>10</sup> 2) the opening of the educational sector higher education for foreign companies and groups, mainly with the stimulation of distance learning and with strategies such as the University for All Program (ProUni) and the Fund for Student Financing of Higher Education (FIES); in detriment to 3) dismantling of the public sector of higher education, with a sharp reduction of public investments, intensification of teaching job, precarization of physical structure, especially by the Program for Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI),<sup>11</sup> promoting “[...] a planned and systematic deterioration of public universities, further rooting the vast private education system in Brazilian society” (Leher, 2010, p. 371).

As of 2016, the Temer Government,<sup>12</sup> more aggressively, approves Constitutional Amendment 95/2016 that freezes public investments for 20 years in public policies.<sup>13</sup> It follows that public investments in health and education will have, in real terms, the same values as 2017, disregarding the growth of the Brazilian population and the social demands for the expansion of access to health and public education. In addition to freezing the allocation of public funds for public policies, EC 95/2016 freezes the sound adjustments of public officials and the holding of public tenders. Despite the struggles of the working class against its approval, PEC was promulgated, as EC 95, on 12/15/2016.

The privatizing logic that characterizes the dependent pattern of higher education in Brazil will be deepened and expanded in the Michel Temer government (2016/2018). The tripod fiscal adjustment for the payment of interest and amortizations of public debt; reduction of the allocation of public funds for the financing of public policies, among them, higher education, and strengthening of the private sector, via public funds, was the guiding axis of the counter-reform of the State and higher education in that period. In 2017, 39.70% of the General Budget of the Federal Government (OGU) was allocated for the payment of interest and amortizations of the public debt, equivalent to R\$ 986,110,833,381.14, that is,

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<sup>10</sup> As a legal support, the Law of Technological Innovation (10.973/2004), which flexibilizes the boundaries between the public and the private through agreements among universities, research centers and companies, including with “[...] use, by the private sector, of infrastructure, equipment and human resources of public HEIs” (Lima, 2007, p.174); and **Decree No. 7.423/2010 that formalizes the Private Support Foundations and their relationship with federal institutions**, for the capture of private resources aimed at the interests of administration of universities or groups of teachers, or for the hiring of staff without tender, and the collection of courses and projects coordinated by professors.

<sup>11</sup> REUNI, regulated by Presidential Decree 6.096/07, opened vacancies in public universities, but disregarding the situation of federal scrapping and the deficit of professors, explicit being the overload of the already insufficient structure, with precarious bases, and the intensification of work, compromising the quality of teaching and the monitoring of students, with disrespect to the requisitions aimed at the tripod teaching, research and extension.

<sup>12</sup> There are several analyzes for the coup of 2016, however, it is considered that the main one was the rearticulation of the fractions of the local bourgeoisie, of a more conservative nature, in the direction of the more aggressive deepening of the design of the ruling class, culminating with the loss of Dilma’s 2<sup>nd</sup> term and the formalization of Michel Temer’s government, without direct election, in fact characterizing a coup in political terms.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the approval of regressive reforms, such as the Outsourcing Law (Law 13.429/2017) and the Labor Reform (Law 13.467/2017).

almost 1 trillion reais, while 4.10% was directed to education (Auditoria Cidadã da Dívida, 2018)

The current time reveals even more aggressiveness on the capital agenda, particularly for dependent capitalist countries, such as Brazil. According to Leher (2019), the Bolsonaro government is characterized by the denial of everything that is already consolidated in the scientific field, still added to violence and ideological control. Therefore, the current government tends to be against science, art and culture in general (Leher, 2019), to all forms of expression that stimulate critical thinking.

The attack of capital on education gains expression in the Bolsonaro Government Plan (2018/ongoing). The examination of the “Bolsonaro Government Plan – The Path of Prosperity” reveals the central guiding lines of the Higher Education Policy for the period 2019–2022: “Content and teaching method need to be changed. More mathematics, science and Portuguese, WITHOUT DOUTRI- NATION AND EARLY SEXUALIZATION. In addition, the initial priority needs to be basic education and high school/technical” (LIBERAL SOCIAL PARTY, 2018, p. 41, author's emphasis). To this end, it advocates changing the school management; modernizing the content of the disciplines and “purging the ideology of Paulo Freire” (Liberal Social Party, 2018, p. 46) schools and universities. The Government Plan also indicates the following guiding axes of Bolsonaro’s actions for higher education:

Universities need to generate technical advances for Brazil, seeking ways to increase the productivity, wealth and well-being of the population. They should develop new products through partnerships and research with private initiative. Foster entrepreneurship so that the youth leaves college thinking of opening a company [...] Distance education: it should be seen as an important instrument and not vetoed dogmatically (Liberal Social Party, 2018, p. 46).

It is in this context of an ultra-conservative offensive that the Federal Government presents the “Entrepreneurial Program Institutes and Universities. Future-se” indicating to the Federal Institutions the raising of funds from the private sector through investment funds, public-private partnerships and the privatization of the real estate assets of federal universities, whose management will be done, according to the program, by Social Organizations (OS’s), of a private nature (UFLA, 2019). The program was divided into three themes: Management, Governance and Entrepreneurship; Research and Innovation; and Internationalization, proposing the signing of a management contract between the Federal Government and each Federal Institution of Higher Education (IFES), concluded with Social Organizations (OS’s) already qualified by the Ministry of Education or by other entities, without the need for public call. The said management contract will establish, for a period of four years, performance targets and productivity indicators for the Federal Institutions of Education. To the OS’s will be responsible for realizing the process of managing resources related to investments in entrepreneurship, research, development and innovation and acting in the property management of the participating IFES. The Federal Government and/or the IFES will be responsible for allocating budgetary resources and allowing the use of public goods by OS’s, thus the real estate assets of the IFES will constitute sources of resources for the program.

In relation to MEC, one may participate as a shareholder of investment funds, (private funds), whose profitability levels will be defined in the statutes of each fund and, also, one can donate real estate to the participants of the management contract. The academic activities of the IFES, in line with OS's, have as main objectives innovation, including parks and technological centers; the improvement of business models and the commercialization of brands and products, fostering the collection of own resources and employability for students of institutions, generating, according to the document presented by MEC, an effective approximation between educational institutions and the private sector.

The creation of a specific purpose society (SPE), in the form of microenterprises, by department or by the IFES for sale, will also be permitted for sale of what the Federal Government considers as educational services, specifically research and innovation, as well as to appoint a part of a good, movable and immovable assets, of a place or event, in exchange for financial compensation.

The program therefore advocates the self-financing or financial autonomy of the IFES (infringing Article 207 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 which deals with the autonomy of financial management), as it is explicitly stated in Article 23, through the following actions: (i) the sale of studies, research, consulting and projects; (ii) the marketing of goods and products with the mark of educational institutions; (iii) the sale of real estate from institutions by sale, improvement and concessions; (iv) financial applications that each institution carries out in dynamics of intellectual property rights of research conducted by professors and students; (v) collection of enrollment and postgraduate tuition *at* federal universities; (vi) capital gains and income from investments made with their assets; (vii) receipt of amounts due to tax incentive laws and (ix) receipt of income from other sources of funding.

Future-se can only be analyzed articulated to EC 95/2016, because, in a context of absence of public funding for public higher education, aims to deepen a model of financing (private) and management (business), resignifying the political-pedagogical functions of public education, emptying the sense of production and socialization of critical and creative knowledge and the search for solutions to the social problems of a dependent capitalist country, replaced by the sale of educational services and real estate of public institutions, and by investment in the profitable financial market (Lima, 2019).

Given this context, we can affirm that challenges (im)posed for training and work in public universities, especially federal ones, in the post-2016 period:

- **Precariousness of Training:**

- a) accelerating the vocational training with distance learning, especially for the growth of private courses, making it difficult for students to access an education that contains research and extension, with incentives to investigative and propositional capacity that escapes the immediate responses indicated by the market;

- b) determining market incidence in education, research and knowledge production, as well as compromising the formulation of questions (and the search for answers) that affect the community and that really afflict the working class;

- c) tendency to disregard with the theoretical methodological/scientific rigor of the stimulus to immediacy put as reality, disqualifying the fundamental distinction between appearance and essence;

- d) training aimed at the immediate supply of necessary labor to the

reproduction of capital, to the detriment of education as a possibility of developing human capacities and thinking society and its problems critically;

e) stimulation of a professional profile that does not appreciate the critical knowledge that ensures the understanding of the complexity of the social reality and the professions inserted in it.

- **Combined dynamics of precariousness and intensification of working conditions in the university:**

a) discredit to the public server, including actions to alter careers and reduce public tenders;

b) overload and intensification of work, in quantity and quality of activities;

c) exacerbation of individualism and competitiveness in daily academic work, affecting professors, administrative technicians and students;

d) illness of the collective of the “academic world” and the difficulty meeting deadlines for completion of academic works (monographs, master dissertations and doctoral theses);

e) production of knowledge more focused on the quantification, in preparation of qualification, that is, stimulation to academic productivism, especially by the research-promoting bodies; and

f) precariousness of objective working conditions (general infrastructure and low wages), both of administrative technicians and professors, led to neglect with investments in the teaching/research/extension tripod.

It is evident that capital advances in its attack on public education, by the materialization of exalted privatism inherent in the dependent pattern of higher education constitutive of dependent capitalism, as Florestan Fernandes analyzed. Such an attack gains, with the assets funds, a new path. Examining the political and academic significance of these funds is the task we will accomplish next.

## **Patrimonial fund and precariousness of the federal universities: the capital agenda for Brazilian higher education**

Exalted privatism and conception of education as a class privilege has been constituted in two structuring axes of the dependent pattern of higher education in dependent capitalism. In addition to the expansion of private sector action by increasing the number of private institutions, the internal privatization of public institutions and the intensive use of public funds for direct and indirect financing of the private sector of higher education,<sup>14</sup> in the current situation, the capital agenda has sought new strategies of profitability that result in profound destruction of public institutions of education and research. Among these strategies, we highlight equity funds.

Equity funds are set up as private-nature asset sets also known as *endowmentfund*<sup>15</sup> or philanthropic funds – financial structures created by institutions of various kinds. They are made by a sum of resources from donations and inheritances, where the main value is applied in the financial market (investment funds) generating income that are directed to

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lima (2007), Rodrigues (2007), Sguissardi (2008), Minto (2011), Leher (2018).

<sup>15</sup> According to Fabiani (2012), *endowment* is the original term in English in what was agreed to define, in Brazil, as a heritage fund.



several initiatives in long term. The objectives and strategies for the creation of these funds are given in different ways, according to the typification of the institutions, which may be: a) Family Fundings; b) Independent Funds or Civil Society Organizations (OSC); c) Business Foundations. According to Fontes (2020, p. 20), these private assets of business hegemony (APHs)

[...] they have more easily access positions in the State, including modifying legislative provisions, and give “state-legal” character to certain elaborations that, focused on private, corporate areas (in the sense of responding to some specific sectors), become imposed on the generalization of such interests, as if they were interest of all.

The author points out that corporate civil society seeks to block, both outside and outside the State, the participation of combative and classist social movements, and it is necessary to think about this activism of dominant sectors – industry, finance, services, agribusiness – in the educational policy<sup>16</sup> associated with equity funds. In the same sense, Neves (2005) analyzes how the new pedagogy of hegemony points out the novelties and continuities of the strategies of capital to (de)educate the workers, having as a common point the theory of human capital in the educational actions to strengthen the bourgeois society project.

These novelties and continuities of the dilemmas of higher education today constitute the offensive actions of capital through the political guidelines of the State – conducted by the reactionary offensive of the Brazilian bourgeoisie, in a new phase of the historical educational duality and the privacy of higher education constitutive of the dependent pattern of higher education inherent to dependent capitalism, as analyzed.

IFES have long been faced with major blockages and orderly cuts that directly affect the conditions of training and work in these institutions. This scenario of reduction of public resources intensifies with the freezing of social spending and the Bolsonaro government, nowadays, presents as an alternative of financing a policy that changes the historical axes that support the public character of the IFES and the social function of public unity in Brazil.

The elaboration of the Future-se program, analyzed previously, was based on the exclusive dialog with the market – the great bourgeoisie through the APHs – to subject the production of knowledge to the interests of capital and not to the needs of the workers. This proposal follows the guidance of international capital organizations, especially the World Bank/BM, based on the US educational system model, such as Harvard University, which have property funds (*endowments*),<sup>17</sup> without considering the particularities of higher education in Brazil.

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<sup>16</sup> Leher (2018) presents the performance of large companies that are among the two hundred largest economic groups active in Brazil and intervene directly in basic, professional and higher education – program their actions through their business entities, the private apparatus of hegemony (APHs).

<sup>17</sup> Abroad the *endowments* were the pioneers in impact investments and the financial return to the investment itself. The return on investment takes place through long-term capital in the financial market, with investment potential higher than pension funds, “[...] they have an implicit liability from their conception. *Abroad, endowments* are responsible for investments in infrastructure, forests, alternative investments, private *equity* investments” (Pasqualin, 2019, p. 49).

This is another form of transplantation of the<sup>18</sup> American model for Brazilian universities – in the framework of cultural heteronomy and inherent to the Brazilian standard of higher education in dependent capitalism, as previously discussed. The organic intellectuals of the capital, specifically the BM, seek to justify the creation of equity funds for Brazilian universities, claiming that international experience proves that *endowments* represent an important source of revenue for public institutions, highlighting, as a reference, the Harvard University. However, in addition to being a private institution, public resources (direct and indirect) represent most of their<sup>19</sup> budget – the State finances, but the one who executes and manages public resources is the private initiative.<sup>20</sup>

The debate on equity funds is presented as a priority in Brazil, but the path was already paved for the implementation and strengthening of this type of fund by the government of Dilma Rousseff, with the promulgation of Law number 13.019/2014, known as the new Regulatory Framework of Civil Society Organizations (BROSC) – the equity fund appears for the first time in Brazilian legislation in article 2nd, I, “A” of the said law. In 2010, the APHs platform was announced by a new MROSC and the Government Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, from the creation of the Inter-ministerial Working Group (GTI), led, through political articulation with the market-philanthropic entities,<sup>21</sup> the formulation of policies and of its own legislation more favorable to the existence of non-profit entities.

The I International Seminar of the Regulatory Framework of Civil Society Organizations (MROSC) took place in November 2011, defining the performance of the GTI and the discussion of several issues of the capital agenda, namely *the Property Funds (endowments)*. According to Lopes (2019), the special session of Gilberto Carvalho (Minister of the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic of the Dilma

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<sup>18</sup> The transplantation of the United States model of higher education prevailed from the consented university reform of the business-military dictatorship (Fernandes, 1979). The American higher education system is often pointed out as a model to be followed, especially in the documents of private apparatus of hegemony and highlighted by several organic intellectuals of the capital – the colonized minds – as something to be copied in Brazil. According to Moraes (2015, 2017), there are several higher education systems in the United States, there is no national higher education system, there is no federal university in this country, as in Brazil. Being a decentralized, deeply stateful system – a pyramidal, diversified and hierarchical model. Funding is one of the important elements to demonstrate the differences and similarities between institutions. All higher education in the US is paid by the student, as well as the courses of public institutions, and the debt is very high. There is no public and free system, as in Brazil. Private schools, such as the renowned *Harvard University* and *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* (MIT), receive a large amount of public money. Revenue derived from university private heritage applications and donations made by large millionaires (alumni) cover a small portion of budgets.

<sup>19</sup> According to Harvard University Financial Report (2019), the university’s revenue sources rely on public resources directly (federal funding), and indirectly (through tax exemptions from “donors”/shareholders). Available at: [https://finance.harvard.edu/files/fad/files/fy19\\_harvard\\_financial\\_report.pdf](https://finance.harvard.edu/files/fad/files/fy19_harvard_financial_report.pdf). Access on: April 01<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>20</sup> According to Moraes (2015, 2017), since Cologne this occurs in the US higher education system – the donation of public land and the exemption of fees that built the assets and structures of US universities. The author highlights what each sector finances and what each sector performs in terms of research in the US – federal resource finances much of the research. The federal government finances research in industry, universities (public and private), centers and institutes linked to universities. While all the institutions execute more than they finance, the federal government finances more than it executes.

<sup>21</sup> For Fontes (2010), the big bourgeoisie is directly linked to the market entities – philanthropic in Brazil – non-profit entities, but for fattening purposes – for receiving exemptions and tax immunities (public resources for these business entities). In addition, these APHs elaborate the power project for the expansion of capitalism, seeking to disqualify any form of challenge and strengthening the formation of consensus.

Rousseff government), during this period there was a lot of openness to listen and encouragement from the government for the non-profit entities to present their proposals to the regulatory framework. With this official articulation [...] the General Secretariat began to build bridges with the legislative power in relation to the subject. There was already a bill in the National Congress (PL 4643/2012) for the creation of Property Funds for public universities and IDIS was preparing proposals within a working group. The presentation of a draft bill, prepared by the group, was certainly an aspect that allowed the advancement of the links with the General Secretariat of the Presidency (Lopes, 2019, p. 197).

According to the “Draft Law Proposal – Linked Equity Funds” –<sup>22</sup>, the study group was formed with the participation of representatives of 33 civil society organizations, public prosecutor, universities and lawyers, in addition to 57 people and institutions interested in information on the progress of studies. The study group presented proposals for extending the creation of *endowments* to PL 4.643/2012 and proposals of the same nature to bill PLS16/2015, which deals with the Senate, as well as presenting technical subsidies and drafting proposals for PL 6775/2016.

