

**CURRICULAR POLICIES AND CRITICAL REFLECTIVE TRAINING IN HIGH SCHOOL IN CONTEXTS OF TRANSFORMATION**

**POLÍTICAS CURRICULARES E FORMAÇÃO CRÍTICA REFLEXIVA NO ENSINO MÉDIO EM CONTEXTOS DE TRANSFORMAÇÃO**

**POLÍTICAS CURRICULARES Y FORMACIÓN REFLEXIVA CRÍTICA EN LA ESCUELA SECUNDARIA EN CONTEXTOS DE TRANSFORMACIÓN**

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**ABSTRACT:**

This article analyzes the impact of curricular policies on Brazilian High School, with an emphasis on the formative itineraries shaped by neoliberal logic, which permeates teaching and learning relations. Based on a bibliographic review combined with documentary analysis, and grounded in the Foucauldian perspective, the study discusses the challenges posed to contemporary education, particularly regarding the notion of entrepreneurship of the self and the discourse of individual responsibility. The selected documents focus on the legal frameworks established after Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2018. The study is anchored in the debate on the formation of flexible and autonomous subjects for the labor market and the meanings attributed to the direction taken by education under neoliberal rationality. This articulation between economy and education directly affects the daily practices of schooling, shaping students as self-managers, to the detriment of a critical, reflective, and socially engaged education.

**Keywords:** teaching and learning relationships. neoliberal rationality. curriculum policies. teacher and student.

**RESUMO:**

Este artigo analisa o impacto das políticas curriculares no Ensino Médio, com ênfase nos itinerários formativos orientados pela lógica neoliberal, a qual atravessa as relações de ensino e aprendizagem. A partir de uma análise bibliográfica articulada à análise documental, fundamentada na perspectiva foucaultiana, discutem-se os desafios impostos à educação contemporânea, especialmente no que se refere ao empreendedorismo de si e à responsabilização individual. Os documentos selecionados concentram-se nos marcos legais posteriores à Resolução CNE/CEB nº 3/2018. O estudo fundamenta-se no debate acerca da formação de sujeitos flexíveis e autônomos para o mercado de trabalho e dos sentidos atribuídos à orientação assumida pela educação sob a racionalidade neoliberal. Essa articulação entre economia e educação incide diretamente sobre o cotidiano escolar, configurando estudantes como gestores de si mesmos, em detrimento de uma formação crítica, reflexiva e socialmente comprometida.

**Palavras-chave:** relações de ensino e de aprendizagem. racionalidade neoliberal. políticas de currículo. professor e estudante.

## RESUMEN:

Este artículo analiza el impacto de las políticas curriculares en el Bachillerato, con énfasis en los itinerarios formativos orientados por la lógica neoliberal, la cual atraviesa las relaciones de enseñanza y aprendizaje. A partir de un análisis bibliográfico articulado con el análisis documental, y fundamentado en la perspectiva foucaultiana, se discuten los desafíos que enfrenta la educación contemporánea, especialmente en lo que respecta al emprendimiento de sí y a la responsabilización individual. Los documentos seleccionados se centran en los marcos legales posteriores a la Resolución CNE/CEB n° 3/2018. El estudio se basa en el debate sobre la formación de sujetos flexibles y autónomos para el mercado laboral y los sentidos atribuidos a la orientación que ha asumido la educación bajo la racionalidad neoliberal. Esta articulación entre economía y educación incide directamente en el cotidiano escolar, configurando a los estudiantes como gestores de sí mismos, en detrimento de una formación crítica, reflexiva y socialmente comprometida.

**Palabras clave:** relaciones de enseñanza y aprendizaje. racionalidad neoliberal. políticas de currículo. maestro y estudiante.

## Introduction

The transformations that have taken place in the educational field over recent decades strongly reflect the effects of neoliberal rationality on curriculum policies, particularly regarding the growing emphasis on entrepreneurship as a desirable and transversal competence. Under the justification of forming "autonomous," "protagonist," and "self-responsible" individuals, contemporary discourses have redefined the role of the school, assigning to the curriculum the task of preparing students for an ever-changing labor market. This shift has been critically examined by authors such as Apple, whose work reveals the mechanisms through which the curriculum operates as an instrument for reproducing inequalities, while simultaneously naturalizing certain forms of knowledge to the detriment of others in this study, the valorization of self-entrepreneurship in opposition to critical and reflective thinking (Pizolati, 2025).

By problematizing the curriculum as a social and political construct, Apple argues that it "is always part of a struggle, a contested space over what should be considered legitimate knowledge" (Apple, 2006, p. 45). From this perspective, the emphasis on school-based entrepreneurship, when disconnected from an ethical commitment to social justice, may contribute to the consolidation of an educational project grounded in meritocracy one that places responsibility on the individual while diminishing the role of the State. Thus, it becomes necessary to analyze to what extent current curricular proposals, by incorporating entrepreneurship, reinforcing logics of individual accountability that shift the debate away from the structural conditions that limit equitable access to quality education.

A critical understanding of the reforms that have shaped Brazilian high school, especially following the ratification of the BNCC-EM (Brasil, 2018) and the enactment of the high school (Brasil, 2024), requires an analysis that goes beyond the normative text. This is a process embedded in structural instabilities and political disputes that permeate the educational field, demanding close attention to the multiple forces in tension. The transformations that culminated in the so-called high school began with Provisional Measure No. 746/2016, later converted into Law No.13.415/2017, triggering intense conflicts among various segments of civil society, academia, and the private sector. In this context, the educational field is recognized as a site of disputes involving diverse social actors: such as teachers, students, educational collectives, and business entities, who contend over the meaning and direction of curricular policies in the process of subject formation.