The rapporteur of the Committee on Constitution and Justice and Citizenship (CCJ) of the Chamber of Congressmen, Federal Representative Paulo Teixeira (PT-SP), presented PL 4643/2012 and, articulated with the General Secretariat, followed the demand of the study group coordinated by the Institute for the Development of Social Investment (IDIS),<sup>23</sup> as “[...] he incorporated in his report the idea of extending *endowments* beyond public universities. It was the first time that the theme appeared in Congress in order to also contemplate the private non-profit entities” (Lopes, 2019, p 197, our emphasis). According to the author in addition to IDIS, other institutions also began to dedicate themselves to the study on the subject, such as the Group of Institutes, Foundations and Companies (GIFE).<sup>24</sup>

After the fire that destroyed much of the National Museum’s collection in Rio de Janeiro in 2018, these organizations managed to placate their proposals for regulation for institutions with a wealth fund as a government policy, after the approval of Provisional Measure (MP) number 851/2018, which aims to regulate the philanthropic Property Funds in Brazil, signed by then President Michel Temer, on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Then, Law number 13.800/2019 regulating the constitution of property functions was enacted on January 04<sup>th</sup>, 2019, by President Jair Bolsonaro. This legal framework meets the demand of organized business that has been claiming this agenda, strengthening public-private partnerships and the new modality of profitable exploitation of higher education. The Property Funds Act is optional<sup>25</sup> – to non-profit entities that already have equity funds the law is not mandatory – as it is important that the public institution demands an exclusive Asset Fund.

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<sup>22</sup> Linked Property Fund was the name created by the Property Funds Studies Group established by IDIS and Vérios that drafted a proposed Bill “Linked Property Funds”. Available at: <http://www.secretariadegoverno.gov/arquivos/fundos-patronais>. Access on: Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>23</sup> The main APH of the Equity Funds in Brazil.

<sup>24</sup> GIFE is an organization that is defined as a non-profit that brings together the business sector in Brazil – it is constituted as an APH that acts as a collective intellectual of the bourgeoisie.

<sup>25</sup> Eduardo Pannunzio (2019) states that the equity fund model of Law 13.800/19 is optional, considering the 1988 CF that dedicates wide freedom to associations. Therefore, it does not consider the existing funds founded of several natures.

The Equity Funds of private non-profit institutions were already a practice in Brazil,<sup>26</sup> that is, funds of this type do not arise under the Law of Equity Funds and do not impose limitations on the funds of existing private institutions. The law, however, creates new rules, especially for funds for public institutions. In the Chamber and in the Federal Senate, several bills of law<sup>27</sup> aimed at the creation of equity funds in universities, cultural institutions and conservation units were being drawn up and under way.

On September 09th, 2019, the paper of the newspaper *Valor Econômico*,<sup>28</sup> points out that MEC, to raise private funding for research, development and innovation in federal universities, aims to bring to Brazil the investments of United States equity funds. The objective, according to this matter is that American managers not only apply but are part of the board of Directors of the Sovereign Knowledge Fund, which will initially have a assets of 4.4 thousand properties, which will be administered by a private law association, no profitable ends. Arnaldo Lima, current Secretary of Higher Education of the Bolsonaro Government, says that the goal is to create a wealth fund of MEC to apply the resources and profitable projects to financial capital. The Secretary told the newspaper *Valor Econômico*, in the above-mentioned article, that MEC will develop financial products for these agents, that is, the MEC equity fund will establish the assets fund agents of the US universities and submit proposals for projects that meet the interests of these investors.

It is evident, therefore, that, in the proposal of the Federal Government, the resources and guidelines of Brazilian higher education will be defined by the institutions of property funds. The conception that it is up to the public university to be constituted as a profitable business, ensuring the movement of the financial market, not only maintains the dependent pattern of higher education, but also extends the exalted privately held historically in Brazil, imposing, on the class and combative sectors of the working class, the defense of public education and the daily reaffirmation that education is not a commodity.

## Final considerations

The reflections presented here, as part of the studies and research that are being carried out in public universities, show that a set of changes is being conducted in the policy of higher education, having as its guiding axis the conception of higher education as a profitable service.

If exalted privatism is a structuring element of the Brazilian standard of higher school, as Fernandes indicates, it is necessary to learn the news of its manifestation today by the articulation of three guiding axes: (i) the use of the public fund for direct and indirect financing of private higher education institutions; (ii) the drastic reduction of public funding to Public institutions, especially federal universities, in the text of EC 95/2016 and the recurring contingencies carried out by the federal government, and (iii) the creation of a legal

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<sup>26</sup> Since the early 2000, it has been noticed that there are several equity funds emerging in Brazil and the vast majority have a source of the banking sector (Queiroz, 2020).

<sup>27</sup> PL 4643/2012 of Federal Congress woman Bruna Furlan (PSDB/SP); PL 8694/2017 (PLS 16/2015) the Senator Ana Amélia (PP/RS); PL 8512/2017 (incorporated to PL 6.345/2016) of the Federal Congresswoman Professora Dorinha Seabra Rezende (DEM/TO); PLS 160/2017 of the Senator Elmano Ferrer (PMDB/PI); PL 7.641/2017 of the Congressman Paulo Abi-Ackel (PSDB/MG).

<sup>28</sup> The article by Edna Simon "MEC that implements in the country a common asset fund model in the USA". Available at: <https://valor.globo.com/brasil/noticia/2019/09/10/mec-quer-implantar-no-pais-modelo-de-fundo-patrimonial-comum-nos-eua.ghtml>. Access on: 04 Oct. 2019.

framework that enables the action of equity funds in public universities, with the argument that they express a viable modality of financing higher education, omitted that such funds constitute, in fact, a new strategy of profitability for capital.

To examine the agenda of capital for higher education, to resist its attacks and to present the project of public and free university, at the service of the workers are, therefore, the guidelines that articulate our studies and our struggles in times of ultra-conservative offensive of capital in crisis.

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# IX

## BETWEEN UNIVERSAL AND FOCAL: THE POLICY OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PARTICULARITY OF THE FLUMINENSE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY (UFF)<sup>1</sup>

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### **Expansion of Brazilian higher education, expansion of access to IFES and change of student profile: Limits and challenges for the effective democratization of the Public University**

Historically, the constitution of higher education in Brazil – the last country in Latin America to create a University (Cunha, 1983)<sup>2</sup> – is overcome by profound inequalities, which, in turn, relate to the structural weakness of a country marked by dependence on the central capitalist countries. This dependence is characterized mainly by the need for overexploitation of the working class of the “colony” and sending part of the surplus value extracted here to the bourgeois fractions of the central capitalist countries.<sup>3</sup> This process is carried out through the exploitation of simple work, since for Brazil, the role of production of agricultural inputs in the international exchange lies. Thus, it is possible to understand why, for the different fractions of the bourgeoisie, there was no concern for the education of the masses at more complex levels (complex work), but only for a small elite who should occupy the state bureaucracy and, later, with the process of “conservative modernization” of the country, work on transnational companies that arrived in the country with special force from the 1950 and 1960.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, as a dependent capitalist country, even after giving the condition of colony, Brazil did not create its own University, sending to Portugal the children of wealthy

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<sup>1</sup> The chapter results from accumulated research within the context of TEIA – Teaching, Research and Extension Center in Work, Education and Social Work, linked to PPGSSDR/UFF, and has funding from FAPERJ and CNPq. The first part of the work, concerning the problematization of the expansion of Brazilian higher education and the changes in the student profile of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IFES), was written by the professor Larissa Dahmer Pereira (2/CNPQ productivity scholarship holder) and by the researcher of TEIA, Andreza Telles dos Santos Ferreira (TCT/FAPERJ scholarship holder). The analysis of Student Assistance at UFF is the result of the research of Vanessa Martins Oliveira, based on a study raised and systematized in the Master's dissertation defended by Oliveira (2019) and guided by professor Larissa Dahmer Pereira, at PPGSSDR/UFF.

<sup>2</sup> For a reading about the “Universidade Temporã”, consult the work of Cunha (1980).

<sup>3</sup> On the cycle of capital in the dependent economy, the pattern of reproduction of capital and the overexploitation of the labor force, cf. Ferreira, Osório and Luce (2012).

<sup>4</sup> According to work by Neves and Pronko (2008), on the formation for complex work in the contemporary bourgeois order, with an analysis of the Brazilian particularity.

families, rural owners and the nascent industry. Only in the 1920, the first University – the Universidade Brasil (now the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) – was created, but, even so, a permanent elitism in the Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) lasted for almost the entire twentieth century, with three expansive modes, and a permanent elitism in the interior of the Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which we will discuss and which help us to understand the “place” of student assistance in Brazilian higher education.

The first expansion of higher education – located in the civil – business – military dictatorship (1964–1985) – sponsored the private market sector, still organized in family companies, which perceived higher education as a lucrative niche of exploitation. At that time, we saw a first movement of expansion of vacancies and enrollments, aimed especially at the middle-level surveys regarding access to higher education diploma and the possibility of social ascension.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the two decades of dictatorship resulted in the reversal of the public sector’s presence in higher education, which occupied, in the 1960, 60% of enrollments. In the 1980’s, at the end of the dictatorship, the public sector accounted for 41% of enrollments and, in turn, the private sector, 59%.<sup>6</sup>

The second expansive moment occurs in the 1990, with movements of pressure for the expansion of higher education and access to social rights, in general, concomitant with the implementation of neoliberal economic and social public policies. The Cardoso government (1995–2002), properly, with the elaboration of the Master Plan of the Reform of the State Apparatus (PDRAE) (Brasil, 1995) and the effective implementation of neoliberal policies, made possible, in the field of Education, on the one hand, the massification of Public Basic Education, – what Algebaile (2009) showed us as a “expansion to less”<sup>7</sup> – and, on the other hand, a second expansive moment of Brazilian higher education, through two important movements: a) the weakening of the public sector, with the economic and human and material resources asphyxia in the IFES; (b) the expansion of enrollments via the market, with a lot of legislation that would benefit the commodification of Brazilian higher education, that is, the increase of enrollments in IES for strictly profitable purposes.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1990, the policy of student assistance, in the IFES, became practically stagnant, even suffering a reduction, given the cuts in resources committed to such institutions.<sup>9</sup> The creation, in the late 1980, in the midst of the effervescence process of

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<sup>5</sup> On educational policy in the civil-military dictatorship, according to Germano (2005). According to also work of Cunha (1983; 1988).

<sup>6</sup> According to data relating to the period, organized by Sguissardi, in the present collection (Chapter 7).

<sup>7</sup> Extension for less, that is, they expanded vacancies, enrollments, but without the quality needed to keep children in school. And even so, this expansion did not extend to high school. Sguissardi (2020), in the present collection, informs us about the structural inequality that crosses Brazilian education, in various aspects. In high school, for example, adolescents – especially those of the most impoverished families of the working class – do not remain, or, in other words, are expelled from school by the conditions of survival.

<sup>8</sup> Neves (2002) organized a collection on the entrepreneurship of Brazilian higher education in the 1990. Also according to Silva Júnior and Sguissardi (2001). See also the text of Sguissardi (2020) in the present collection.

<sup>9</sup> According to Kowalski (2012, p. 94): “With regard to the funding for student assistance during this decade [1990], no documents were evidenced in the legislation in force that covered and assigned resources for the cost of social educational programs; on the contrary, there was a movement of denial of the rulers in providing the resources for student assistance. This is evidenced by the promulgation of the LDB [Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education] of 1996, which records in article 71, I incite IV the irresponsibility of the State with the funding for student assistance. According to the said article, “It will not constitute expenditure on maintenance and development of education, those carried out with: Supplementary feeding, medical – dental care, pharmaceutical and psychological programs, and other forms of social assistance”.

social movements, of the National Forum of Pro-Rectors of Community and Student Affairs (Fonaprace), which developed significant research for the debate of Student Assistance, in order to build a national policy aimed at guaranteeing the staying of the students.<sup>10</sup> However, in view of the context of profound counter nature of the Brazilian State in the 1990,<sup>11</sup> such a policy did not find favorable ground for advancement. Thus, the Federal Universities have little developed sustained policies of student assistance, restricting themselves to what had already been built in the previous two decades.<sup>12</sup>

The third expansive moment of Brazilian higher education occurred in Lula's governments, from the 2000 onwards, characterized by continuities relative to the previous period, but also novelties: this period allowed the expressive expansion of access to higher education by fractions of the working class that had never imagined stepping on the Public University or obtaining a higher education degree through private higher education and/or higher education courses (distance learning). On the one hand, the increase of enrollments in the private sector, especially the market, through the incentive of government programs, such as the Student Financing Fund (FIES),<sup>13</sup> focal<sup>14</sup> government program created still in the FHC government, which was significantly expanded in the 2000. Another program, also of a focal nature and created in the Lula government,<sup>15</sup> was the University for All Program (PROUNI).<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, there was also, in the period, the expansion of vacancies/enrollments in the public sector, through programs such as the Universidade Aberta do Brasil (UAB),<sup>17</sup> the Program to Support Plans for Restructuring and Expansion of

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<sup>10</sup> In the first half of the 1990, FONAPRACE conducted studies on university residences, university restaurants, student health, among other topics. In 1994, the first sample survey of socioeconomic profile of IFES graduates was made, but, as the data produced lacked greater consistency, it was decided by the realization in 1996 of the I Survey of Socioeconomic and Cultural Profile of Undergraduate Students of the Brazilian IFES. The II Research was carried out in 2003/2004; the III Research took place in 2010; the IV Research, in 2014; and finally, V Research was published in 2019. For a brief history of the research carried out by FONAPRACE, cf. ANDIFES/FONAPRACE (2019).

<sup>11</sup> On the contrary of the Brazilian State, according to Behring (2003) and Coutinho (2012).

<sup>12</sup> During the period of Military Dictatorship, in the 1970, there was the creation of the Student Assistance Department (DAE), inserted in the Ministry of Education, in order to implement a policy of attendance to university students at national level, through food services, housing and medical and dental care. In the 1980's, the DAE ceases to exist and the actions aimed at the attendance of students become sprayed, under the responsibility of each institution (Kowalski, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> FIES, created from Law 10.260/2001 (Brasil, 2001), is a program of the Ministry of Education aimed at financing the graduation of students enrolled in private HEIs.

<sup>14</sup> On focusing, Tavares thus analyzes: "Under the poverty alleviation programs that prevailed in Latin America in the 1980 and above all in 1990's, the 'segmented access' that would characterize state social services, as well as the 'only apparent universalism' of social policies were questioned. [...] Thus, a series of principles that reoriented social policies were established. The first of them was *focusing*. Based on the assumption that the scarcity of resources was an obstacle to the practice of universalist policies, the focus was based on the need to concentrate social actions on the poorest" (Tavares, 2006, n/p, *emphasis added*). The politics focused on the poorest remained, with some differences, also in the Lula's and Dilma's governments, having as chief car the Bolsa Família Program. And also in Temer and Bolsonaro governments: the Bolsonaro government realized the electoral force of Emergency Assistance and launched the Citizen Income program, a program of income transfer, with the aim of putting the brand of the current government and "erase" the brand Left by the Bolsa Família Program.

<sup>15</sup> Sguissardi (2015) analyzes the process of expansion of Brazilian higher education and characterizes it as a process of mercantile massification (rather than a real democratization), given the predominance of the private market sector in higher education in the country, the relationship with the financial sector and the action of the State, via focal programs such as FIES and PROUNI, to encourage the sector.

<sup>16</sup> PROUNI was created in 2004, by Law number 11.096/2005 (BRASIL, 2005) and aims to grant full and partial scholarships to students of undergraduate courses and sequential courses of specific training, in private institutions of higher education.

<sup>17</sup> The UAB system was established by decree 5.800, of June 8th, 2006, for the development of Distance Learning modality (EAD) in public institutions. According to <https://www.capes.gov.br/uab/o-que-e-uab>. For the

Federal Universities (REUNI), Established by Decree number 6.096, of April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 (BRASIL, 2007),<sup>18</sup> and the National Program of Student Assistance (PNAES) (BRASIL, 2010).<sup>19</sup> It is clear that the number of IFES enrollments almost doubled in the period in force of REUNI (2007–2012) (Andifes/Fonaprace, 2019).

The important (but insufficient) expansion of access to public higher education<sup>20</sup> brought a new student profile in the IFES: according to the V National Survey of Socioeconomic and Cultural Profile of Graduates (AS) of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (2019), it can be affirmed the existence of a new student profile in the IFES from the 2000.<sup>21</sup>

The V Survey brings the following main results in relation to the students' basic profile, namely: the continuous growth of the female sex, the increase in the share of black students in the IFES, that is, the change in the racial profile, changes in sexual orientation, in the number of students who have children, the increase of students with per *capita* monthly family income of up to one and a half minimum wage.

Regarding the predominance of female students, it is important to highlight that, according to the study analyzed, "in all geographic regions, female students exceed male students in the composition of the student body of IFES" (ANDIFES/ FONAPRACE, 2019, p. 57). The amount of female students also outperforms male in high school. That is, it is a history of the educational path that women are the majority in higher education. According to ANDIFES/ FONAPRACE (2019), this information results from the premature insertion of male sex students in the labor market.<sup>22</sup>

Another finding of the V Survey concerns the racial profile of students in IFES in Brazil: for the first time, in all the studies carried out by ANDIFES, there has been the quantitative increase of black people [black quilombola, blacks non quilombola and brown] reaching the majority in the whole researched set, with 51.2% of the students.<sup>23</sup>

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critical analysis of the Open University of Brazil (UAB), according to Text by Mancebo, Vale and Martins (2015).

<sup>18</sup> It should be remembered that, prior to REUNI (Brasil, 2007), the federal government created the Expandir Program (2003–2006): "[...] social pressures lead to the action of the federal government in the direction of greater investments in the expansion process of federal universities. The first phase of the Expandir Program (2003–2006), called 'Expansion with interiorization', which aimed to encourage the expansion of higher education through the creation of new universities and the creation and/or strengthening of campuses within the Brazilian states" (Jezine; Trindade; Martins; Fernandes, 2014, p. 154).

<sup>19</sup> According to Data presented by Sguissardi in the present collection.

<sup>20</sup> Here it is worth noting that the lack of resources for growth with quality of the public sector is related to the insistent state action to maintain incentives and tax exemptions to the private sector, which greatly weakens the conception of higher education as social law, but it places it within the framework of mercantiled services.

<sup>21</sup> Since 1996, the National Association of Leaders of Federal Institutions of Higher Education (ANDIFES) has carried out research on the student profile of the IFES and its main objective is to elucidate the "[...] socio-economic and cultural medium profile of the students of the institutions Federal Higher Education" (FONAPRACE/ANDIFES, 2019, p. 11).

<sup>22</sup> "[...] female people seek higher education as a way to reduce social inequalities, aiming for careers and remuneration that guarantee them minimally to reconcile, for example, maternity and work, at a certain professional moment, and enjoy benefits and labor rights. Based on a relational approach to sexual division, it is necessary to consider that the underrepresentation of male students in high school and higher education is also related to the 'early' entry into the labor market, which is culturally and socially required of them" (ANDIFES/FONAPRACE, 2019, p. 57).

<sup>23</sup> "Another impactful data is the number of indigenous villagers and black quilombolas. Doubled the number of indigenous villagers. It was 2,329 in 2014, reaching 4,672 in 2018. In relation to black quilombolas, it was 4,231 and today it is 10,747. The student contingent of black quilombolas grew about once and a half, that is, 154%. Although the color and race profile of the Brazilian population also changed, in the period 2014–18, the increase of black, brown and indigenous people identified by the V Survey was higher than the population growth" (ANDIFES/FONAPRACE, 2019, p. 58).

A piece of information revealed in the V Survey concerns the internal question of heteronormativity to the University: although most of them declare themselves cis, by grouping those who deny such identity, they reach almost 12% of the respondents, which indicates the survey: “[...] such numbers lead us to think that the public university in fact is a space where heteronormativity, not to say cis-normativity, it tends to be increasingly questioned” (ANDIFES/ FONAPRACE, 2019, p. 59).

Another data revealed by the V Survey was about the number of students who have children. The survey states that 1 out of 10 undergraduates have children. Male students have a greater number of children, with 4 (four) or more children, already female graduates mostly have 1 (one) child. Consequently, it can be said that: “As the number of children grows, the percentage of female students decreases, which indicates that motherhood and academic life are more difficult to reconcile [...]” (Andifes/ Fonaprace, 2019, p. 59).

The V Survey revealed that there was a significant growth of the individuals who are included in the monthly per *capita* household income cut of up to one (1) minimum and a half wage. These students fall into the criteria of coverage of PNAES. Thus, it is understood that:

In a robust way, the V Survey reveals that 70.2% of the total students of the IFES have a monthly income per capita of “up to 1 and a half SM”, 4 p.p. from the profile identified in 2014. Regionally there are discrepancies, but in all of them the percentage of students inserted in this income range is above 60% of the target population. The Northeast was, in 2014, the region with the highest percentage of students in the per *capita* monthly family income range of “until 1 and a half SM”, having been surpassed, in 2018, by the North. In turn, the Midwest, which in 2014 concentrated the lowest percentage, was exceeded by the South. The average monthly per *capita* income of the family group of the target population is R\$ 1,328.08 (ANDIFES/ FONAPRACE, 2019, p. 59).

According to ANDIFES/ FONAPRACE (2019), this new student profile presented in the IFES from the 2000 results from extensive institutional changes: “[...] there was a significant expansion of federal higher education vacancies and institutions. In the period 2003–2017, there was a growth of 260% registered in the number of vacancies offered” (Andifes/Fonaprace, 2019, p. 15–16). This increase in the number of vacancies is directly linked to the opening of new IFES and with the change of the basic profile of students of such institutions. “18 new IFES were created from 2005 to 2017, covering four of the five regions of the country” (Andifes/Fonaprace, 2019, p. 16). In addition to the expansion of the quantitative of IFES, its courses and its vacancies, there was an important process of internalization of federal institutions.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “[...] The investments were oriented to break with the past logic and because of this, sought to oppose the concentration of federal institutions of higher education in metropolitan regions, with greater purchasing power and more favorable socioeconomic indicators. In fact, the regions with high demographic density and low public university coverage were considered, furthest from the major centers and with specific demands for undergraduate courses or border regions with characteristics of integration and regional flow” (FONAPRACE/ANDIFES, 2019, p. 17–18).

Associated with the expansion of vacancies/enrollments and the creation of new IFES, the creation of the Unified Selection System (SISU) stands out,<sup>25</sup> as well as the quota law,<sup>26</sup> Law n° 12.711/2012 (Brasil, 2012) that ensures vacancies for students from public schools. Both the new selection model, based on SISU, and the quota law for high school students, provide greater social mobility and the change in the socioeconomic and cultural profile of the graduates within the IFES: consequently, the need for student assistance policies that can guarantee the quality of these students in the universities increased.

Therefore, it should be noted that if, on the one hand, there was an important increase of the federal public sector in the provision of vacancies and greater access to higher education by different layers of the working class that until then were submitted to IFES, on the other hand, a huge challenge is necessary for this contingent of students to have effective conditions to continue their studies with quality and stay at university, which requires above all sufficient public resources. In this sense, it is up to us to analyze the National Program of Student Assistance (PNAES), although briefly, which will help us to address the particularity of Student Assistance at Fluminense Federal University (UFF).

## **The student assistance in the context of expansion of the Brazilian upper education: the particularity of the UFF and the tensions between the focal and the universal**

In a context of expansion of the public sector, PNAES meant an important normative framework for student assistance, especially considering that, until then, a special national program aimed at student assistance had not been created at IFES, but only there were punctual and disarticulated actions.<sup>27</sup>

Initially, PNAES was regulated by Ordinance number 39, dated from December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007 and subsequently assumed legitimacy with the promulgation of Decree No. 7234 in 2010, through the contribution of research developed by ANDIFES/FONAPRACE. With the PNAES, the legal obligation to formulate and operationalize the study assistance was indicated, with the aim of reducing evasion and ensuring the permanence of students of the IFES and Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology. It appears, therefore, as already highlighted in the present chapter, in a context of expansion of the public higher education, during the Lula governments (2003–2010), contributing to a greater structuring of Student Assistance in public institutions and resulting from the history of struggles of the student movements for State Assistance and greater democratization of the IFES.

In the content of the decree the objectives and purposes were delimited of Student Assistance actions, consolidating a reference in cooperation to be followed by the institutions that develop actions and services of Student Assistance. Thus, the Student Assistance is guided by the goal “[...] to expand the conditions of permanence of young

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<sup>25</sup> It should be noted here that SISU is a “[...] Computerized system that uses the grades obtained by students in the National High School Examination (ENEM) to allocate candidates among the accredited institutions” (Fonaprace/Andifes, 2019, p. 18).

<sup>26</sup> Quotas are applied to low-income students, students who have gross monthly family income of up to a minimum and a half salary per person, for PPI – Black, Brown and Indigenous – and People with Disabilities according to FONAPRACE/ANDIFES, 2019).

<sup>27</sup> Until PNAES there was no specific program aimed at Student Assistance in higher education. According to KOWALSKI (2012); DUTRA (2015); PINTO (2015).

people in public education” (Brasil, 2010), guided by the following objectives: “[...] I — To democratize the conditions of permanence of young people in federal public higher education; ii — to minimize the effects of social and regional inequalities on the permanence and completion of higher education; iii — to reduce retention and evasion rates; and iv — to contribute to the promotion of social inclusion by education” (Brasil, 2010, art. 2<sup>nd</sup>).

Through the PNAES it was established that the actions of the State Assistance should articulate teaching, research and extension, whose focus is on permanence of the student. Therefore, PNAES highlights the following areas of activity of the Student Assistance, in its paragraph 1<sup>st</sup> of article 3<sup>rd</sup>: “[...] I — student housing; II — food; III — transportation; IV — health care; V — digital inclusion; VI — culture; VII — sport; VIII — daycare; IX — pedagogical support; X — access, participation and learning of students with disabilities, global developmental disorders and high skills and gifted students” (Brasil, 2010).

By delimiting these axes of action, it is verified the possibility of developing Student Assistance actions articulated to the various social policies, with a view to the broad social protection of the student. That is, to develop student assistance actions involving the various areas of human rights (Imperatori, 2017). Throughout the decree, the target audience of student assistance is defined in Article 5: “Students from the public primary education network or with per *capita* family income of up to a minimum and a half salary will be attended by PNAES, without prejudice to other requirements set by federal institutions of higher education (Brasil, 2010, our emphasis). This article, therefore, indicates the “priority” target-public of student assistance based on the criterion of income and school origin, that is, it is important to realize that these criteria are priority and, therefore, are not exclusive. Thus, it opens the possibility of building ways of access to student assistance, oriented from the perspective of universal or focal care, which requires differentiated projects of Student Assistance in dispute.<sup>28</sup>

It should be pointed out, however, that in a growing context of strengthening a neoliberal rationality<sup>29</sup> – with the defense of focusing on social policies, strengthening of individualism and weakening of the principle of universality – the criterion of per *capita* family income established in PNAES has still been considered as one of the main guiding axes used by institutions for socioeconomic evaluation in the process of selection of grants and scholarships Student Assistance, corroborating to the focus of its access on the most impoverished students.

We present, in a synthetic way, a study related to the reality of the UFF (Oliveira, 2019), in which we raised, through documentary analysis, the conception of Student Assistance present in the institution. The study involved the reading of the Institutional Development Plans (PDI) and Management Reports of the UFF, published in the UFF virtual site, with the aim of apprehending the conception of student assistance present in institutional planning, based on a concept of focal or universal care to students. The choice, in the research, by reading/analysis of the conception of student attendance present in the

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<sup>28</sup> It is clear that, in a regressive context as to rights, emphasis on the focus of social policies and brutal reduction of resources for the social area, such a dispute, for those who fight in defense of constitutional precepts and Social Security, becomes somewhat arduous. If, in the Lula and Dilma governments, there were already strong limits, in the post-coup governments, Temer and Bolsonaro, this situation is amplified, making the prospect of universalization even more difficult in the various social public policies.

<sup>29</sup> On the discussion of neoliberal rationality, according to book by Laval and Dardot (2016).



PDI stems from its importance as a tool of institutional planning, which presents its mission and strategies to achieve objectives and goals, covering a period comprehended in five years.<sup>30</sup> Other documents chosen in the research process were management reports, which consist of an annual reporting instrument of the federal public administration, with the description and consolidation of information on the performance of the activities developed by the institutions and results obtained based on the goals and strategies recommended in the Institutional Development Plan.

We analyzed the PDI 2003–2007 (UFF, 2009) and PDI 2008–2012 as well as the Management Reports of the years 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011 and 2012. These documents were built with the time of implementation of REUNI at UFF (2007–2012), also period of creation/implementation of actions and student assistance services at the institution.

The study was based on the reading/analysis of PDI 2003–2007 with the objective of identifying how student assistance was planned in the institutional planning period prior to the adhesion to REUNI by the University. Thus, the data collected in the said document provided subsidies for a comparative analysis with PDI 2008–2012, published later to the adhesion of the UFF to REUNI.

The reading of PDI 2003–2007 reveals that the document already pointed to a perspective of expansion of undergraduate courses linked to an initial preoccupation with the development of programs aimed at reducing student retention and evasion. The publication of the document occurred in a context of implementation of the Expandir Program (2003–2006), as previously signed. During the validity of the aforementioned PDI, the actions to attend the student at the UFF were carried out by the Department of Community Affairs (DAC), inserted in the Human Resources Superintendence (SRH), which directed to the entire academic community, responsible for serving servers and students. The data collected in the Management Report of the Year 2007 indicated a range of attendance to students not expressive, given the institutional reality of absence of a sector specifically related to the students' attendance.

It should be noted that, in the historical trajectory of the constitution of student assistance at the UFF, services aimed at the student's attendance were already present in the institution, even if in a pulverized and dispersed way through the sectors (Pinto, 2015). With the UFF accession process to REUNI in 2007, and still, the implementation of PNAES from 2010, new requirements were imposed on the construction of an institutional policy aimed at student permanence actions, given the scenario of expansion of the number of vacancies for undergraduate students (Pinto, 2015). Therefore, PDI 2008–2012, after joining REUNI by the institution, outlined new features of the consolidation of student assistance at the UFF, with the definition of action proposals aimed at student assistance. We must signal, in turn, that the period of implementation of this Plan was demarcated by the transversality of the institutionalization of PNAES through Decree 7234 in 2010, which provided new contours to the structuring of student assistance in the institutions.

It was observed in the text of PDI 2008–2012 that student assistance gains space in the policy of institutional planning, from the incentive to structuring actions aimed at investment in University Restaurants, student transportation, construction of student accommodation and services for student with disabilities (UFF, 2009).

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<sup>30</sup> The process of the PDI elaboration must comprise the participation of the academic community and civil society, passing through the appreciation and approval of the University Council (CUV).

In the midst of the process of expansion of the vacancies in undergraduate courses and the pressure of the student movement demanding conditions of permanence in the university – given the very change of the student profile, as presented previously –, a process of consolidation of the actions aimed at student assistance at the UFF was boosted and the establishment of a more structured sector designed exclusively for the students' attendance. In 2010, the Dean's Office of Student Affairs (PROAES) was implemented, which represented the centralization and systematization of forms/modalities of attendance of student assistance at UFF. It should be pointed out that, with the creation of PROAES, there were significant changes in the dynamics of actions and care services. To the student at the institution, with the creation of new modalities of scholarships and stipends (Pinto, 2015).<sup>31</sup>

It also stands out, as part of the context of expansion of IFES and, particularly, of UFF, the hiring by public tender of a contingent of professionals of Social Work filled in PROAES: although this amount is insufficient in the face of the demand for care, it was a period in which a competition was opened for the hiring of new social workers. Until the creation of PROAES, there were 09 social workers filled in the DAC (Pinto, 2015). After the creation of PROAES, there was the realization in 2013 of contest with 04 vacancies<sup>32</sup> for social worker (UFF, 2013) and, in 2017, there was another contest with 03 vacancies for social worker, being 01 place for Niteroi, 01 to Santo Antônio de Pádua, 01 to Volta Redonda (UFF, 2018). Currently, PROAES comprises 12 social workers, one being transferred to another organ (UFF. TRANSPARENCY SYSTEM, 2020). That is, although there has been a competition for PROAES, there was no increase as expressive as the size of the team, since with the PNAES there is an increase in demand, not accompanied by the increase in the number of social workers in the sector.

PROAES covers four co-ordination units: Coordination of Social Support, Coordination of Academic Support, Coordination of Student Housing Management and Management Coordination of the University Restaurant (UFF. Organograma Proaes, 2020).

It should be noted that, through the Social Support Coordination (CAS), the entire process of planning, monitoring and execution of student service services is carried out, among them, the offer of scholarships, grants and student support. CAS comprises the Social Programs Division (DPS) with six social workers, the Social Service Division (DSS), with two social institutions, Student Health Care Division (DASE) with a social system (UFF. Transparency System, 2020). In general lines, DASE performs “[...] actions for the reception, monitoring and forwarding of health demands” of students (UFF, 2019). DSS acts in the attendance and follow-up of students, through the reception, the addition of information, referrals and socioeconomic analysis, in order to contribute with conditions of student permanence in the university (UFF, 2016). DPS is responsible for the planning process, elaboration and implementation of grants and stipends,<sup>33</sup> as well as the realization of

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<sup>31</sup> According to data from the scholarship and aid notices published in 2019, it stands out as scholarships and stipends offered in the Social Support Coordination: the Academic Development Grant; Food Aid for students of *the expanding campuses*; Housing Aid; Transport Support Grant; Health Assistance; Support Scholarship for Students with Disabilities; Nursery Support; Emergency Support Grant (UFF, 2019).

<sup>32</sup> It should be clarified that the vacancies made available in the competition undergo approval and appointment process, undergoing change. In addition, the social workers named in these competitions were not only crowded in PROAES, but also in other occupational spaces at the UFF, such as the Antônio Pedro University Hospital (HUAP) and Dean's Office of People Management (PROGEPE).

<sup>33</sup> According to data from the scholarship and aid notices published in 2019, it stands out as scholarships and

socio-economic analysis, attendance and follow-up of scholarship students. According to data collected from the Management Report 2019 3,813 grants and stipends were granted in 2019 (UFF, 2019).<sup>34</sup>

UFF was the federal institution that grew the most in the period of REUNI: it is an institution with great capillarity, acting in 32 (thirty-two) municipalities of Rio de Janeiro, with projects of teaching, research and extension. According to data from the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 2018, UFF has 45,762 (forty-five thousand seven hundred and sixty-two) students enrolled, 35,257 (thirty-five thousand two hundred and fifty-seven) students in face-to-face courses and 10,505 (ten thousand five hundred and five) students in courses offered in Distance Learning (EAD). However, when we look at the data related to the amount of scholarships (tables 1 and 2) and the Social Work team itself (table 3), we learn that there is still a need for a significant contribution of material resources, financial and human for an effective improvement of student assistance policy at UFF.