As established by Resolution CNE/CP No. 4, dated December 17, 2018, the curricular structure defined at the time provided for a total of 3,000 hours of instruction in high school, organized over three academic years with a minimum of 1,000 hours per year. This structure consisted of a General Basic Education common to all students, complemented by the so-called formative itineraries, which allowed for elective tracks focused either on Technical and Professional Education or on deepening specific areas of knowledge. This curricular flexibilization logic was legitimized by the National Common Core Curriculum for High School (BNCC-EM), enacted in 2018.

With the enactment of Law No. 14.945, dated July 31, 2024, the National Policy for Upper Secondary Education was established, introducing significant changes to the Law of Guidelines and Bases for National Education (Law No. 9.394/1996) and revoking provisions of Law No. 13.415/2017. This new legislation focuses on the curricular reorganization of this stage of education, prioritizing the comprehensive development of students and strengthening pedagogical flexibility through the reformulation of formative itineraries.

As Brunel (2004, p. 45) observes, “essa lógica educacional tende a priorizar a versatilidade e a capacidade de adaptação contínua, muitas vezes em detrimento de uma formação crítica e aprofundada.” This statement becomes particularly relevant when analyzing the BNCC-EM through the lens of market demands, which repositions the role of the school by shifting its historical commitment to citizenship education and social emancipation. This raises a pressing question: by emphasizing the preparation of individuals for the labor market, is the school relinquishing its role in forming critically aware and socially engaged citizens? This concern becomes even more acute when considering that neoliberal rationality redefines

individuals as “entrepreneurs of themselves” shifting responsibility for success or failure entirely onto the individual. In this sense, Han (2018, p. 16) warns that “the neoliberal subject, characterized by self-exploitation, internalizes personal failure as a personal flaw, ignoring the structural and social factors that influence their reality”.

In this context, the principle of learning to learn emerges as a response to the demands of an increasingly flexible and volatile labor market. According to Biesta (2018, p. 78), “neoliberal logic requires individuals to constantly adapt to change, transforming them into multifunctional subjects, capable of continuously reinventing themselves.” However, while this emphasis on adaptability and innovation may open new possibilities, it also leads to the precarization of labor relations and the devaluation of deeper, more specific forms of knowledge. As Pinto (2017, p. 67) observes, “the BNCC, by focusing on preparing students for the labor market, may obscure its role in promoting a more critical and reflective civic education”.

Neoliberal rationality, which has become consolidated over recent decades, is responsible for shaping Brazilian educational policies, and is embodied in the BNCC-EM (Pizolati, 2025). In this framework, the principle of learning to learn, often associated with the valorization of entrepreneurship of the self, supports the construction of a subject perceived as autonomous and fully responsible for their choices and outcomes. This conception shifts the entire burden of success or failure onto the individual, thereby naturalizing inequalities and disregarding structural conditions. In this context, Han (2018) argues that the neoliberal model idealizes a subject who, driven by belief in individual freedom, ends up exploiting themselves, internalizing the logic of competition and interpreting as personal failure what often stems from broader social factors.

The Base (Brasil, 2018), by emphasizing autonomy and individual responsibility as formative pillars, explicitly incorporates the principles of neoliberal rationality. This perspective guides the preparation of students for a labor market marked by precariousness, instability, and intensified competition. By shifting the burden of social adversity onto the individual, the current curricular proposal tends to obscure structural inequalities and historical power asymmetries within society, a phenomenon already identified by Bauman (2008) in his analysis of the disintegrating effects of neoliberal dynamics on social and collective bonds.

In this context, entrepreneurship of self emerges as one of the central pillars of the high school reform, directly reflecting the logic of individual accountability that permeates current educational policies. Since the 1970s, the notion of entrepreneurship has been incorporated

into curricular reforms and pedagogical discourse, grounded in frameworks such as that of Schumpeter (1997), who conceives the entrepreneur as a driving force of innovation and economic development. As the author states, “the entrepreneur is the one who, by innovating, drives economic progress” (Schumpeter, 1997, p. 12). This view has been transposed into the educational field, promoting the formation of subjects considered innovative, self-sufficient, and adaptable to market demands, traits that, while valued, may, when disconnected from a commitment to equity, contribute to the naturalization of inequalities and the depoliticization of educational formation.

This logic is clearly embedded in the general competencies outlined in the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC-EM), which states that students should “exercise protagonism and responsibility in their life paths, based on the development of competencies related to innovation, problem-solving, and the creation of solutions for diverse contexts” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 50). Furthermore, the BNCC-EM emphasizes that the formative itineraries should promote “autonomy, critical thinking, and creativity, aligning educational training with the demands of the global market and the characteristics of the contemporary world” (BRASIL, 2018, p. 45).

From this perspective, entrepreneurship of the self is shaped as a mechanism for labor market insertion and as a tool for responding to neoliberal economic dynamics. By encouraging students to become managers of their own life paths, the BNCC-EM legitimizes a type of education that prioritizes flexibility, innovation, and self-responsibility, often at the expense of a collective and critical approach to the role of education in social transformation (Pacheco, 2009). In this way, market logic becomes central to the configuration of the curriculum, promoting subjects who internalize economic demands as an intrinsic part of their formation and identity.