**Table 1** – Total students with grants/stipends in 2018

GRANTS AND STIPENDS	TOTAL
Feeding Stipend for field workers in Expansion	618
Childcare Stipend	13
Housing Stipend	624
Health Assistance	8
Welcoming Scholarship for ingressing students	610
Student Support Scholarship with disability	33
Transport Support Scholarship	298
Academic Development Scholarship	1,026
TOTAL	3,230

**Source:** Own elaboration from data taken from the Management Report 2018. On October 4th, 2020. Data for the year 2018.

**Table 2** – Total students with grants/stipends in 2019

GRANTS AND STIPENDS	TOTAL
Food Stipend for campi students in Expansion	632
Childcare Stipend	12
Housing Stipend	640
Health Assistance	24
Welcoming Scholarship for ingressing students	780
Support Scholarship for Students with Disabilities	41
Transport Support Scholarship	289
Academic Development Scholarship	1034
Didactic Material Scholarship	147
Emergency Scholarship	214
TOTAL	3,813

**Source:** Own elaboration from data taken from the Management Report 2019. On October 4th, 2020. Data for the year 2019.

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stipends offered in the Social Support Coordination: the Academic Development Grant; Food Aid for students of the *expanding campuses*; Housing Aid; Transport Support Grant; Health Assistance; Support Scholarship for Students with Disabilities; Nursery Support; Emergency Support Grant (UFF, 2019).

<sup>34</sup> That is, the monitoring of students by the Social Service becomes, thus, limited to documentary analysis, see the amount of grants/stipends and the number of social workers existing in PROAES.

**Table 3 – Quantitative of Social Work Professionals at PROAES**

SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS AT PROAES	
TOTAL	12*

\*Considering that a professional has been ceded to another organ.

**Source:** Own elaboration from data taken from the Transparency System of UFF. Data for the year 2020.

The opening of a public tender held in the period, as well as the contribution of social support grants was, without a doubt, fundamental. However, it is important that, in view of the expansion of enrollment and the change of student profile, that increasingly demands student assistance for the stay in the University, as we discussed in the first item of the chapter, it is urgent to hire more professionals in the area of Social Work and related (such as Psychology, due to a growing demand for care in the area of Mental Health), in addition to the expansion of scholarships and values thereof.<sup>35</sup>

Another issue to be highlighted, with regard to the offer of aid and grants, refers to the scholarship process, which characterized the constitution of student assistance in the institution, but which, in addition to the UFF, constitutes itself as a trend in the other IFES. Such offer of scholarships and stipends is structured via transfer of income, through the financial transfer to the student. Its form of access, therefore, is based on the focus of the public attended by the selection criteria based primarily on income, which is based on the eligibility of the most impoverished students. In this process, it is necessary to understand the perspective of monetarization<sup>36</sup> in the offer of scholarships, through transfer of income, which makes us assume the existence of interconnections of student assistance with the trend assumed in the Social Assistance Policy in Brazil, that directs its interventions to the most impoverished segments, through compensatory programs of transfer of minimum income.<sup>37</sup>

Although the scholarship process has been constituted in a growing trend, the information obtained through the analysis of the PDI's and Management Reports made it

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<sup>35</sup> Based on the scholarship and stipends notices published in 2019, the Academic Development Scholarship has a value of R\$440.00; Food stipend for students of *the expanding campuses*, R\$240.00; Housing Aid, R\$300.00; Transport Support Grant, R\$275.00; Health Aid, R\$80.00; Support Scholarship for Students with Disabilities, R\$400.00; Nursery Aid, R\$100.00; Emergency Support Grant, R\$400.00 (UFF, 2019). It is worth noting, based on the stock of the grants and aid, the discrepancies in relation to the value of the minimum wage, which in 2019 was R\$998.00.

<sup>36</sup> And here we should point out the close relationship between this process (of monetarization) with the financial sector. "Income transfers do not only constitute a form of social policy established to function as a mechanism to combat poverty, in response to the priority guidelines of multilateral organizations to promote the development of peripheral countries and to obtain consensus and legitimation of counter-reforms implemented before the working class and middle sectors. This policy, by the same activity, was also configured as a means of valuing interest-bearing capital in a process of capturing fractions of social wealth that, in the Union budget, were not directed to the remuneration of state-creditors capitalists. That is, even the part of the public fund that was not converted into primary surplus was captured by these capitals. Even the lowest values, which serve the most impoverished, are plotted by the capital" (Lima, 2017, p. 118).

<sup>37</sup> According to Debate on the limits and possibilities of the Single Social Assistance System (SUAS) organized by the CFESS (2011). MOTA (CFESS, 2011, p.69) thus addresses the process of "assistance": "In this way, being elevated to the condition of the main mechanism of coping with social inequality, we can say that there is social security assistance. And this assertion is not confused with the reference or what we call an assistance practice one day, but it concerns its centrality among the protection mechanisms in force. In a colloquial translation, what happens is that Social Assistance, originally a mediating and articulating policy, seems to assume the condition of structuring policy. And more, it begins to be constituted in an ideology that legitimizes the relationship Poverty *versus* Social Assistance, as the society passivates."

possible to identify that the institution has also implemented services such as student housing, university restaurants, Student transport between *campuses* (BusUFF) and student health care and care services. It should be noted, however, with regard to the Student Housing, that the form of access is based on a conception of care provided, through a socio-economic selection process. It was identified in the institutional reality a insufficiency of Student Houses, because there are no houses in all *the campuses* of the interior. However, it should be recognized that the construction of Student Housing, although fundamental, represents a complex process for the institution, which requires necessary budgetary and technical resources.

On the other hand, it was verified a prioritization of a Housing Policy aimed at the financial transfer to students, through the offer of Housing aid that is also based on the criteria of focused care and consents to the financial transfer to fund part of the housing expenses (UFF, 2020).

It was understood, through documentary analysis, the existence of services, although insufficient, that are directed to the entire academic community, from the perspective of universal service, in which the University Restaurant<sup>38</sup> and the transport between *campuses* (BusUFF) were structured. It is worth noting, however, that university restaurants were not built on *the countryside campuses*, there are only units at the headquarters in Niterói. This element revealed a centralization of services at the UFF headquarters in Niterói, in which we can also highlight the services of student health care, considering the data collected during the analyzed period.

Based on the research carried out, it was found that the state assistance at the UFF has been delineated by a tension between the focal and universal conception, manifested in the access to financial aid grants (focused on the most impoverished sectors) and services extended to a larger number of students (Such as the University Restaurant and Transportation). It was identified a noticeable prioritization of institutional policy aimed at the offer of grants and stipends, through direct financial transfer to the student and guided by the focused access institution. However, it was also observed the presence of the offer of services, although in a minority way, aimed at access to the academic community, based on a perspective of universal care.

## Final considerations

After a decade of validity of PNAES, the access format focused on the most impoverished students is expressed as one of the trends of Student Assistance, whose actions in the institutional sphere have been characterized by the offer of “[...] focused, emergency benefits, intended for a specific public” (Nascimento, 2012, p. 151). It is worth noting that income transfer programs have shown centrality in the field of student assistance through the payment of scholarships and/or stipends to students; On the other hand, we cannot disregard the investments in collective actions, from PNAES, such as university restaurants, student housing, daycare centers, as demonstrated by analyzing the particularity of UFF. It is considered, therefore, that although the student assistance in IFES has, mainly, directed its

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<sup>38</sup> The amounts paid for access to the RU consist of: R\$ 0.70 (seventy cents) for students; R\$ 2.50 (two reais and fifty cents) for technical-administrative or outsourced, R\$ 8.00 for visitors (UFF website). It should be noted that for students of *campuses* that do not have RU, food stipend is offered.

performance through a perspective of focused access to its aid and scholarships, also, although insufficient, services and actions aimed at every student public, are also done, with a universal access perspective.

One of the brands of Student Assistance is, therefore, the process of “scholarship”, with the concentration of the offer of grants and stipends by the institutions. These scholarships are set up in financial aid (pecuniary) as a way of meeting the demands presented by the students. We should also reflect on the similarities present in the perspective of monetarization of the institutions offered by student assistance, through the transfer of income, which approaches the trend assumed by the social assistance policy in Brazil, which is manifested by the “[...] monetary transfer programs; as a compensatory policy [...]”, by enabling “[...] Even if access to consumer goods is precarious” (Sitcovsky, 2010, p. 154).

Our argumentative effort is therefore to realize that although the student assistance, whose insertion is the Education Policy, has a distinct nature of the Social Assistance Policy, these areas present interconnections, considering that the conception of the transfer of income is present both in the social assistance policy – with the payment of social benefits – and in student assistance through the provision of aid and grants.

With regard to the process of operationalization of PNAES by the institutions, Decree 7234/2010, in paragraph 2 of Article 3, states that: “It will be up to the federal institution of higher education to define the criteria and method of selection of undergraduate students to be benefited” (Brasil, 2007). Therefore, each institution has relative autonomy to define the parameters to be used in the execution of Student Assistance, according to his or her local needs and specificities. This reality brings several possibilities of action for Student Assistance in the different institutions, according to the correlation of internal forces, and especially the pressure of the student movement.<sup>39</sup>

Many are the challenges for structuring the “place” of assistance in the IFES, given the fragility of a legal apparatus that guides its actions and programs, based on a more universal direction of attention. We are not, however, ignoring the importance of the autonomy of institutions in developing student assistance actions according to their local needs. But, rather we point out the need to build a National Policy for Student Assistance, which provides not only parameters for this area of activity, but above all sufficient resources that allow the development of universal actions, such as the provision of fundamental services for student permanence with quality: university restaurants, student housing, day-care centers/recreational spaces, among others.

Therefore, we must analyze that, although Student Assistance has expanded by the IFES, it has not yet been structured as a National Policy for Student Assistance in Brazil. That is, the legal regulation of the student assistance that is currently held consists of a presidential decree that outlined more comprehensive outlines for the State Assistance

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<sup>39</sup> However, with regard to the question of autonomy conferred on institutions in PNAES, Lima (2017, p. 126–127) develops the following considerations: “The question of autonomy delegated to the IFES in relation to the program should be perceived with caution and criticism. On behalf of the establishment of democratic relationships in the management, execution and social control of the program, the choice of institutions will be left to the public attended. Structural guidelines are not institutionalized at the national level, so it becomes common to find in each IFES different criteria of attendance to students. In all institutions, compliance with what is oriented in the reference regulation is affirmed. Moreover, in addition to the weak and small institutionality, the flagrant lack of resources – always far short of the student demand – makes the autonomy of the IFES in the face of the implementation of the PNAES an idyllic prerogative” (Lima, 2017, p. 126–127).

Program. It should therefore be clarified that the program based on a presidential decree consists of an order issued by the President of the Republic, which can at any time be revoked from another decree. Distinctly, a Program based on Federal Law, remains.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the weaknesses in the consolidation and future of Student Assistance in the country are evident, especially if we consider the post-impeachment period of President Dilma Rousseff, the Temer government and, finally, the election of Jair Bolsonaro to the President of the Republic, what greatly affected the cuts in resources for the educational area.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, we highlight the challenge of the IFES in carrying out actions of the Student System that are based on a universal access perspective, considering the adverse scenario that we experience in which more and more social policies of access focused on the poorest fractions of the working class are increasingly prized.

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<sup>40</sup> A Andifes divulgou, em 2018, notícias sobre os esforços realizados para transformar o decreto 7.234, de 2010, em lei federal. Availabe at: <http://www.fonaprace.andifes.org.br/site/index.php/2018/06/29/andifes-defende-que-pnaes-passe-a-ser-politica-de-estado/>. Access on: Aug. 10<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>41</sup> In 2021, the forecast, according to ANDIFES, is a 17.5% cut in "non-compulsory" (discretionary) expenses. "Despite the name, they are not "unnecessary". These are costs related to payment of water, light, employees and third-party services, works, and even student assistance programs, which are not bound by" laws. On September 11th, 2020, G1. Available at: <http://www.forumensinosuperior.org.br/noticias/item/corte-de-quase-r-1-bi-para-universidades-federais-e-mantido-mesmo-com-alteracao-no-orcamento-do-mec-para-2021-dizem-reitores>. Access on: Sep. 15<sup>th</sup> 2020.

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# X

## STUDENT ASSISTANCE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: MARKET TRAINING AND NATIONAL STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN PT GOVERNMENTS

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### Introduction

The objective of this article is to reflect on public policies for income transfer and/or financial transfer in the period of expansion of professional and technological education from 2010, specifically in the actions implemented in the scope of Student Assistance in the federal network. For this, it was necessary to understand the expansion actions of the Federal Network of Professional Scientific and Technological Education (RFEPCT) and the constitution of the Program in the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES). In this movement, it was essential to highlight the change of student profile that enters the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IFES), as a result of Law number 12.711, of August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, known as the Quotas Law.

Brazilian intellectuals critical of education contribute to the historical clarification of the development of Brazilian education, so that we can affirm that professional education in Brazil expresses, in itself, a particularity of the uneven and combined development of the productive forces in the country.<sup>1</sup> The education project (and specifically the professional education project) that has been developed in the country meets the interests, based on the theses of economic development, of offering skilled labor and submissive to the interests of capital. Faced with the corporate projects in dispute, there is the prevalence of the project that guarantees the maintenance of the dual school – which compose the a model of education for the working class and another for the dominant class.<sup>2</sup> And, in Brazilian society, wage labor becomes a kind of privilege, at a time when the number of informality and precariousness in the labor market grows dramatically year after year.

### **Social policies in the governments of the Labor Party: “education as a means to promote social equity.”**

Florestan Fernandes (2009) contributes to understanding how education in Brazilian society plays a strategic role in government actions and presents itself in a combined way with the demands of capital and the processes of professionalization of young people in the

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<sup>1</sup> See, on the subject, Miranda and Rodrigues (2017).

<sup>2</sup> On the structural duality of education, see Manacorda (1989).

search for more dignified living conditions. The author states that horizontal or vertical occupational mobility and professionalization assume the appearance of “viable” and “efficient” alternatives to solve, on an individual scale or small groups, problems that the competitive social order cannot solve on a collective scale (Fernandes, 2009, p. 84).

In Fernandes’ analysis (2009), in a dependent and underdeveloped economy (which reproduces the dual accumulation and the shared appropriation of the former national economic transferor), as in any capitalist economy, one cannot rely exclusively on repression to maintain the social competitive order. For this reason, the social reproduction of *over-exploited work* (Fernandes, 2009) is led by the articulation of the conformism of the masses and wear-out of their living conditions that depresses, releases and neutralizes the integration of the “low-class people” into the bourgeois order itself. This dependent pattern makes economic underdevelopment a normal state of the system.

From this perspective, we seek to observe how the concept of social equity gains centrality in the development of governmental actions in the programs developed during the governments of the Labor Party (PT), in Brazil, especially in the policy of expansion of professional education. In the analysis of Castelo (2009), the concept of social equity is the theoretical pillar of intervention in the “social issue” during this period. Equity is seen as equal opportunities, drawing any relationship from the historical structural references of social inequalities. In this social equity bias, this equality of opportunity will be promoted by education, which is entered in a very specific (and restricted) dimension, that is, as training for market competition.

Still according to the analysis of Castelo (2009, p. 82), education “[...] it is, in accordance with this perspective, entirely subordinate to the skill requirements necessary for the production processes of goods governed by the capital”. In this respect, he draws attention to the similarity between the theses presented in recent programs for Brazilian education and the neoclassical theses of human capital:<sup>3</sup> both naturalize the condition of employees and assume competitiveness in the labor market. That is, they naturalize what should be historicized. Thus, they obscure the main objective of obtaining qualified labor at low costs.

The governments of the Workers’ Party have developed and implemented a particular class education project. The implementation of this proposal was in the opposite direction to the expectation of an education focused on the interests of multilateral formation, of a polytechnic character,<sup>4</sup> financed by the State and under the control of workers that educational sectors and social movements had as horizon. Even the prospect of a more humanist education was abandoned. On the contrary, such governments sought to attend to the interests of the perspective of education understood as a factor of production, the aim of which would be to add value to capital through training for work and, on the other hand, ensure the expansion of the sector of selling educational services.<sup>5</sup> Rodrigues (2007), in the book “Entrepreneurs and Higher Education”, named these two basic forms of

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of human capital, based on a reductionist view, sought to present itself as an explanatory element of development as a theory of education. “The central thesis links education to economic development and income distribution” (Frigotto, 2010, p. 51).

<sup>4</sup> “The notion of polytechnics is directed toward overcoming the dichotomy between manual work and intellectual work, between professional instruction and general instruction” (Saviani, 2003, p. 136). This notion is based on Marx’s theory, which conceives the human reality constituted by work and will think of human education in the concomitant development of the exercise of members, hands and mental, intellectual exercise.

<sup>5</sup> On the subject see the articles of Leher (2010), and of Santos and Rodrigues (2015).

the bourgeoisie to view education as commodity-education and education-commodity. In the first, education and knowledge are reduced to inputs for the production of goods, in the second, education is the own commodity, to be sold on the market.

The motto of the second government – interrupted through the coup d'état –<sup>6</sup> by Dilma Rousseff was “Brazil, the educational homeland”. Education as the target of government policies appeared as the priority propaganda of the Workers Party when it entered its fourth presidential term. In the campaign and inauguration speech, in January 2015, President Dilma Rousseff decided to triple the number of enrollments in Professional Education, through programs such as the National Program for Access to Technical Education and Employment (PRONATEC), and reach 12 million places to “[...] young people, workers and workers have more opportunities to gain better jobs and can contribute even more to the increase in the competitiveness of the Brazilian economy.”<sup>7</sup>

We have here the priority model of training for work, of reeditin the ideology of human capital, of subordination of training to the logic of competitive economy, as the entrepreneurs desire and charge, whether for the less qualified worker, graduated in course of 160 hours of PRONATEC, be for the worker graduated in graduation. In our evaluation this is the basis of the project of all the expansion in professional education that occurred between the years 2003 and 2016.

The political direction of the central-left governments, in the 2000 and 2010, fueled the hypothesis of creating a model of national development (read, economic growth) in conjunction with compensatory social policies. The argument was based on the existence of a new myth: economic growth with social and environmental development as a project to overcome social inequalities (Mota; Amaral; Peruzzo, 2012, p. 162). This is how the Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff governments promoted the changes and expansion of professional education, as a specific education to meet different expectations, both those of the productive and economic sectors, as well as those of a social, social, economic and social sectors. That in contemporary times they become labeled as inclusion in the perspective of social equity, seeking the conformation on the basis of society and the modification of the situation of pockets of poverty, but without shaking existing social structures, following the guidelines of international organizations such as the World Bank.

However, the course of recent Brazilian history leads us to observe, especially in the last decade, the limits of this project in the face of another structural crisis of the Capital. The illusion of a bourgeois solution to leverage the development of the periphery of capitalism unfolds in the harsh reality with which many Brazilians struggle for conditions of survival.

We can point out the deepening of the capitalist crisis in the US as the main aspect to affect the economic foundations of the government project in 2008.<sup>8</sup> According to Harvey (2011), in 2009, international global trade fell by one-third in a few months, creating tensions in mostly exporting economies such as Germany and Brazil. During this period, there was a strong resizing of the Chinese economy, combining relative reduction of the expansion of

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<sup>6</sup> For the period in question, see Demier (2017).

<sup>7</sup> According to <https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/448217-integra-do-discurso-de-posse-da-presidente-dilma-rousseff-no-congresso/>. Access on: Mar. 30<sup>th</sup> 2020.

<sup>8</sup> For those interested in understanding how the crisis occurred and its impact on the economies of the different countries, we suggest Harvey (2011). About the impact of the crisis on the Brazilian reality, Almeida (2012) brings data for the analysis of this situation.

raw material consumption and greater autonomy in relation to the various natural resources. These facts competed for the fall in commodity prices *from* 2010, the main pillar of the national economy. The capital demanded a strong fiscal adjustment with the appropriation of the public fund to protect the payment of the debt service.

In the words of Antunes (2016), “[...] this crisis has bolstered and brought the pt party myth of class conciliation to ruin.” This myth presented signs of fracture with the June 2013 mobilizations, when the PT was celebrating the anniversary of 10 years of the Lula government. The public degradation of health, education and public transport, added to others, began to show that the myth of a country that was walking to the first world was a devoid of fiction of any material ballast (Antunes, 2016). Rising unemployment, especially in industry, only between 2014 and the first quarter of 2016 reduced 1.7 million occupations.<sup>9</sup> From this situation arises the indebtedness of families, stimulated in the expansive cycle with government actions of income transfer programs.

From the end of 2015, the political forces opposed to the PT and that dispelled the change of government assumed increasing hegemony in Brazilian society, especially among bourgeois factions and with the support of the great media, spread an image of the crisis hostile to the Dilma government, which was the only one of the most important elements of the government. “[...] opening the way to an agenda which involves radical social regression” (Leher; Motta; Vittoria, 2017, p. 16).

Dilma Rousseff’s *impeachment* is the bet of the bourgeoisie to confront the crisis through measures that sought to speed up the pace and deepen the re- taken of workers’ rights as the counter reform of social security, the flexibilization of labor legislation and the restriction of the public fund to all social policies, through Constitutional Amendment 95/2016.<sup>10</sup>

It is in this context that we will seek to understand how the most intrinsic relationship is established between the expansion of the professional and technological network and the transfer of income, in the 2010, next.

## **The expansion of the Federal Network of Professional and Technological Education: the changes that occurred since the 2000**

The changes that occurred in the world of work, from Fordism to flexible accumulation,<sup>11</sup> point to the increase of the subsumption of science and technology to Capital. According to Kuenzer (2000), just as in Fordism we will have the education project

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<sup>9</sup> IPEA data. Available at: [https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/mercadodetrabalho/161117\\_bmt\\_61.pdf](https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/mercadodetrabalho/161117_bmt_61.pdf). Access on: Jul. 29<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<sup>10</sup> With Constitutional Amendment number 95/2016, under the command of President Michel Temer, the constitutionally guaranteed funds for education and health, free education in official establishments, single legal regime for civil servants, retirements of the general regime and the own pension schemes, Universality of the Unified Health System, preservation of indigenous areas, social function of the land, everything, finally, that concerns social rights, is bound to budget limits. What had previously floor becomes a ceiling.

<sup>11</sup> In the historical context, Harvey (2003) will identify the period from 1965 to 1973 as the most evident of the exhaustion of Fordism Taylorism, due to the very contradictions inherent in capitalism. Flexible accumulation, so called by Harvey, “[...] it is marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidity of Fordism. It relies on the flexibility of labor processes, labor markets, products and consumption patterns. [...] Flexible accumulation involves rapid changes in patterns of unequal development, both between sectors and between geographic regions [...]” (Harvey, 2003, p. 135).

based on the demand of the productive system, the flexible accumulation will not be different. The discourse on education will be for the need to train flexible professionals who follow and dominate the technological changes arising from contemporary scientific production. We understand that the formative requirement is now more flexible. That does not mean, in any way, that we are moving toward the elimination of the dual structure on which institutionalized knowledge is based. In true, the new requirements to the worker go through other requirements to the work for the maintenance of this structure.

The constitution of the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (RFEPCT), through Law n. 11.892, of December 29th, 2008, was established with the creation of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology, which were formed from the merger of the Federal Centers for Technological Education (CEF), the Federal Agrotechnical Schools and the Technical Schools linked to Federal Universities. On December 29th, 2008, 31 Federal Centers for Technological Education (CFETs), 75 Educational Units (Uneds), 39 Agrotechnical Schools, 7 Federal Technical Schools and 8 schools linked to Universities ceased to exist to form the Federal Institutions of Education, Science and Technology. In 2012, Colégio Pedro II also incorporated REFPCT. From then on, these new institutions began to operate in a similar way to that of federal universities, at least in terms of the administrative structure.<sup>12</sup>

The paths for the expansion of Professional Education were opened by presidential decree 5154/2004 that deepened the structural duality of education, adding to it the conjunctural characteristic coveted by the world of work, flexibility, at all levels and modalities of formation.

Still in 2005, Rodrigues already indicated, when analyzing the impact of the decree on High School and Higher Education, that he was

[...] quite suitable for the most important feature of the current accumulation pattern — flexibility —, as it regulates all sorts of courses. In fact, the decree further expands the range of possibilities of “articulation” between high school and technical vocational education, since it provides for the possibility of a “integrated” technical level training, in addition to those already covered in Decree No. 2.208/97, namely, subsequent training and concomitant training. This is the core of the flexibility that seeks to reconcile some of the conflicting interests since the promulgation of Decree number 2.208 in 1997 (Rodrigues, 2005, p. 266).

In fact, the analyzes contained in this first Marxist critical text to optimism, which marked the launch of the decree, confirmed itself, mainly with regard to the flexibilization and precarious expansion of Professional Education, including in the configuration of Higher Education. Teixeira (2012) considers that the precarious way in which the expansion of the federal network occurred in the governments of the PT and how this process affects challenges/obstacles to the institutional and academic organization in the expansionary path, based on the model of the Federal Institutes of Education, should be considered as a counter

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<sup>12</sup> This information is available on the MEC website and can be accessed at: <http://redefederal.mec.gov.br/historico>. Access on: Jul. 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.



reform of professional education, Inaugurated by Decree 5154/2004 and Law No. 11.892/2008.

The expansion of the public technological network in the Lula and Dilma governments was planned in three phases.<sup>13</sup> In 2005, the Lula Government implemented the first phase of the Expansion Plan of the Federal Network, constituting it from the creation, expansion, agglutination and federalization of institutions such as the Federal Centers of Technological Education (CEFETs), Decentralized Teaching Units (UNED), Agrotechnical Schools, Federal technical schools linked to universities. Together, they will form the Federal Network that will become composed of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFS), Federal Centers of Technological Education (CEFETs), Technical Schools guaranteed to the Federal Universities and Federal Technological University (UTF), offering high school courses integrated to technical training, superior courses in technology and undergraduate degrees, as well as postgraduate courses. In the second term of Lula, in 2007, the second phase of the Expansion Plan of the Federal Network was launched under *the slogan* “A technical school in each city-pole of the country”, in order to create 150 new units. In the same year, the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFETs) were formed. The third phase of expansion started, in 2011, with Dilma Rousseff, whose goal was to create 120 more units. During this period, we also had the incorporation of Colégio Pedro II. In 2014, it reached 578 *campuses* in 512 municipalities. The most recent data of 2016 indicate that the federal network has 644 *campuses* in operation (MEC, 2015).

In quantitative terms, we had an increase of 400% in number of units. According to Silva (2012), a significant result of this expansionist policy was the entry of larger segments of workers in the federal network, in order to have access to teaching modalities restricted to the instrumentalization for subordinate work, differentiated from an education to access the highest levels of education and the productive chain. We observed, thus, that the expansion is a portrait of the very contradiction of Brazilian society. On the one hand, educational opportunities have grown on the other hand, these opportunities meet a demand for subordinate work, within a structure that has expanded in a precarious way.

We must agree, from the already developed so far, that the policy imposed in the Lula da Silva’s government did not change duality, and this articulation between general and technical formation came to meet a demand and a guideline of international bodies. And therefore, it was in the opposite of an educational political project guided by the commitment to the emancipation of the working class, even if all this expansionist policy, “gleaming like gold”, and the history of the formation of the Workers’ Party corroborate to the obfuscation of the criticism (Leher, 2004).

We share the understanding that Decree n. 5154/04, like many others that were necessary to continue the project of training in the PT governments, had as objective the expansion of training for work in Brazil, contributing to the increase in productivity and competitiveness in material and ideological production, increasing access to this type of education. The analysis of Neves and Pronko (2008) brings an important contribution to understand how the set of reforms carried out in the context of counter-reform, of this period, contributed to the passivation of the social places. A process characterized, according

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<sup>13</sup> Consult the expansion plan of the Ministry of Education available at: <http://portal.mec.gov.br/setec-programas-e-acoes/expansao-da-rede-federal>. Access on: Jul. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

to the authors, by the assimilation of popular forms to the objectives of society projects and hegemonic sociability. They point out that:

Upon promoting an early terminality in regular schooling, these decrees contribute to strengthening social cohesion in peripheral social forms, in times of increasing social inequalities resulting, in a large part, from the employment of orthodox neoliberal economic and social policies. In this process of recovering the technological education of the high school, little by little, the struggle of segments of Brazilian society for the maintenance of a technological education of integrated medium level, as an important contribution to the transformation of the current social relationships, will be diluted, and a significant part of these segments will assimilate these reformist proposals that integrate, submissive, popular social segments to the social project and sociability of the ruling classes (Neves; Pronko, 2008, p. 81).

Law number 11.892/2008, which established the Federal Network of Professional Scientific and Technological Education (RFEPCT), established mandatory percentages of vacancies for the IFs, but that, currently, also do not come to be served strictly by the IFS. The law obliges the Federal Institutes to offer a minimum of 50% of the vacancies for High School, the minimum of 20% of the vacancies for undergraduate degrees and the remainder for other higher and postgraduate courses:

Article 8th: In the development of its academic action, the Federal Institute, in each exercise, must guarantee a minimum of 50% (fifty per cent) of its vacancies to meet the objectives defined in section I of article 7 of this Law, and a minimum of 20% (twenty percent) of its vacancies to meet the provisions of point VI of the caput of the said article 7<sup>th</sup>.

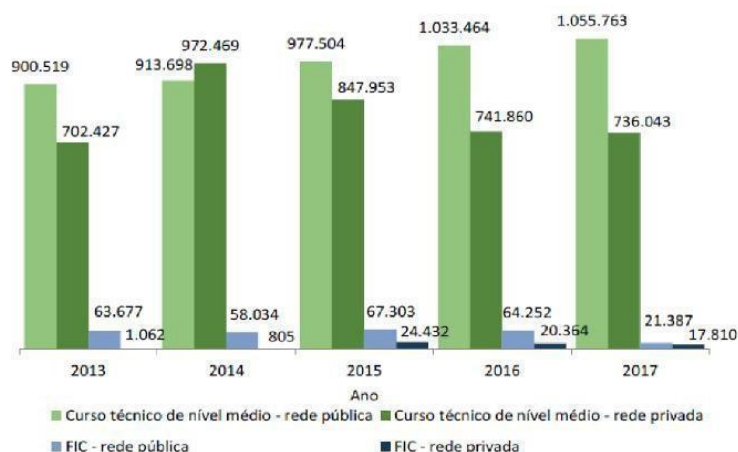
§ 1<sup>st</sup> Compliance with the percentages referred to in the caput should observe the concept of student-equivalent, according to the regulation to be sent by the Ministry of Education.

§ 2<sup>nd</sup> In regions where the social demands for training at the higher level justify, the Superior Council of the Federal Institute may, with the consent of the Ministry of Education, authorize the adjustment of the offer of this level of education, without prejudice to the index defined in the caput of this article, to meet the objectives defined in section I of the caput of article 7<sup>th</sup> of this Law (Brasil, 2008).

Given the mandatory percentage of vacancies offered for each teaching segment, it is clear the concern of the Ministry of Education of the time with the destination of these Institutes to offer basic education, mainly, in high school courses integrated to Professional Education. The expansion of the federal network had its base in Technical Education integrated to High School. As Decree number 5.154/04 provided for total flexibility in the provision of high school and vocational education, the choice was in the interference of institutions or, at the most, of the state secretariats. According to Brunow (2017), experiences in state schools did not achieve the expected success in quantitative terms, operating in few states and for a short time. According to the author, although Law number

11.195/2005 stated that the expansion of the technological education supply would occur preferably in partnership with states, municipalities and Federal District, the productive sector or non-governmental organizations, Integrated High School consolidated and focused on the educational network (Brunow, 2017, p. 212). We can observe these facts in the data presented by the Ministry of Education, represented in charts 1 and 2:

**Chart 1** – Number of enrollments in technical high-level courses and in initial and continuing education (FIC) courses by education network – Brazil 2013–2017



**Source:** School Census – Statistical notes 2017, MEC, Brasília, 2018.

Of the universe of medium-level technical course enrollments of the public network, more than half is in the federal network, there were 547,818 enrollments only in the federal network in 2017, according to data from the Nilo Peçanha platform.<sup>14</sup>

**Chart 2** – Number of enrollments in vocational education by education network and type of course (integrated, concomitant, subsequent and initial and continuing training)



**Source:** School Census – Statistical notes 2017, MEC, Brasília, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> The Nilo Peçanha Platform (PNP) is a virtual environment for collecting, validating and disseminating official statistics of the Federal Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education (Federal Network), monitored by the Secretariat of Professional and Technological Education of the Ministry of Education (SETEC/MEC).

In the universe of integrated high school, 223,893 are enrollments of the federal network.<sup>15</sup> Based on the above figures, it is undeniable the predominance of the public network in the Integrated High School. While, the private network has the highest number of enrollments in courses only of technical training, such data show the place of the Federal Network in the supply of Technical Education and what are the modalities courses that are accessible to young people in Brazil.

We concluded this section with the reflection of Santos and Rodrigues about the limit of this form of expansion of RFEPCT, since it was not the reversion of the subordination of public policy to the hegemony of capital, especially its financial fraction, in order to resize new economic resources to social policies:

In this sense, as the Brazilian economy enters another cycle of contraction, it is necessary to recognize that the relative long process of expansion of education (private and public, with privilege for the first) comes to an end – from the perspective of (con)formation of the productive citizen – led by the successive government of the Workers' Party, without, in fact, having faced the contradictions and inconsistencies that historically mark the Brazilian education (Santos, Rodrigues, 2015, p. 109).

## **Student assistance in professional and technological education – the logic of the functioning of PNAES<sup>16</sup>**

We can consider the National Program of Student Assistance – PNAES (Decree n. 7234/10) a milestone in the policies for the permanence of the federal network of Brazilian education. The defense for the necessary conditions to continue studying, historical agenda of the students' demands, is conceived through a strategic program that assimilates the characteristics of the policies to combat poverty developed by the Brazilian government in the 2000. The reduction of the effects of social inequalities, which prove the performance and academic path of students from increasingly impoverished social security, is the main strategy of the program (Nascimento, 2012). For this, the decree associates student assistance with the conception present in the social assistance policy, that is, in the notion of compensatory inequality policy, since it addresses students in “social vulnerability”. In Article 5, it delimits:

Students from the public primary education network or with per *capita* family income of up to a minimum and a half salary will be attended by PNAES, without prejudice to other requirements set by federal institutions of higher education (Brasil, 2010, Decree n. 7234/10).

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<sup>15</sup> Data obtained on the Nilo Peçanha platform. Available at: <https://www.plataformanilopecanha.org/>. Access on: Aug. 22<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>16</sup> We developed this point based on the study carried out by Arlene Trindade in her master's dissertation, defended in 2019. The author carried out an investigation about the permanence of students of the Technical Professional Education of High Level (EPTNM) in the form integrated to high school and their relations with the Student Assistance Policy, having as a case study the first class of Integrated High School Federal Center for Technological Education Celso Suckow da Fonseca (Cefet/RJ) – *Maria da Graça campus*, with temporal cut the period between 2014 and 2017. Available at: <https://app.uff.br/riuff/handle/1/10884>. Access on: Jul. 10<sup>th</sup> 2020.