This study is based on a bibliographic review combined with documentary analysis, with the central objective of understanding how curricular policies, particularly the BNCC-EM, contribute to the shaping of subjects forged under the aegis of neoliberal rationality. In this context, the central role of entrepreneurship of the self becomes evident as an expression of the constitution of a neossujeito (new subject), resulting from the articulation of educational, social, and economic logics that permeate curricular reforms within basic education.

Accordingly, the following section presents the methodology adopted in the research, while the subsequent parts focus on the analysis of entrepreneurship of the self as a device of governmentality, based on the formulations of Michel Foucault. The discussion then turns to

the issue of curricular flexibilization as a strategy that intensifies the logic of individual accountability, particularly in the educational trajectory of Ensino Médio students. This dynamic contributes to the depoliticization of the structural conditions that shape human development directed toward labor, income generation, and social inclusion. In other words, it raises the question of how this market-oriented logic redefines the subject's relationship with themselves and with others, shaping the meaning of schooling within the scope of formative itineraries and the individual responsibility associated with life projects.

## **Theory and method**

This article was developed based on a bibliographic review combined with documentary analysis, with the aim of investigating the interfaces between neoliberal rationality and subject formation within the context of contemporary curricular reforms. The selected studies address categories such as teaching and learning, entrepreneurship, and student formation, and served as the foundation for the critical dialogue with the legal frameworks analyzed and the theoretical references adopted. The bibliographic search was conducted through the platforms Google Scholar and SciELO and was supplemented by references cited within the selected studies themselves, which formed the basis for the analysis developed throughout the article.

In terms of normative frameworks, this study adopts as its temporal scope the legislation and curricular guidelines that, beginning in the 1990s, shaped the field of Brazilian educational reforms aimed at high school. The starting point is the enactment of Law No. 9.394, dated December 20, 1996 (LDB), which establishes the general guidelines and foundations of national education and introduces, among other principles, the articulation between education and labor. Article 35 of this law specifically provides for the organization of high school with a view to ensuring the comprehensive development of students.

Law No. 12.616/2012, although directed at the organization of the Labor Court, is often mistakenly associated with educational policies that promote entrepreneurship. However, it does not address entrepreneurial education itself, but rather the promotion of entrepreneurship within education, aligned with neoliberal logic. This approach was later incorporated into guidelines such as the BNCC-EM and into resolutions issued during the period by the National Council of Education (CNE), which link school education to competencies oriented toward the labor market.

In the process of curricular regulation and revision, Resolution CNE/CP No. 4 of December 17, 2018, stands out, as it establishes the Base Nacional Comum Curricular for High

School (BNCC-EM) as the final stage of Basic Education. This regulation consolidates the proposal for curricular flexibilization through the distinction between General Basic Education and formative itineraries, as previously outlined in the LDB, now under strong influence from neoliberal rationality. The BNCC-EM, ratified in 2018, represents a continuation of the national base approved the previous year for Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and from that point on serves to nationally guide the organization of high school curricula, emphasizing competencies related to employability, innovation, and self-management, which are central to the logic of entrepreneurship of the self,

The most recent legislative debate materialized in Law No. 5.230/2023, approved with amendments by the Federal Senate in June 2024, which amends the LDB to formally establish the National High School Policy. This new legislation, later enacted as Law No. 14.945/2024, reaffirms and expands the principles of curricular flexibilization, maintaining the centrality of the formative itineraries and reinforcing the logic of individual accountability over students' educational trajectories, particularly through the emphasis on life projects.

Resolution CNE/CEB No. 4, dated May 12, 2025, establishes the National Guidelines for the Advanced Formative Itineraries (IFAs) in high school, serving as a regulatory framework that guides the curricular organization of this stage of Basic Education across all school systems in the country. These legal documents, analyzed in conjunction with the selected theoretical literature, provide the necessary elements to understand the consolidation of a curricular policy that prioritizes the logic of adaptability, self-management, and individual accountability, to the detriment of a critical and socially engaged educational formation.

As its theoretical foundation, this study draws on key concepts that articulate the relationship between neoliberalism and education, with emphasis on the contributions of Bauman (2008), Foucault (1975, 1980), Dardot e Laval (2016), and Michael Apple (2006), all essential for understanding the curriculum as an ideological instrument and a site of symbolic dispute. By denaturalizing the appearance of neutrality in school knowledge, Apple (2006) demonstrates that the curriculum is shaped by power relations, being selective with regard to the knowledge it legitimizes and guided by social and economic interests committed to maintaining specific hegemonies. This critique allows for an understanding of how certain competencies and discourses, focused on the individual management of one's own educational path, such as entrepreneurship of the self, are incorporated into everyday school practices under the discourse of pedagogical innovation. However, what becomes evident is the reinforcement of the logic of individual accountability and adaptation to the demands imposed by the current

order.

Foucault (1980, p. 194) describes the apparatus as “a multifaceted structure that encompasses elements such as discourses, legislation, institutions, and practices, conceived to respond to specific demands of a given historical moment.” In the educational field, entrepreneurship of the self operates as such an apparatus by organizing practices and discourses that promote self-management, self-control, and conformity to market demands. Also, according to Foucault (1980, p. 237), government refers to “the conduct of conducts,” that is, the ways in which subjects are guided to behave and to relate to themselves and to the world, under a normative logic sustained by discourses of efficiency, autonomy, and performance.

Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 38) expand on this perspective by stating that “neoliberal rationality structures all aspects of social and educational life, promoting subjects who self-exploit and self-govern.” This logic is reinforced by discourses that naturalize competitiveness, flexibility, and self-responsibility as pillars of educational formation. The Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC-EM), established by Law No. 13.415/2017, reflects this logic by proposing “autonomy and youth protagonism as essential foundations for the comprehensive education of students and their integration into the world of work” (Brasil, 2018, art. 36). Furthermore, Resolution CNE/CEB nº 3/2018 states that “the formative itineraries must promote autonomy, problem-solving ability, and creativity, articulating technical competencies with ethical and social values” (Brasil, 2018, art. 5º).

Within the context of the Base (2018), the entrepreneurship of the self operates as a mechanism that organizes educational practices and redefines subjectivities, shaping individuals according to market logic. This configuration requires students to internalize market demands and view themselves as solely responsible for their own success or failure, assuming the role of managers of their educational trajectories. In this sense, the ideal subject promoted by this rationality is one who, by continuously adapting, becomes the protagonist of their own formation and contributes to the dynamics of the market.

According to Bauman (2008, p. 45), “individualization transforms identity into a continuous task, in which the subject must self-manage as an entrepreneur of themselves.” This idea complements the notion of the new subject, as described by Pinto (2017), who states that “the formation of the neossujeito is shaped by neoliberal rationality, which demands constant flexibility and adaptability from individuals” (Pinto, 2017, p. 112).

According to Dardot and Laval (2016), “the new reason of the world is grounded in the

market economy, which reorganizes all aspects of social and educational life” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 38). This logic is clearly present in the educational policies of the high school, which aim to “prepare students for the challenges of the contemporary world, with an emphasis on developing competencies that integrate autonomy, responsibility, and innovation” (Brasil, 2018, art. 36). In this sense, the formative itineraries introduce the principle of learning to learn as a response to labor market demands, emphasizing adaptability and lifelong learning.

Han (2018) points out that, under neoliberal rationality, the subject is led to fully assume responsibility for their own productivity, operating according to a logic of self-management and self-exploitation, grounded in the idea of individual freedom. This profile is directly encouraged by the general and specific competencies described in the BNCC-EM, which promotes “autonomy and the ability to make responsible decisions as foundations for social inclusion and participation in the world of work” (Brasil, 2018, p. 48). Moreover, the document reinforces the value of skills such as creativity and problem-solving, considered essential for entrepreneurship and for functioning in economic contexts marked by instability and competitiveness.

The concept of self-entrepreneurship, however, goes beyond business creation. As stated, “the formative itineraries must encourage youth protagonism and autonomy, preparing students for the exercise of citizenship and their insertion into the labor market in an ethical and responsible manner” (Brasil, 2018, art. 5º). This orientation reflects an attempt to balance technical training with the development of social values, although, under neoliberal logic, there is an evident overload of responsibility placed on the individual.

In this way, the articulation between educational policies and the labor market transforms education into a tool for adapting to economic demands. Although competencies such as autonomy and entrepreneurship foster innovation, it is essential that preparation for the world of work be balanced with a critical and socially oriented perspective, ensuring that those being educated not only adapt, but also contribute to transforming society toward greater equity.

Thus, as Sousa (2019) analyzes, this study proposes a critical examination of how Brazilian curricular policies, particularly in the context of recent reforms, have been structured to respond to the demands of a globalized market, while also questioning the social and subjective effects of this neoliberal logic. It is observed that, although principles such as youth protagonism and autonomy are widely emphasized in official documents, their implementation may result in the transfer of structural responsibilities onto the students themselves, placing on them the individual burden for the success or failure of their educational paths based on the

selection of curricular itineraries.

## **Entrepreneurship of the self, curriculum flexibility, and neoliberal formation**

The 2000s brought significant advances in studies on entrepreneurship of self, marked by the maturation of the field and the consolidation of diverse research strands. However, this diversification also posed challenges to the construction of a unified theoretical approach. Shane (2000) identifies three main perspectives in this field: the domain approach, focused on specific sectors or contexts; the integrative approach, which connects entrepreneurship of the self to disciplines such as psychology and sociology; and the multi-research approach, which proposes segmentation into specific subfields. Although this diversity broadened the scope of investigations, it also “made it more difficult to build a unified theory and to compare results across different studies” (Shane, 2000, p. 219).

In the Brazilian educational context, neoliberal rationality is manifested in curricular policies that structure the Base (Brasil, 2018), which establishes the formative itineraries as the organizing core of curricular flexibilization. The document proposes that these itineraries be oriented toward the integral development of students, emphasizing competencies considered essential in the contemporary world, such as creativity, innovation, and the ability to solve complex problems. In addition, it places central importance on autonomy and youth protagonism, encouraging students to choose and construct their own educational trajectories based on personal interests and life projects. This proposal, by shifting responsibility for choices onto the individual, reinforces the logic of individual accountability and dilutes the collective dimension of school education.

By aligning educational training with the characteristics demanded by neoliberalism, these policies consolidate a logic that privileges adaptability and self-management. According to Resolution CNE/CEB nº 3/2018 – BNCC-EM, “it is necessary that curricular flexibility be accompanied by strategies that promote equity and universal access, ensuring that all students are able to fully and responsibly develop their life projects” (Brasil, 2018, p. 15). Thus, while these policies aim to modernize education and connect it to contemporary demands, they also require careful attention to avoid placing excessive burdens on individuals and perpetuating structural inequalities.