The author Nascimento (2012; 2017)<sup>17</sup> contributes to understanding this historical moment of student assistance in Brazil under decree n. 7234/10 and, at the same time, presents a criticism of its structuring process as a public policy, considered possible only within the limits of the interests of the ruling class. We agree with the author that a phase of expansion and structuring of student assistance was operated in the 2000 as an integral part of the new hegemonic strategies of the ruling class (and its representations in the state bodies) in an attempt to consolidate educational projects consistent with the requisitions of commercialization, flexibility, productivity and accelerating (of services and social relationships), driven by capital to recompose its profit rates (Nascimento, 2017).

Seen from this perspective, the defense for student assistance poses new challenges to the dispute among the different educational projects. The incorporation of student assistance in the agenda of actions of the PT governments occurred when the “social issue” becomes a field of government intervention, with centrality in the concept of social equity, claiming to reprove the excesses provoked by the neoliberal idearity in its classic model (Castelo, 2009, 2012; Mota; Amaral; Peruzzo, 2012). However, its instrumental functionality can be identified in the way the student assistance was constituted, in its intrinsic relationship with the university counter-reform project.<sup>18</sup>

When analyzing the historical path of the assistance consolidation in Brazil, we cannot disregard the fact that, in the 2000, student assistance gains legitimacy and legality never seen before in the country. Such advance, at the same time, it expresses the expansion of these actions in Brazil, contractually, it symbolizes the linking of student assistance to the proposals for higher education compliance undertaken by the educational project.<sup>19</sup>

According to Nascimento (2017), the student assistance emerged as one of the main guidelines of the Program to support plans for restructuring and expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI) and was elevated to the condition of state policy. In the author’s evaluation:

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<sup>17</sup> According to Nascimento (2017), such a project, whose specificity is justified by the reformulations of the historical flags defended by the political subjects of education, was, by the author, called consented student assistance, in a clear allusion to the category of university reform consented, Built by Fernandes (1975). It reflects, therefore, the narrowing of attempts to structure and implement student assistance with the guidelines and objectives of the dominant educational project in the context of capital globalization – its spread to peripheral and dependent education, in countries such as Brazil (in the wake of the globalization of the so-called European Higher Education Area (EEES) (Nascimento, 2017, p.2).

<sup>18</sup> We must consider that the propellant movement of PNAES was the process of counter-reform of higher education. RFEPCT and its different levels of education were covered by the actions of student assistance, but the focus has always been higher education. PNAES, initially regulated by MEC/n.39 Normative Ordinance of December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007, was intended for students enrolled in face-to-face undergraduate courses of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education. In 2010, with the regulation given by Decree n. 7234/10, the recipient public becomes young people in federal public higher education.

<sup>19</sup> According to Neves & Pronko (2008), the World Bank Group-BM, the International Monetary Fund-IMF and the Inter-American Development Bank-IDB, act as economic and political-ideological drivers of Latin American capitalism. Thus, the State’s participation in the implementation of the new model of higher education extends from the planning of policies and management of the system, the provision of financial resources, the quality control of education, to the defense of equity and social cohesion, showing that there is no opposition between State and market in contemporary capitalism within the framework of social policies. On the contrary, there is a State that restructures itself, using new instruments of domination to defend the contemporary interests of the capital of expanded reproduction of the labor force and legitimation of capitalist relationships (Neves; Pronko, 2008, p. 113).

At the same time that those legal advances, possible from PNAES, contributed to the structuring and consolidation of assistance at national level – and its consequent extension to the different IFES, thus embracing a greater number of students – on the other hand, the institution of student assistance in the IFES, as a result of its incorporation into the government counter-reformist agenda, also meant its narrowing to the neoliberal guidelines imposed on Brazilian higher education (Nascimento, 2017, p. 3).

During the regulatory process of PNAES a new paradigm was constituted of student assistance, of restrictive and consensual character – narrow to the productive interests of the dominant educational project that, in the assessment of Nascimento (2017), was, at first, overshadowed by the optimism of the social movements of education and the academic community, in general, by considering student assistance a “advance in itself” (Nascimento, 2017), since many students, from that mode, would not need to stop studying to work.

In addition to this “terrifying optimism”, we would have, from 2012, a new student profile accessing the Federal Institutions of Education through the Quotas Law (Law 12.711/12), in which student assistance had become an essential policy for the permanence of these students. With the implementation of Law n. 12.711, of August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 (Quotas Law), the entry into the federal education network of students of the most impoverished working class has been guaranteed. However, their inclusion in student assistance programs is limited.

The proposal of PNAES, within a focused policy perspective, is not to meet the totality of students and not to consider the particularities of student needs in daily life for permanence. The *per capita* family income is the main socioeconomic criterion provided for in this regulation and the main means of selecting the public notices in the Federal Institutions of Education.

The expanded conception of student assistance (expressed in defense of the abolition of income cut for access to services and the construction of public equipment that permanently integrated the structure of the university – restaurants and university residences, day-care centers, living spaces, leisure areas) present in the claim agenda of social movements went beyond their objective character.<sup>20</sup> With PNAES, these proposals for universalizing inclusion have been replaced by a specific profile, under a low-income court<sup>21</sup> and submitted to notices that disregard the spontaneous delivery of students and bureaucratize access to student assistance programs (Nascimento, 2017).

Historically, it is on the agenda of student movements, or in the students’ daily education, the difficulties and constraints to keep studying and, as a consequence, it is the students who have been pressing for this social policy to become an effective right and advance in the sense of guaranteeing their conditions of permanence in the Federal Institutions of Education, in addition to the priority public provided for in the Decree.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> We have as a great example the flags of universalization of student assistance, strengthened within the University Reform Movement of the 1960, under the students’ pioneering spirit.

<sup>21</sup> The Decree 7234/10 determines in its article 5 that students from the public network of basic education or with family income *will* be treated in the scope of PNAES as a priority.

<sup>22</sup> The claims agenda of the National Federation of Technical Education Students – FENET, approved at the

The students have been, in fact, the protagonists of actions/demands for the expansion of actions in the scope of student assistance or the rescue of the paradigm of student as-systems of universalizing perspective. However, in addition to the priority public's stiffening, the lack of resources allocated – always below the student demand – is also a factor that acts in ensuring the focus of student assistance.

In 2014, we started to have the increase of resources for professional and technological education through budgetary action 2994 - assistance to the education of professional and technological education,<sup>23</sup> However, there was also an increase in the number of enrollments of the federal education network. This means that we did not have an extension of the resource for special assistance, because demand continued to increase.

Trindade (2019) considers that the main point that marks this “new” paradigm of student assistance is the process of “scholarship” (Moraes; Lima, 2011) present in this program. Although the PNAES decree does not mention in any way that the implementation is made through aid, the actions of the institutions, following the model of the income transfer programs of the social assistance policy, they have as their flagship the scholarship and financial aid programs. The Federal Institutions invest little in building a school structure for structural assistance that offers services, in addition to assistances. This demonstrates the emptying of an educational policy that guarantees the right to stay of the student, providing collective spaces and with universal character.<sup>24</sup>

The tendency to “scholarship” of student assistance services is also a consequence of the tendency to welfare of social policies, which does not prioritize the debate with students about their needs, in order to build a student assistance project that distanced itself from the logic of “ready packages” (Moraes; Lima, 2011, p. 4).

We agree that this “scholarship” strategy is associated with the process of monetization of social policies (Silva, 2009; Lima, 2017; Trindade, 2019). The focus of care and the process of monetization are elements of the government's economic policy that relates social policy and economic system in the process of capital accumulation (Silva, 2009).

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final plenary of the National Meeting – ENET – of 2014, regarding Student Assistance provided for: 1. FENET strengthen the fight for the free fare; 2. Build FENET student assistance seminar to discuss the policy of funding assistance within state institutes and networks; 3. FENET launch campaign for the construction and expansion of the offer of vacancies in the cafeteria and in the student housing; 4. Improvement in public transport for access to schools located in rural areas; 5. Fight for increased student aid grants (food aid, transportation, housing), based on demands (amount of students for better service); 6. Struggles for the guarantee of scholarship for the technical network's quota students. Available at: <http://fenetbrasil.blogspot.com/p/texto-aprovado-no-ultimo-enet.html>. Access on: Oct. 09<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Based on the studies carried out by Felipe & Silva (2018), in 2008, the first year of PNAES, the forecast of a specific budget for the provision of student assistance, a little more than 67 million reais. In 2010, when Decree 7.234 is established, this volume goes to 278.2 million, reaching about 1.2 billion in 2016. There is a growth of 1,875%, with an emphasis on the years 2014, 2015 and 2016, where a specific student assistance item for vocational and technological education begins to be foreseen in the budgets. Until then we had different budget forecasts described in the transparency portal: 4002 – Assistance to Higher Education Student; 8741 – Development of Educational Projects for Access and Stay at the University of Low Income Students and Socially discriminated Groups (Felipe; Silva, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> According to Moraes and Lima (2011), assistance consists of giving centrality to the Social Assistance policy as a strategy for managing poverty, made possible through the “administration” of the indices of poverty and absolute poverty. In this logic, on the one hand, the possibility of thinking the social totality and of understanding the relationship of this public policy with other policies is lost, such as: housing, education, health, work, employment, etc. On the other hand, it breaks with the inseparable unity between politics and the economy.

In this context, we have the transfer of resources between the educational institution and the student body, mediated by a bank institution, since, in order to receive some form of financial assistance, the student needs to have a bank account. With this, involuntarily, the “included” in student assistance programs accesses this right through income transfer and carries out financial movements to meet his or her needs. By this mechanism, part of the public fund is a means of valuing the capital bearing justice.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the end of financial aid may occur at any time, different from what it would mean to dismantle a policy based on the expansion of infrastructure and the number of workers – legally contracted – for its operation.

The context of low investments, the application of conditionalities for the attention of the target public, the focus of attention and the insertion of the students in the banking-financial circuit are the main characteristics of the process of implementation of student assistance under Decree 7234/10, that give us a condition to relate it to the process of “[...] commodification and financialization of social policies” by: commodification and also financialization of social policies (Silva, 2012, p.211).

Trindade (2019) evaluates that student assistance, under the term of Decree n. 7234/10, appears in an articulatory way between the policies of transfer of income and training to the market. In this sense, the relationship between the expansion of the Network of Professional, Scientific and Technological Education and the implementation of the National Program of Student Assistance reflects the unequal and combined relationship with which educational projects are carried out in societies of dependent capitalism.

The study developed by Trindade (2019) leaves no doubt that financial aid programs contribute effectively to the school permanence of a group of students. However, they are ineffective in eliminating the obstacles experienced by the working class that access the educational network and that end up causing evasion. Or, putting it another way, it is possible to affirm that receiving financial aid is not the only one, nor is it the main means to reduce evasion.<sup>26</sup>

Given these data, we can affirm that a Student Assistance policy directed by the conception that configured the social assistance policy in Brazil, reduced to focused, emergency benefits, aimed at a specific audience, reveals the limits of the policy of this student assistance. In order for us to have some horizon of qualitative and quantitative change, the Student Assistance must be understood as the actions directed to student permanence within the educational policy, which identifies and acts in its constraints. These are the challenges of the present time. Therefore, we want to make it clear that our defense is

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<sup>25</sup> According to Silva (2009), “[...] the development of the process of capitalist production and reproduction makes money itself a commodity. But a special commodity that cannot be bought and sold and therefore acquires the form of commodity given on loan. To this form, Marx calls interest-bearing capital. This fraction of the capital has the appearance of being autonomous and valuing itself in the financial sphere” (Silva, 2009, p. 174). The transfer of income acts as a kind of lever to include in the circuit of consumption of goods, services and rights existing in society, social groups that are prevented from this participation. The income transfer programs, by operating with the transfer of the so-called “exchanges”, promote the insertion of the poorest layers in the process of commodity circulation, that is, of value realization and guarantee the reproduction of capitalist accumulation (Silva, 2009, p. 177).

<sup>26</sup> Trindade (2019) presents in his data that of the 108 students who started the integrated high school course, in 2014, 76% per cent received the stipend at some point. More than half received at least three years. Of these, only 20 (18%) received for the entire duration of the course (4 years). Of the 73 students who completed in the expected time (four years), 51 (70%) were included in the financial aid programs. And those who passed through a reprobation (14), all were inserted into the programs. Of those who evaded – abandonment and jubilee – (21), 85% were “included” in the financial aid programs.



not to end what has already been agreed by the students, under Decree No. 7234/10, but rather to expand and make these achievements in the field of education really effective.

## **Final considerations**

The educational public policies of the governments of the Workers' Party did not seek to break with neoliberalism, as our analysis and the authors of the educational field cited indicated. In social policies, the was in the same direction, that is, the respect for the neoliberal principles, with the attempt to contemplate some social demands, incorporated them, subordinately, to what we call the policy of classes conciliation.

The search for a model of economic development in conjunction with compensatory social policies was the face of these policies, in the impossible attempt to achieve the proclaimed goal, the repair of social inequalities or a "government for all". The educational policies of the formation of the working class have gained new contours and expanded in a precarious way, without stable financing capable of guaranteeing them, in order to meet the demands of the Capital for training workers adequate to the conditions of intensification of the flexibilization of precariousness and exploitation of the workforce.

Focused, highly selective, financialized and scholarship-based student assistance, through resource transfers, reveal the fragility of a public policy that was not powerful in ensuring better conditions for student permanence, as a way of repairing part of the profound social inequalities that mark the Brazilian society and education. Subsumed to the financial crisis, social policies in Brazil were strangled by the public budget and the respective bourgeois mechanisms of placing it at the service of capital accumulation.

The days when we wrote this article were distanced from the analyzed context, the cycle of four successive federal governments of PT was abruptly interrupted, marking the rise of the ultra-right wing in the country. In the midst of a health crisis (the COVID-19 pandemic), economic and social unprecedented, the problems previously "open" gain clearer, more brutal, and more out of place contours of the dismantling of the State and frontal attacks on social policies, education and scientific production in Brazil.

In 2020, the great offensive against the rights conquered by our society, including under threat to the restricted representative democracy, allowed us to point out that even the nature of the educational policy materialized in the Workers' Party governs, insufficient before the needs of an omni lateral formation, on the one hand, and on the other hand, subaltern to the commodification and social conformation demanded by the Capital, it is about to crumble like a sand castle. A project is underway to destroy productive forces, including education and the production of knowledge in large proportion, operated by the government of Jair Bolsonaro.

It is the concrete particularities of Brazilian capitalism (of colonial and dependent origin) and the existence of a bourgeoisie, which assumes the condition of dependence as a condition of its own existence, that allow us to understand why, currently, sparse and meager rights, such as access to education and forms of social protection, have been seen by the current government and the ruling class as threats to economic stability and order. In view of this, our analysis cannot give up radical criticism, but rather, under the inspiration of the Marxist classics, it must be at the service of the recovery of the social rights known and with-

drawn by the bourgeoisie in successive crises and point to the struggle for a future egalitarian society in which all of them are dispensable.

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# XI

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CONSERVATISM: DILEMMAS AND RESISTANCES OF THE PROFESSIONAL EXERCISE OF SOCIAL WORKERS BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### Introduction

The present text aims to carry out an initial assessment of the professional exercise of social workers of the policy of social assistance in the state of Rio de Janeiro, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, problematizing the ongoing conservative offensive, the capitalist crisis, based on the contingency measures of the health crisis and the challenges and resistance posed to the professionals of Social Work.

To this end, we organized the reflections in two sections, besides this introduction and the final considerations. In the first, we bring an axis of analysis of more open scope that aims to articulate the debate among the crisis of capital, the advance of conservatism on social assistance policy and the more conjunctural aspects related to the pandemic. The first subsection deals with the impacts of conservative escalation over professional exercise within the Single Social Assistance System (SUAS); The second makes a problematization about the implications of the capitalist crisis with the health crisis and the rebates on SUAS that, due to the dismantling and defunding of recent years, find crucial bottlenecks to meet the demands posed by society, inflated by the spread of the New Coronavirus.

In the last section, we bring aspects of the reality of the state of Rio de Janeiro, presenting and analyzing the main dilemmas, challenges and resistances of Social workers of the policy in question, both basic social protection and the special social protection of SUAS. The reflections of this section point to the increase of the precariousness of work, accentuated under the conditions of insalubrity before the health risks, negligence and interference of the State (in the institutions of the Federal Government, states and municipalities) in combating the pandemic and guaranteeing basic conditions for the safe professional exercise and the conservative offensive that spreads in the management and operation of this policy in the current context.

## **Crisis, pandemic and advancement of conservatism in social assistance policy**

Faced with the worsening of the crisis after 2008 and the responses given to it, it is perceived a process of accelerated advancement of conservatism in all fields – ethical, political, religious, cultural, educational, moral. However, conservatism has never ceased to make available training and professional exercise, even more so when it comes to the Social Assistance Policy, whose past is characterized by patronage, patrimonialism, bureaucratic engagement, culture of favor, appears re-updated, enhanced under new contradictions.

According to Escorsim Netto (2011), conservatism in its classical form continues to mark its contemporary forms of manifestation, because it functions as a fundamental key piece in the reproduction of capitalistic social relations, never leaving the scene, and it is necessary to preserve the foundations of capitalist society and always making itself available.