This orientation is intensified by Law No. 14.945/2024, which regulates the Police National of High School and reaffirms the alignment between educational training and the

demands of a constantly evolving market. The law establishes that curricula should prioritize preparing students for contexts marked by high complexity, by making school trajectories more flexible to adapt them to socioeconomic demands. Within this legal framework, the formative itineraries are presented not only as mechanisms to articulate education and the labor market, but also as instruments of subjective shaping, by promoting entrepreneurs of themselves as a central competence in the educational process.

Grounded in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Law No. 9,394/1996), Law No. 14,945/2024, and CNE/CEB Resolution No. 2/2024, CNE/CEB Resolution No. 4, of May 12 of 2025 aims to ensure the supposed quality, equity, and coherence in the implementation of the formative itineraries, seeking to articulate general education with in-depth studies in specific areas of knowledge. Among the main provisions of this resolution is the requirement that each education system and institution must offer at least two distinct formative itineraries, with a minimum workload of 600 hours. These itineraries must integrate the components of the BNCC-EM with pedagogical proposals that promote youth protagonism, active learning, and the development of projects that connect academic knowledge with social realities. The resolution recommends that the itineraries be structured based on interdisciplinarity and the appreciation of cultural, ethnic-racial, and regional diversity, as well as inclusion and equity.

Its enforcement begins in 2025, with mandatory application for students entering high school from 2026 onward. It thus reinforces the centrality of the formative itineraries within the structure of the high school and aims to standardize their implementation while acknowledging local specificities. However, depending on how it is operationalized, it may also reproduce the very contradictions highlighted by critical scholars, by aligning pedagogical practices with a performative and managerial logic that intensifies individual accountability and the adaptation of subjects to market imperatives.

The challenge, however, lies in balancing this technical and market-oriented education with the promotion of critical citizenship. Without such equilibrium, there is a risk of reinforcing individual overload, shifting to students the exclusive responsibility for their entry into and success in the job market, while disregarding the structural and collective factors that also shape these trajectories. As Meirieu (2005) argues, there is a danger of reducing educational formation to mere individual accountability. For the author, education should not be understood as a simple process of adapting the subject to external demands, but rather as a space of shared construction, where the presence of the other is a condition of possibility for

the development of autonomy. Meirieu (2005) emphasizes that genuine autonomy is not synonymous with isolated independence, but the result of a formative itineraries journey that involves mediation, conflict, and recognition of alterity. Thus, by promoting a discourse that naturalizes self-responsibility without acknowledging social constraints, the model of formation based on self-enterprising subjectivity undermines the role of the school as a space for democratic and solidarity education based.

From this perspective, Landström, Harirchic and Åströmd (2012, p. 1172) highlight two main perspectives on self-entrepreneurship: "one that treats it as a phenomenon to be understood within the scope of the social and human sciences," and another that emphasizes its practical applications in the real world. This broad approach reveals that self-entrepreneurship is not limited to business creation but also constitutes a strategy for individual and collective development, being essential in the formation of innovative and proactive subjects.

The concept of Intrapreneurship of the self, widely discussed in contemporary educational policies, reinforces the logic of adaptation and innovation across diverse environments. However, the curriculum flexibilization proposed by Law No. 13,415/2017 appears to acknowledge diversity by establishing formative itineraries, but, as Ferretti (2018, p. 44) points out, "operates apart from social policies that pay particular attention to the most impoverished sectors, and may therefore strengthen existing inequalities rather than contribute to their mitigation." This analysis highlights how the objective limitations of public schools, combined with the prevailing neoliberal perspective, ultimately exacerbate the social and educational disparities already embedded in the Brazilian system.

From this perspective, aligned with a Foucauldian lens, self-entrepreneurship can be understood as a *dispositif* that regulates conduct and shapes subjectivities. Foucault defines a *dispositif* as "fundamentally a formation which, in a given historical moment, had as its major function to respond to an urgency" (Foucault, 1980, p. 244). In the context of the Brazilian High School Reform, the *dispositif* of self-entrepreneurship emerges as a response to the demands of a globalized and volatile market, transferring to the individual the responsibility for managing their own educational and professional trajectory. This perspective is reinforced by Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2018, which promotes entrepreneurship as an essential competence, shaping adaptable and collaborative subjects.

By integrating collaboration among the State, society, and the market, as established by Law No. 14.945/2024, the *dispositif* of entrepreneurship aligns with neoliberal demands, shaping an educational field that reinforces the logic of individual responsibility. However, this

configuration also raises critical concerns. As noted by Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 38), “neoliberal rationality transforms the subject into an entrepreneur of the self, holding them accountable for their success or failure while disregarding the structural inequalities that permeate the system”.

In this context, entrepreneurship of the self-functions not only as a guiding framework for educational practices, but also as an element that redefines students' subjectivity, shaping them as individuals who internalize the logic of constant adaptation and individual accountability, resulting in the management of the self as enterprise. Foucault (1980) conceptualizes the *dispositif* as a strategic arrangement that structures conduct through the articulation of practices, discourses, institutions, and knowledge, operating as a mechanism of power within specific historical contexts. When the reconfiguration of High School is analyzed through this lens, it becomes evident how the curriculum is mobilized by the State to meet the demands of the neoliberal market. This response shifts the responsibility for directing educational and professional trajectories onto students themselves, thereby weakening the social role of the school and obscuring the structural conditions that shape access to education and social inclusion.