The modern classical conservatism, far from defining itself as a pure and simple re-exchange, being against all kinds of change and progress, is compatible with transformations, but without ruptures with the social order (Poggi, 2019).

In view of this perspective, we understand that the manifestations of the extreme right wing that are gaining prominence in Brazil should not be seen as something “out of place and time”, as a totally new phenomenon in the current scenario, even because what is new in conservatism today cannot be understood by itself, but as an expression of the current configuration of the class struggle and the struggles of the oppressed (Iasi, 2015).

The ground on which these struggles occur and their configuration lays roots in the social relationships of production and property determining this historical movement, the moment of offensive of the ruling class at the national and international level.

According to Lowy (2015), some factors helped in the success of the growing offensive of the far right wing on the European scene, but that we could expand to the international level: the responses given to the 2008 crisis, which have much more politically favored sectors more reactionary than parties and movements of the center or the left wing; the process of neoliberal financial globalization, which, in addition to provoking a process of cultural homogenization, helped to strengthen fundamentalism and religious nationalism; cultural elements traditional historical antisemitic elements and colonial culture that persisted even after decolonization.

In Brazil, according to Braz (2017), the rise of a reactionary conservatism in the recent Brazilian context is linked to the management of the crisis by the ruling class, which no longer saw in the class conciliation project a compatible way of managing the interests of big capital.

Hence, even with all the austere measures carried out, the ultra-liberal offensive has advanced against the Dilma government since the beginning of 2013, obtaining its first great victory with impeachment, but that did not stop there, being a door to new democratic retreats and the destructuring of rights, as we see with what followed with the Temer government and with the current president Jair Bolsonaro.

In this offensive is the functionality and meaning of the right “new”, which is to press for the adoption of ever tougher measures against workers’ rights and public services, deepening the recessive exit from the crisis (Hoeveller, 2016).



From the 2016 coup, Brazil began a more dramatic phase of neoliberalism, which does not erase the gravity of the initial processes of implementation and subsequent consolidation of the rentier ruling classes project in our country (Castelo, 2017). Since then, there has been an accelerated increase in state coercion (violent and repressive attitudes) exercised against workers, gaining neo-fascist airs, confirming that the coup that led Michel Temer to power has a historical function of resuming, at any cost, declining profit rates in the country and coercively silencing the growing rifts of popular rebellion (workers and public servants strikes), student occupations, urban and rural, indigenous uprisings, the struggles of feminist, black and LGBTQIA+ movements, etc.).

It is in this sense that Braz (2017) states that non-classical Bonapartist forms will prove useful, because they form political forms not open-minded dictatorial, but that conspire against any democratic advance, even the bourgeois and any labor advance, social conquered by the workers. For the author, such a political form is not exactly an openly fascist form, but it uses fascist elements, a fascist political culture of attack on rights (Braz, 2017).

Fueled by the 2016 coup, the advance of the far right wing, capitalized by the bourgeoisie and parts of the middle class led to the election in 2018 of the current president Jair Bolsonaro, an ultraneoliberal government in the economy, conservative and reactionary in the social, in values and customs and increasingly authoritarian in politics and in the pursuit of social struggles, with an even faster advance of the offensive against social rights.

His actions have been aimed at criminalizing social movements that fight and resist and persecutions of critical thinking and the production of knowledge, which may reveal any trace that questions the conservative worldview that his current government wants to impose. Universities and Federal Institutions have been the main targets, because in addition to suffering from the instabilities, fellowships and stipends, they are highly attacked by the “Future-se”. The attack on universities also expresses the contempt this government has in relation to the importance of science.

We have also seen the constant investments of the Bolsonaro’s government on the struggles against oppression, the exaltation of chauvinism, homophobia, racism, among other oppressions – which has meant the increase in violence of all kinds in everyday life. In addition to actions of neglect with the environment and facilitation for the attack on the areas of environmental protection and indigenous reserves.

Before an economic, social and political crisis of such proportions, which is possible due to the pandemic, where the risk of death is faced, humanity questions itself about the possible alternatives and what kind of life one wants, which world one wants to build. With this, scientifically anchored exits that affirm the well-being of the working majorities may question modes of domestication and government projects based on high degrees of exploitation of the workforce, such as that of the current ultra-neoliberal government and fascist tendencies of Jair Bolsonaro.

As Iasi points out (2015), ideological fantasy assumes that people weave an idea that serves as mediation between them and objective reality, not as mere falsehood, but as a necessary illusion. That is, it is not simply to invent a lie, but to live a lie as if it were real, taking it seriously. And that’s what the government has been doing during the pandemic.

Thus, in order to recompose the ideological fantasy necessary for the proper functioning of the market, it is necessary to exclude from the field of possibilities some

alternatives where the revolutionary process and great social transformations for the welfare of the majorities appears as a possible world. The question is that, as in all ideological discourse, it is necessary to include the real basis to distort it later.

It is in this sense that religious fundamentalism, conservatism and reactionary move to delimit the possible field of this government, that is, a policy of death via the “natural selection” of the strongest, denying and distorting what is scientific, obscuring the artistic, cultural and cultural contributions, intellectuals who may question the limits of this manipulation.

Faced with this government that seems to continue defending the profits and welfare of capital above any other life, using increasingly authoritarian paths, one of the fundamental issues for the defense of the lives of workers is the struggle for social protection or what remains of it, particularly here is the non-destruction of social assistance as a public policy.

Since the implementation of SUAS, in 2005, new developments have been placed for the professional work of social workers, with assignments and competences in different spaces and with various legal guidelines and regulations. The social workers who work today in the Social Assistance policy are directly affected by new contradictions in their relationships and working conditions, in their routine with the teams, in the relationships with the users (Silva; Mauriel, 2019).

Even with the Normal Basic Standard – NOB/RH 2006, which demarcates the hiring via public tenders, this condition is not guaranteed yet for most professionals. It is common to find concurred professionals living with other servers with precarious contracts, without the same labor rights and for a certain time or by commissioned positions, which compromises the continuity of the actions. Such conditions have been challenging the planning and impose a strange routinization to the professional, who is captured by the routine of care and demands, without being able to reflect, plan and systematize his or her work together with peers and other professionals, dictating to meet the demands of users beyond the immediate.

According to Guerra (2010), such fragmentation and discontinuity of work do not allow the apprehension of the process in which the professional performance is carried out, limiting the knowledge of the totality to the elements that constitute the situation, making that what is manifested in the daily life of users is on the singular and immediate plane. Thus, in the professional daily life, given its current conservative structuring characteristics, the tendency is to consider the intervention by its result, without seeking its foundations and to carry out interventions that conceive the individual isolated from the structure and socio-historical context, in order to hold him or her accountable and, even more so, to blame him or her for his or her supposed success or failure.

It is not circumstantial that new demands for specific, autonomous and isolated interventions appear with families, therapeutic practices, actions of individual and/or social responsibility, requests for clinical practices. And this is not put exclusively in the guidelines of the Social Assistance Policy, but it comes from social, political, economic processes that involve it and the professionals who carry out their work in it (Silva; Mauriel, 2019).

Considering the recent changes that characterize the sphere of production and the world of work, which bring changes in structural employment, characterized by productive flexibility, segmentation of workers in increasingly complex occupational structures and the

expansion of services, the social workers are subjected to constraints in the face of the problems of intensification and precariousness of work in the institutional spaces where they perform their work (Yazbek, 2014).

Moreover, conservatism has been presented under professional conditions, since we have witnessed how superior education has been being pressed toward privatization, with curricula flexing according to markets, with the University increasingly focused on a technocratic perspective based on standards and criteria based on cost-benefit, effectiveness-inoperancy, productivity/unproductiveness, under strong interference from multilateral organizations (Yazbek, 2014).

Silveira Jr. (2016) points out that such trends are present in the notions, ideas and forms of rationality present in PNAS/SUAS. And its original theoretical sources, from which the predominant ideological aspects of the content and pedagogical processes of training of PNAS/SUAS, they are in multilateral or financial bodies historically linked to capital restoration strategies.

According to Silveira Jr. (2016), it is possible to identify three main rebates of these conservative trends in the Assistance Policy. The first is in the way of explaining social contradictions and inequalities, which are not understood by their structural determinants, but as a matter of wealth distribution or poor income distribution. Regarding social assistance, this means the centrality of defending income transfer programs as a priority strategy. The second aspect deals with the view of the State, seen in abstract and without class antagonisms, which gives strength to the idea of perfecting institutional superstructures, the technical and managerial arrangements of social policies in general, and the management of social assistance in particular; the third element is in the very conception of social assistance, which appears linked to the phenomenon of poverty identified as “deprivation of individual capacities”, and such a condition labeled as “risk situation and social vulnerability”.

This change has a deeper impact on the displacement of awareness and the purposes placed for social assistance, particularly when we see the increase in the target audience of social assistance, which becomes integrated by an increasing mass of precarious and sustained workers, in addition to unemployed people fit for work. Here these ideologies become a form of construction of their consent for their subordinated insertion in the precarious labor force market.

## **Pandemic and social assistance policy: health crisis and SUAS**

The identification of the New Coronavirus and its disease, COVID-19, has caused a kind of seismic shock in the world at the dawn of the year 2020. Between China’s warning to WHO about the outbreak of a new variant of the corona virus and the global health crisis announcement were a matter of days. What happened to the consolidation of one of the most serious pandemics experienced by humanity, with a very high level of contamination and the collapse of various health systems from the world to the outside. In addition, contingency plans were inexorably followed by the adoption of harsh measures of social isolation.

It did not take long for the health crisis to assume, in the narrative of the mainstream media and the global ruling class, the condition of cataclysmic factor causing a

serious global economic crisis, which would prove to be wrong the predictions for the GNPs of superpowers to peripheral countries. As every phenomenon bears appearance and essence, it is true that the measures of social isolation paralyzed an important part of the capitalist production and circulation of markets – products and services – slowing down the circuit of capital appreciation on a global scale. It is clear that such a situation creates problems of great magnitude for capital, which cannot produce value without exploitation of labor force, converging to the explosion of the crisis. However, it is not the pandemic that causes the crisis as the advocates of capital believe.

However powerful, the health crisis does not determine the economic crisis. The crisis is capitalist, as demonstrated by the criticism of the Marxist political economy from one hemisphere to the other in the world. Gouvêa (2020) presents central theses that help us in this understanding. The first is that it is not true that the world economy was recovering and that the fate of the pandemic precipitated a new defeat. Since 2018, at least a new wave of the 2008 crisis was underway, fierce by the geopolitical disputes between China and the US; in the second hypothesis, the author explains that “[...] even considering that the disruptive dimension of the current crisis has changed when the emergence of the pandemic” (Gouvêa, 2020, p. 21) it is essential to explain that the outbreak of diseases such as Covid-19 had not existed outside the capitalist mode of production, nor would its effects be the same in another form of sociability and production of life. The third argument shows that, in fact, the isolation required for contingency of the disease imposes the deepening of the crisis on scales never seen.

In Brazil, the effects of the pandemic have been enhanced by the federal government’s encroachment and irresponsibility with its irrational, unscientific and flat-earth foundations, with at least three changes in health minister, and now this ministry is the burden of a general. The context is bleak and at the time we produce this text, Brazil has more than 140 thousand deaths (October 2020), not to mention the high level of underreporting perpetrated by the negative logic that directs the management of the pandemic in Brazil.

In the dramatic context of Brazilian dependent capitalism, the health crisis has exposed the alarming conditions of unemployment, poverty, unhealthy and precarious working class living conditions. Under the beacon of an extreme right-wing government, the ultra-liberal economic policy entailed by Minister Paulo Guedes has since 2019 promoted a destructive offense on social rights, destructing public policies, depriving services and companies or state segments in the wake of counter-reforms like that of social security.

It is in this context of “devastated land” that the consequences of a sanitary crisis with the characteristics that we experience become tragic for the most impoverished segments of the working class, especially the most prized and/or those under the conditions of the phenomenon of “uberization of labor” (Antunes, 2020).

Shortly after the confirmation of the first case of the new coronavirus in Brazil, at the end of February, the federal government decreed “a state of public calamity” that, when determining the stoppage of some activities to enable social isolation, it elevates the services considered essential, among them these included the “social assistance and assistance to the population in vulnerability situation”, according to Presidential Decree number 10.282/2020.

Intervening on the context of public calamity would not be a novelty for the social assistance policy, since the very national typification of the Social Assistance Services,

approved in 2009, already determined that the services of Special Social Protection, especially of high complexity, would be essential in contexts of public calamity and emergency. In this regard, it is strange to the Brazilian social assistance policy to involve its services in a crisis of this size and we begin to observe a movement that bordered chaos so that the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), that had already suffered from the ultra-neoliberal offensive that engenders its defunding and dismantling, could account for the demands insulted by health care, in a context where the expressions of the social issue were already extremely fierce.

The deepest setbacks of Brazilian dependent capitalism expose, without any camouflage, the contingent of workers in informal work and without labor guarantees, the absolute poverty of people who survive, through the most precarious, unstable and despoiling activities, the fragility of income of individuals who survive from intensive self-exploitation and their families, glamorized under the mantra of entrepreneurship, outsourced, artists, small merchants, street vendors, domestic workers, application workers of all sorts and a myriad of others that make up the phenomenon of the uberization of work.

The pandemic unveils the very barbarization of life that capitalism operates in an attempt to guarantee its expanded reproduction, but how it affects – even if not in the same way – middle and high sectors of the bourgeoisie – the health crisis requires measures from the State and society that can mitigate the most harmful damage. The social welfare policy that has been in Brazil, taking on functionality in recent years to account for the demands of the reproduction of the working class, especially its most impoverished fraction or, to use Marx's terms, that contingent that composes the relative, stagnant superpopulation (Marx, 2013), it is requested to intensify its actions (Silva, 2020).

Even before the seriousness of the situation and the instrumentality that social assistance may have to manage more disruptive expressions of the social issue, social protection measures were objects of purposeful delay at the federal government's door.<sup>1</sup>

Almost a month after the announcement of public calamity, in the face of the deepening of social disaster and the intensification of public pressure by governors, mayors, state and municipal secretaries of social assistance, as well as workers and their organizational forums, as well as the users themselves, the Ministry of Citizenship begins a "rush" to ensure measures of contingencies of the pandemic and begins to try to "remedy" in days, the damage of the last four (4) years, allowing, for example, the use of account balances of Municipal Social Assistance Funds and flexibilize the allocation of resources to facilitate the purchase of Personal Protection Supplies and Equipment (PPE) (Joint Ordinance number 1 /2020, Ministry of Citizenship).

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, the Federal Government issued Provisional Measure number 953, designating an Extraordinary Credit for the Ministry of Citizenship with views to Confront the New Coronavirus, worth R\$ 2.550 billion. According to the National Secretariat of Social Assistance (SNAS),<sup>2</sup> the resource could be applied both in Basic Social Protection (PSB) and in Special Social Protection (PSE), and can be used in the hiring of personnel, in the payment

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<sup>1</sup> On 03/18/2020, the government announces measures in different ministries and areas (Economy, Infrastructure, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Regional Development, Health, Defense and Anvisa), but even a word about the measures of the Ministry of Citizenship that covers, among other areas, the National Secretariat of Social Assistance and the National Secretariat of Income of Citizenship. Such a stance already indicated concern with the areas of economics and health and total contempt for the suffering of thousands of Brazilians marked by insufficient income for survival and protection (Lopes; Rizzotti, 2020, p. 134).

<sup>2</sup> Live on the Channel of the National Conference of Municipalities, on YouTube on 04/17/2020. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9V4sE\\_YwhE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9V4sE_YwhE).

of complementary feeding of users and teams, payments of third-party services, increase of eventual benefits, such as funeral contracts (sic), hiring of caregivers, expenses with costing, purchase PPE, hiring of communication service, improve and adapt infrastructure for security guarantees regarding contagion, ventilation equipment, electronics, expansion or installation of internet network, etc. The initial priority would be to improve the reception units, public or contracted network, emphasizing the situations arising from the homeless population. The start transfer will take place through ranking, depending on the number of people in street situations in the municipalities.

Only at the end of April, the Ministry of Citizenship published Ordinance No. 369, providing for the emergency financial transfer of this resource for the execution of socio-assistance actions and structuring of SUAS network. The Ordinance lists a list of conditionalities and methods for calculations and definitions of the resources to be delivered in each municipality or state, according to their size and according to the amount of workers serving, users to be served, host vacancies, service modality. There is the determination, including the base value for calculation. For example, the reference values for network structuring regarding the acquisition of: “EPI, will observe the amount of R\$ 175.00 (one hundred seventy-five reais) monthly per worker, multiplied by the number of workers to be contemplated”; as for food, the base value is “R\$ 115.00 (one hundred and fifteen reais) monthly per person, multiplied by the number of people to be contemplated.”

The ordinance also emphasizes that “[...] the second installment referring to item I of §1st will be conditioned to the real need for the use of PPE, according to the recommendations of the Ministry of Health - MS, according to the complementary act of SNAS” (ordinance number 369/2020, Ministry of Citizenship).

Even considering that the bureaucracy has an instrumental basis for differentiating access to rights, and that the formula of the lowest cost-benefit is at the basis of every action of the capitalist state at the heart of neoliberal radicalization, the proof of “real need for use of PPE” in the context of a pandemic demonstrates the level of technicism, minimalism and even irrationalism to which the social protection measures have reached in Brazil.