The dialogue between the neoliberal project and neoconservative traits, as analyzed by Picoli (2020), is expressed in the attempt to impose a singular model of subjectivity, guided by criteria of efficiency, performance, and conformity to pre-established standards. According to the author, “the influences of political and economic groups on the BNCC are respectively neoliberal and neoconservative” (Picoli, 2020, p. 02). This logic is largely operationalized through large-scale external assessments, which function as instruments for regulating school practices and standardizing educational processes, even in contexts where local curricula propose different approaches. By establishing uniform performance indicators, these assessments subordinate pedagogical practice to a technocratic logic that disregards the specificities of educational territories. In this scenario, ethical and aesthetic resistance by schools and educators becomes even more urgent, given that the curriculum, although formally open, ends up being driven by the normative force of these metrics, resulting in the capture of education by market and ideological interests.

Complementarily, the study by Queiroz, Ortega, and Militão (2023) highlights how the BNCC, when articulated with large-scale external assessment systems, consolidates mechanisms of control and accountability that reinforce school productivism. The authors argue that curricular policy, far from promoting equity and inclusion, ultimately intensifies historical

inequalities by subjecting schools, teachers, and students to quantitative indicators that disregard sociocultural contexts and local specificities. The combination of a prescriptive curriculum and standardized evaluation creates a scenario of radicalized neoliberalism, in which performance prevails over the educational process.

Based on the analyses presented, it is observed that both Picoli (2020) and Queiroz, Ortega, and Militão (2023) highlight the risks of an educational policy that ceases to prioritize autonomy and emancipation, becoming instead a mechanism of regulation and conformity. The authors converge in showing that the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (Brasil, 2018) functions as a governmental device that guides school education according to the imperatives of the market and performative logic, undermining diversity, critical thinking, and the social function of the school. In this context, reaffirming education as a practice of freedom and as a space for collective construction becomes a political and ethical imperative in the face of the consolidation of hegemonic discourses that underpin contemporary curricular reforms and reduce the role of the school to the production of measurable outcomes and flexible, adaptable subjects.

This logic structures the discursivity of "entrepreneurship of the self," reinforcing self-governance as a central practice within the educational field. According to Foucault, to govern means to conduct conduct, which involves shaping the ways in which individuals relate to themselves and to the world (Foucault, 1980). Thus, entrepreneurship, as an educational practice, transforms autonomy into a requirement that prioritizes adaptation to market contingencies, often at the expense of critical and civic education.

CNE/CEB Resolution No. 3/2018 reinforces the logic of the free market by structuring educational tracks that emphasize competencies such as innovation, creativity, and problem-solving. However, as Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 45) point out, this approach "naturalizes competition and self-responsibility, reducing education to mere preparation for the market." This reconfiguration may compromise the balance between technical training and the development of critical citizenship, obscuring the collective and social aspects of the educational process. Therefore, the challenge lies in ensuring that the autonomy promoted by educational policies does not result in the erosion of teaching as an essential mediator of the teaching and learning process, preserving the educator's critical and reflective role in the formation of autonomous and engaged individuals.

The practice of entrepreneurship within the Brazilian educational context is officially recognized as one of the central pillars of the New High School reforms. According to

CNE/CEB Resolution No. 3/2018, "entrepreneurship is understood as one of the foundations of the educational tracks, promoting the ability to solve problems, creativity, and innovation, with a view to forming individuals prepared to act in a dynamic and complex society" (Brasil, 2018, p. 12). This principle is expanded by Law No. 13.415/2017, which establishes curricular flexibility and youth protagonism as guidelines for high school education, highlighting "learning to learn" as an essential element for training autonomous students capable of adapting to the demands of the labor market.

"Creating better circumstances" is interpreted in this research as "the ability to reinvent oneself in the face of contingencies, that is, to undertake oneself" (Pizolati, 2021, p. 18). From this perspective, the neoliberal logic links job and income generation to processes of exclusion and social disaffiliation. As pointed out by Castel (2005) and Paugam (2003), the inability to adapt to the neoliberal paradigm places individuals in situations of social vulnerability, turning "personal failure" into an internalized experience.

This perspective resonates with the concept of meritocracy, in which failure is perceived as a direct consequence of poor life choices and management, disconnecting from social and governmental factors. As Sandel (2021, p. 78) notes, "the number of people who believe that work is the driver of social mobility is steadily increasing," reinforcing individual blame in the face of structural inequalities. Thus, while the emphasis on "learning to learn" and entrepreneurship fosters relevant skills, it can also intensify individual responsibility and obscure the social conditions that hinder full human development.

In this context, the entrepreneurship of the self-present in these curriculum policies structures educational practices and subjectivities, assigning students the responsibility for their choices and life paths. While this logic promotes innovation and autonomy, it can also weaken social relations and reinforce inequalities, as discussed in the curriculum policies of the High School (Brazil, 2024).

From this perspective, Giroux (1997) argues that education has been used as a means to "legitimize and strengthen existing social inequalities by subordinating the role of the school to market interests" (p. 7). In this context, Nogueira and Borges (2020), in dialogue with Aguiar (2018), emphasize that the BNCC-EM operates as a homogenizing device that disregards the country's regional and cultural diversity, prioritizing limited and adaptive training, reinforcing market logic within the educational field. Furthermore, Giroux (1997) points out that "in a market-oriented education, the role of the teacher becomes secondary, and learning becomes a commodity, which limits the development of a pedagogy that fosters social justice and

emancipation" (p. 12), highlighting the implications of this approach for critical and civic formation.

According to the BNCC-EM (Brasil, 2018), the high school curriculum must be organized "according to the relevance to the local context and the possibilities of the education systems" (Art. 4). Although this guideline appears to value flexibility and adaptation to local realities, in practice, it intensifies regional inequalities already present in the Brazilian educational system. Ferretti (2018, p. 42) observes that "the concrete conditions of schools, especially public ones, prevent the implementation of a curriculum that meets local diversity, limiting the possibilities of choice and deepening regional disparities." This analysis reveals that linking the formative itineraries to local structures shifts to schools the responsibility of overcoming these limitations, which, in many cases, perpetuates historical inequalities.

This critique also reflects the neoliberal logic that shifts responsibilities from the State to individuals and institutions, as highlighted by Ferretti (2018, p. 40), who points out that "the organization of high school under this perspective reinforces the tendency to hold schools and students accountable for the system's shortcomings, concealing the unequal structural conditions that characterize the Brazilian educational landscape." This logic turns curricular flexibility into a mechanism of exclusion, especially in more vulnerable regions, where the lack of infrastructure and resources prevents the full implementation of the policy.

Furthermore, the BNCC-EM and the reforms introduced by Law No. 13.415/2017 reproduce a vision that prioritizes market demands to the detriment of critical and civic education. Ferretti (2018, p. 36) highlights that "the new educational model, by prioritizing preparation for the labor market, tends to reinforce regional inequalities, as it favors locations with greater capacity for investment in pedagogical and human resources." Thus, the proposal of formative itineraries, far from promoting inclusion, may intensify educational segregation.

In this context, it is crucial to adopt a perspective that considers the social role of the school and the need for public policies that ensure equitable conditions. Ferretti (2018, p. 26) emphasizes that "it is essential for educational policies to include strategies that ensure equity and inclusion, especially in public schools, so that local diversity does not become a justification for the perpetuation of inequalities."

Therefore, curricular flexibility, without adequate structural and pedagogical support, runs the risk of limiting the emancipatory function of education. As Ferretti (2018, p. 46) rightly points out, "a genuine inclusion policy must prioritize the reduction of structural inequalities, ensuring that all students have access to a comprehensive and civic education." Thus, the

implementation of the BNCC-EM (Brasil, 2018) must be accompanied by investments and support policies that guarantee equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their geographic location or social condition.

In this sense, under neoliberalism, the subject is one who voluntarily self-exploits, believing themselves to be free by working under the logic of being an enterprise of the self (Pizolati, 2021), subordinated to goals and results, where the entrepreneurial individual, upon failing in the "neoliberal performance society, instead of questioning society or the system, considers themselves responsible and feels ashamed for it" (Han, 2018, p. 16). This process is aligned with the guidelines of Law No. 13.415/2017, which established the Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC-EM) in Brazilian high school education by emphasizing autonomy and protagonism as core competencies in educational training. The BNCC-EM states that "students must be enabled to make responsible decisions based on scenario analysis and problem solving" (Brasil, 2018, p. 45), thereby reinforcing the logic of individual accountability.

This approach is reinforced by Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2018, which proposes formative itineraries focused on entrepreneurship and curricular flexibility, stating that "students must take ownership of their educational paths, building a life project aligned with contemporary demands" (Brasil, 2018, p. 14). This logic shifts to the individual the responsibility for managing their education and success in the market, highlighting the withdrawal of the State from providing broad social support. As a result, autonomy, which should represent an emancipatory practice, is reframed as a form of accountability that often operates as an additional burden on students' life choices.

In this context, "accountability denotes a sentencing resulting from certain attitudes assumed by the individual" (Pizolati, 2021, p. 35), becoming a central mechanism in the formation of the neoliberal subject. Law No. 14.945/2024, by establishing the National High School Policy, deepens this logic by emphasizing the importance of forming students who are "capable of adapting to complex scenarios and contributing to socioeconomic development through their individual competencies" (Brasil, 2024, p. 23). Thus, the entrepreneurship dispositif, as discussed by Foucault, reorganizes the governmentality of education by promoting self-exploitation under the justification of autonomy.

Education, according to Roman (1999), "began to be seen as a service to be delivered, where technical training gained emphasis, leaving critical education in the background" (p. 47), reflecting a trend that intensified in subsequent educational reforms. In this context, Foucault

(1980) interprets education “as a tool that shapes behaviors and identities, disciplining bodies and minds according to established standards” (p. 140). For the author, power “is not exercised simply through prohibitions and commands, but mainly through normalization, that is, through the creation of standards of behavior and thought that are considered normal” (Foucault, 1980, p. 221), highlighting how contemporary educational logic aligns with practices of social control and standardization.

This perspective aligns with the principles of curricular flexibility and autonomy established by Law No. 13.415/2017, which structures the High School around formative itineraries. These itineraries allow students to choose areas of specialization according to their interests and aspirations, reinforcing the construction of a "life project" as a central element of the curriculum. Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2018 complements this approach by emphasizing that “the education of students should prepare young people to face contemporary challenges, articulating technical skills and ethical values, while promoting autonomy so they can develop their life project” (Brasil, 2018, p. 14).