In addition to specifying the physical goals, the municipalities and states should sign a Acceptance Agreement, present Action Plan and accounting procedures. Resources should be made available in two installments, each related to three (3) months of attendance, “observed the budgetary and financial availability” (Ordinance number 369/2020, Ministry of Citizenship, Art. 4) and the manager of social assistance policy should promote, at the end of the emergency situation in Public Health of National Importance, “the gradual demobilization of socio-assistance actions, implemented or reorganized in the scope of this Ordinance” (Ordinance Number 369/2020, Ministry of Citizenship, Article 10).

The allusions in question, regarding the way of operationalization of the resource for contingency measures and coping with the pandemic within the SUAS scope, may seem unnecessary, but they help to highlight the truncated, bureaucratic, restrictive and emergency character of the investments of the Brazilian State in social assistance policy. When we affirm this important character, we do not belittle the importance of such actions, but the permanently improvised character of incipient mechanisms of social protection.

The specific nature of the investment is even clearer if we observe that there is no recomposition of the federal budget for Function 08 – social assistance –, which is lagged at about R\$ 1.3 billion reais. This is a key point of the issue: SUSA already suffered from a

strong defunding and dismantling. Since 2016, social assistance policy has lost resources, which has been intensifying in the context of tightening fiscal adjustment, only due to Constitutional Amendment 95 and the hardened austerity policy advocated and implemented by the Bolsonaro government.

SUAS has always lived under the dispute of different social directions. There is no way to despise the advances achieved under the PT governments, with the consolidation of the normative framework, capillarised institutionality throughout the national territory, having the accession of the 5,571 Brazilian municipalities plus the DF and the 26 states (Lopes; Rizzotti, 2020). Even so, there have always been constant tensions in the guarantee of resources to effect the social assistance network, competing with the modality of focused program more compatible with contemporary capitalism: the income transfer programs.

Thus, the public social equipment and the contracted network have always undergone serious problems. Between precarious structures and limited human resources (whose relationships and working conditions are mostly extremely precarious), the list of elements that mark the physical conditions of the institutions, where socio-assistance activities and services are carried out, have always attributed great difficulties to the consolidation of a public network of quality services. Inadequate environments, very restricted accessibility conditions, restricted or non-existent means of communication and transport, or poor conditions for guaranteeing professional secrecy for the professionals of higher level who enjoy this prerogative, improvisation of installations, have always composed the range of the most blatant issues that undermine the existence of SUAS.

This situation has deepened dramatically in recent years and even income transfer programs – which since 2004 receive greater contribution from federal resources in the care field – have fallen investment. PLOA for 2020, with regard to the *Bolsa Família* Program (PBF), provided for the attendance of 13.2 million families, a reduction of 400 thousand families compared to 2019. According to Neri (2020), in net terms, about 1.1 million families were disconnected from the Program between May 2019 and January 2020. According to Paiva (*et al*, 2020), the PBF has an estimated queue of approximately 1.7 million families.

The interference of the federal government in the struggle against the health crisis and the manifestations of the social tragedy that it has been triggering occupy place of development in the world scenario. Even the emergency assistance – a measure that would not only contribute to ensuring the survival of informal workers and individual micro-entrepreneurs (MEIs) – but could also guarantee a certain potential for domestic consumption – was ostensibly hampered by the federal government. Since the proposition of the derisory value of R\$200.00, overthrown by the mobilization of the opposition that guaranteed a benefit in the value of R\$ 600.00, to the inefficient, delayed and nebulous operationalization, the government demonstrates its complete technical incompetence and contempt for social demands.

The government opted for a path that despised the institutional apparatus of SUAS itself, the *know-how* of the information system that manages the database of the Single Registry, creating a new parallel, confusing and efficient system, which privileged the use of mobile devices, via internet, for application. This strategy enhanced the exclusion of several segments of workers, such as street people and peripheral population, most of them without active CPF, which is a condition for the release of the benefit. On the other hand, it considered that an important part of the public to be benefited does not have cell phone or

internet access, not to mention the impossibility of operationalizing an application because they do not know how to deal with this type of technology.

Although the government has not resorted to socio-assistance services to compose the network of operationalization of guarantee access to the benefit, the difficulties of access, the truncated information and the very reference that the population has in the CRAS and CREAS also converged to intensification of demands for guidance, information and even assistance in the request for the stipend. This scenario that aggravated the already precarious and inflated conditions of demands and professional work in SUAS.

## **Dilemmas and resistance of the professional exercise of social assistance in SUAS context of the new coronavirus in the state of Rio de Janeiro**

It should initially be noted that the pandemic of the new coronavirus, although affects the whole of society, does not homogenize the way in which the different social classes experience and face it. Moreover, sanitary crises of these proportions have the potential to unveil and accentuate contradictions inherent to the capitalist system (social inequality, hunger, misery, unemployment, violence, among others), on which the professional category of social workers already has a theoretical – methodological, technical – operative and ethical – political accumulation to operate.

In this context, professional engagement in the intransigent defense is essential, especially a fundamental principle of the Code of Professional Ethics: “commitment to the quality of services provided to the population and to intellectual improvement, in the perspective of professional competence” (CFESS, 2011, p. 24 ), in order to better qualify to operate with the users of the Social Assistance Policy, in view of the complexity of the demands presented and the context of the advancement of conservatism within SUAS itself in the state of Rio de Janeiro, with “old” demands of said policy presented with a “new garment”, under the human discourse of solidarity and unity of efforts, that “we are all in the same boat.”

Upon observing the reports on the situation of municipalities in Rio de Janeiro, in March 2020, regarding the performance in the equipment of Social Assistance, extracted from the Note of the State Forum of Workers of SUAS (FETSUAS) – RJ on the work in the Social Assistance Policy and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible to confer conditions that already made precarious their services and benefits previously, and they are aggravated by the new contradictions that arise in the face of the health, social and economic crisis in the country arising from the pandemic.

According to the document, the socio-assistance services have functioned in person, some remotely in the period in question, but there is no contingency plan, guidance or operation protocols, consistent information on the part of the management or minimum safety conditions for prevention of COVID-19 contagion.

Moreover, according to the reports of the workers present at the FETSUAS/RJ meeting, in most municipalities, there was no regulation and/or effectiveness of any benefits, nor were there any articulations consistent with other sectoral policies.



In most municipalities, about which reports were obtained, the individual protection measures (PPE's), as well as hygienic products for users (AS) and workers (AS) were not being supplied, and, when needed, they were delivered late and in insufficient quantity. There was a case of a municipality in which soap for hand washing was not provided by professionals and users (AS), meeting Ordinance number 337/2020 of the Ministry of Citizenship and Guidelines of the Public Ministry of Labor, regulating the measures to deal with the situation of public health emergency arising from the New Coronavirus by SUAS, especially what deals with in Article 3.

In all the reports, it was evaluated that there was no proper training of workers regarding the use and management of PPE's and measures to prevent risks related to COVID-19 contagion, contrary to the guidance of the most diverse bodies, such as the Public Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Citizenship itself.

Regarding the adoption of relay shifts to promote better distribution of the workforce in order to avoid the concentration and proximity of people in the workplace, in most reports, it can be understood that there was release of work or for remote work of people from risk groups announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MS). In most of the reports, it was found that there was some kind of rotation among professionals in the equipment or reduction of the hours of operation and, in some, there was the possibility of teleworking, understanding this moment as exceptionality.

However, the guidelines for operation by the management are not consistent and follow any type of planning or concern with subsidies for offers to the public attended. There were also reports of coexistence of divergent forms of labor management, imputing differentiated conditions for the accomplishment of the work depending on the hiring bond. Thus, facts notified to FETSUAS are illustrative, regarding the guarantee of basic securities such as work by scale for statutory public servants and the intensification of the workload for those under work regime by temporary contracts and/or commissioned positions.

The workers consider that some of the interferences carried out by the management of the municipalities are related to the fact that it is an electoral year, where an attempt to assist the politics in favor of electoral finalities is perceived. Even, there were reports about municipalities in which workers were "forced" to distribute care packages without any type of personal protective equipment under the justification of being "home visits". In these cases, it was also observed that the technical autonomy of some categories that have in home visit a technical instrument and that should be chosen according to the specific evaluation, as in the case of social workers, for example.

The political-electoral use of social assistance policy in these terms remote to the cultural broth of coronelism, whose reticence is still corrupt in some municipalities, especially small ones, but not exclusive, such as that of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro. In a context that has already been marked by the delegitimation and disrespect of democratic institutionality by the federal government,<sup>3</sup> and the adoption of a social direction would

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<sup>3</sup> The dismantling of the councils of rights and the trivialization of social control perpetrated by the Federal Government is elucidating as the failure to convoke the National Conference of Social Assistance by the National Council of Social Assistance and the fact that the federal government did not make them viable conditions for the realization of the national body of deliberation of this field. It is worth noting, however, that there is a collective struggle for SUAS and for social control and the collective construction of the National Democratic Conference of Social Assistance, organized and carried out by various actors such as professional collectives, users, workers'

challenge the culture of rights, such processes become increasingly enhanced by a reactionary leverage in social assistance services.

It was also highlighted a more authoritarian stance by some managers of Social Assistance, which only aggravates the challenges to be addressed by the organization of workers and users in this movement. However, this is not a posture that occurs in all municipalities.

Regarding the infrastructure, the workers identified that the social assistance equipment that had already been worsened and wrecked, gained amplification during the pandemic, given the decrease of resources aimed at the implementation of the policy. Many workplaces and services that were already unhealthy before the pandemic, whose fragile and inadequate infrastructure of equipment – which already existed without ventilation, incompatible windows, windows without access to the internet – appear more aggravated by the pandemic. This leaves the professionals without support to meet the demands of the users of the service.

Another difficulty pointed out was the locomotion, since several intermunicipal transport lines were not working.

In view of the above, we must highlight the nuances that are behind the call for solidarity in a pandemic context of exception, in which there is a fertile soil for the intensification of the worker's polyvalency, as well as for the tendency to deprofessionalization and despecialization of the category of social workers. Thus, it is strategic and essential to defend professional private skills and attributions provided for in Articles 4 and 5 of Law 8.662/93 (CFESS, 2011), respectively.

It is also important to signal the significant difference between the social control of participatory and democratic bias, which includes one of the flags of struggle of social workers and the control of social by the increasingly authoritarian state, through political and charitable actions, that the Social Assistance Policy crossed by the advance of reactionary conservatism has been seeking to carry out, being in this context, of paramount importance for the necessary challenges and resistances, have in view the correlation of forces of each socio-occupational space, the existing fragile bonds and a territorial analysis of it, where there are spaces with greater tension than the other.

To exemplify the advance of reactionary conservatism in SUAS, we analyze the case of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro (Full Management)<sup>4</sup> in relation to working with people in street situations. During this pandemic scenario, the actions called “intersectoral approaches” or “joint actions” returned, which relate to activities of “urban cleaning” and political-partisan nature, involving the Military Police, the Municipal Guard, the Municipal Company of Urban Cleaning (COMLURB), the Regional Superintendents and professionals of SUAS, among them, social workers, with the false speech that the latter are present to ensure that there is no violation of law in these actions.

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forums and civil society representatives, on November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in Brasília, it is an expression that this struggle is alive.

<sup>4</sup> Namely, in the case of municipal management and the Federal District, three levels of qualification are possible to SUAS: initial, basic and full. The initial management is due to the municipalities that meet minimum requirements, such as the existence and functioning of council, fund and municipal social assistance plans, as well as the execution of basic social protection actions with own resources. At the basic level, the municipality assumes, with autonomy, the management of basic social protection. At the full level, it goes on to the total management of socio-assistance actions (source: Ministry of Citizenship).

Such joint actions, however, greatly impair the work of the procedural approach carried out by the teams of the Special Reference Centers for Social Assistance (CREAS), as well as erode and weaken the links established between the teams and the users in street situation of these territories.

It is valid to signal that there is no naivety in any concept, so it is necessary to reflect on the concepts of vulnerability, risk and social exclusion, laid down in the National Policy of Social Assistance (Brazil, PNAS/2004) and the Single System of Social Assistance (Brazil, NOB-SUAS/2005), it is important to seek to unveil the underlying principles of them and understand the social direction they point out, of transformation or of reality maintenance.

Thus, concerning the Social Assistance Policy, analyzing critically what the concepts of vulnerability, risk and exclusion have in common, comes to a reactionary perspective, blaming the individual for his or her situation, untying his or her problems from a structural context, which is the basis of the capitalist system.

Regarding the said public policy, in the sense of resistance to these tendencies of dismantling of SUAS, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the decisions and fight flags of the CFESS–CRESS group: defense of Social Assistance as a Law and of SUAS as a public policy and the working conditions of social workers and other workers; Articulation with or after professional categories, through the insertion in the forum of workers / of SUAS, in the spaces of social control and the political organizations of workers for the defense of work management, and incidence in the desks of business; repudiation of first-damismo in social assistance policy and re-use of welfare practices, which reproduce the logic of favor over rights; defense of SUAS 100% state, universal and quality, based on the principles of social protection; defense that the Benefit of Continuous Benefit (BPC), as well as donations of a provisional nature, are not computed in the calculation of family income, for the purpose of access to income transfer programs and that *per capita* income is of a minimum wage; defense of termination of the conditionalities of users and families benefiting from income transfer programs; participate in the spaces for discussion of the public budget and financing of public policies, with a view to the approval of EC 95/2016 (CFESS, 2018).

It is of great value to highlight here the work that has been carried out by *the* “CFESS-CRESS Aggregate: actions in defense of life”, to defend the profession and professional work, since Social Work is at the forefront of action against the New Coronavirus, together with other professionals throughout Brazil. However, despite being provided in article 3, item d, of the Code of Ethics of the Social Worker: “participating in assisting programs to the population in a situation of public calamity, in the care and defense of their interests and needs” (CFESS, 2011, p.27), it is essential to highlight that the category of social workers is not composed of heroines and heroes, but is a working class and, as such, collective struggle with other bodies, organs and social movements is necessary in order to have guaranteed the technical and technical conditions for the protected, qualified and committed professional performance. It is worth mentioning, the dispatch of regulations and resolutions in this context, in order to subsidize the work of social workers, arising from debates through the Guidance and Supervision Commissions (COFI’S) and the legal assessments of the whole, based on guidelines of sanitary authorities with scientific support, for actions to defend profession, work and life.

## Final considerations

It is worth noting that this pandemic is serving, among so many things, to give transparency, to society in general, of the main problems produced by the capitalist system, precisely, in a dependent capitalist country marked by a profound and historical social inequality, in addition to proving the use of blows to it and its rulers that the main “weapons” to win this “war” are those that have been so attacked and disillusioned by the public power in the contemporary Brazilian state: SUS; Science; Education (in particular, Public Universities); Art; Culture; SUAS.

It is of great value to point out that, although the media devices try to pass on an idea that “we are all in the same boat”, certainly we are not, given the reality of most users of the Social Assistance policy. In short, we are talking about the “risk of not being able to meet the risks” (part of the live title held on 04/16/20 by the National Association of Education and Research of the Public Field – ANEPCP). If the current “vaccination” is social distancing/isolation, the call to “stays at home”, imagine how these people are even more unprotected, in particular, the homeless population in this situation.

Thus, staying at home and having a house to fulfill the crucial orientation of the authorities and health agencies to decrease the speed of the spread of the virus in this time of pandemic, in fact, are class privileges, of which, the users (as) of Social Assistance, especially the people who use the streets as living space and/or survival do not have. Thus, measures of distancing, social isolation and quarantine cannot be disassociated with social protection measures, otherwise the less-favored classes will suffer much more the impacts of this pandemic. We cannot continue to naturalize the social tragedy lived, we cannot return “to normal”, since this is the essence of the problem. In fact, “the class struggle will not end because of the coronavirus, but we can mitigate it” (speaks of sociologist and Doctor Professor of UERJ Dario Souza e Silva during the live “Street population and COVID19”, on 04/15/20).

Moreover, it is essential to seek to break with the preserved inheritance of the identity of the users of SUAS, who are stigmatized as disorganized, depoliticized and available for electoral maneuvers. It is also necessary to reflect on the absence of the debate of the social class in the Social Assistance Policy and to problematize the concepts of vulnerability and social risk contained in it (Couto; Yazbek and Raichelis, 2014). Highlight also for the importance to collectivize the struggle of SUAS beyond the scope of Social Work, aiming for the working class of Social Assistance policy, with emphasis on its politicization and criticality to overcome the above-mentioned security.

It is important to emphasize that, in pandemic contemporaneity, the role of the State has been called to guarantee forms of ownership and new niches of commodification that generate a degree of exploitation of such an order, which exposes the minimum conditions of existence, by expropriating the means of life by destroying social rights. It is in this sense that the State has found a new organic articulation between the repression of the working class and the conservative assistencial forms, aimed at confronting the “social issue” in the Brazilian dependent capitalism, measures reissued in the face of the crisis that we have experienced since 2008, deepened from the 2016 coup, with the exhaustion of the neoliberal cycle allied to the class conciliation project.

Thus, the conservative character of social assistance and its functionality in the reproduction of the working class for the maintenance of *the status quo* are evidenced, being assistance programs and eventual benefits, such as the case of Emergency Assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, useful strategies of capital to regulate the market at low cost, leaving its users “captive” of their minimalist logic of rights.

In this sense, it is essential that the category of social workers follow in the defense of the fight flags of the CFESS-CRESS set, among which, highlight the appreciation of SUAS and SUS, inspired by the fundamental principle II of the Code of Professional Ethics: “Intransigent defense of human rights and refusal of agency and authoritarianism” (CFESS, 2018), under the aegis of the professional ethical-political project committed to human emancipation.

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