By connecting entrepreneurship to the life project, the curriculum aims to promote an education that combines technical skills with the capacity for self-direction and adaptability. However, as suggested by Foucault (1980), the dispositif of entrepreneurship reorganizes power relations and educational governmentality by shifting the focus to the individual as the primary agent responsible for their own path. This movement, by emphasizing autonomy and flexibility, may obscure the need for a collective structure to support young people in their choices, reinforcing the notion that success or failure is solely related to the individual management of one's skills and resources. Therefore, although curricular flexibility and the life project open new possibilities for development, it is essential to balance these practices with an education that values critical thinking and collective engagement, ensuring that students are prepared not only for the market but also for active citizenship in a pluralistic and inclusive society.

## **Curricular Reforms and the Challenges in the Implementation of the Brazilian New High School**

With the implementation of Provisional Measure No. 746/2016 and the subsequent Law 13.415/2017, High School in Brazil underwent structural changes. The National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (Law No. 9.394/96) was amended, particularly in Article 36, to include the Common Core Curriculum and formative itineraries. These itineraries cover the areas of Languages and their Technologies, Mathematics and its Technologies, Natural

Sciences and their Technologies, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Professional Technical Training. The total of 3,000 hours is divided between the Common National Curriculum (BNCC-EM), with 1,800 hours, and the formative itineraries, with 1,200 hours. In this context, "entrepreneurship of self emerges as an essential competency to be developed by students" (Pinto, 2017, p. 67).

The principle of learning to learn, as cited in the UNESCO report, "was coined by the anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1973), who defined three basic forms of learning: primary learning (protolearning), deuterolearning (the internal process of learning), and tertiary learning (the consolidation of the ability to model and shape one's own learning)" (Pizolati, 2021, p. 3).

Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2018 positions entrepreneurship of the self as one of the key pillars of the formative itineraries in the New High School. Alongside scientific investigation and sociocultural mediation, "entrepreneurship of the self stimulates in students the ability to solve problems, creativity, and responsibility" (Pizolati, 2021, p. 27). This guideline highlights the shift in educational focus toward the development of competencies related to self-management and adaptability, aligning with the principles of neoliberal rationality institutionalized in Brazilian educational policies, as previously analyzed by Pizolati (2021; 2025), who examined the statements "continuing to learn" and "learning to learn" as mechanisms of subjectivation adjusted to market demands.

In this context, the emphasis on innovative projects and problem-solving contributes to the formation of a proactive, flexible, and self-responsible educational subject, characteristics that, although valued in the official discourse, may deepen inequalities when implemented without the proper material and formative conditions. As Pizolati (2025) argues, the tension between a neotechnicist education and the fading of critical reflection in teaching-learning relations reveals a formative model driven by performativity at the expense of intellectual emancipation, which compromises the social function of public schools and aligns with the interests embedded in neoliberal rationality.

The implementation of entrepreneurship of the self, therefore, is not limited to the practical dimension of curricula. It requires ongoing teacher training that goes beyond technical updates and considers the different school contexts, as well as structural and organizational investments that are still beyond the reach of many public education networks. This gap between prescription and institutional reality reveals the risk of reinforcing the logic of individual accountability, especially in contexts of resource scarcity and infrastructure.

According to Sousa (2019), drawing on the contributions of Stephen J. Ball, it is

essential to understand educational policies not only as normative texts but as processes involving disputes, translations, and effects on everyday school life. Thus, the curricular policy, by incorporating entrepreneurship of the self as a guiding principle, needs to be critically read as part of a broader regulatory project that articulates discourse, power, and the production of subjectivities within educational practices.

In this sense, it becomes essential to engage with Apple (2006), who understands the curriculum as a political space permeated by ideological disputes and hegemonic interests that select, validate, and impose certain knowledge at the expense of others. According to the author, curricular processes are not neutral, but rather operate as mechanisms of social reproduction, shaping individuals according to values that favor specific classes, groups, or worldviews. The inclusion of entrepreneurship of the self as the core of the curriculum, therefore, must be problematized as part of this movement of naturalizing a market-driven rationality in education.

Complementarily, based on Foucault's formulations (1979; 1980), it is understood that this logic is grounded in the notion of governmentality, defined as the set of techniques and rationalities intended to guide the conduct of individuals. In the educational field, this process has materialized in the mobilization of devices such as the curriculum, assessment systems, and school management, which operate to induce behaviors considered desirable, in line with the demands of the market and the logic of performance. In this context, entrepreneurship of the self-functions as a technology of subjectivation that shifts the responsibility for one's formation to the individual, obscuring structural conditions and transforming education, through the curriculum, into an instrument of regulating conduct and shaping consciousness.

Thus, entrepreneurship of the self permeates the formative itineraries by promoting an entrepreneurial culture sustained by the principles of learning to learn and the individual's responsibility for their own path. This perspective emphasizes the development of skills such as creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, and collaborative work, which are central to the profile of an individual adaptable to the dynamics of a volatile market. Active learning, as outlined in Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2018, encourages youth leadership by guiding students to analyze scenarios, develop solutions, and lead projects that respond to social demands. However, it operates within a formative logic that prioritizes functional autonomy at the expense of critical reflection and collective emancipation.

In this perspective, the implementation of the New High School has been the target of strong criticism and social mobilization in different regions of the country. Various representative entities and student movements have questioned the effects of the reform,

demanding its revocation considering the inequalities that have been exacerbated by its consolidation. The publication of Ordinance No. 399/2023, which establishes a commission to evaluate and propose the restructuring of the National High School Policy, highlights the urgency of a broader and more participatory public debate. As Sandel (2021, p. 88) points out, "it is crucial that discussions about the future of high school take into account the demands of students, teachers, and society as a whole, seeking to ensure an education that is of high quality and relevant for the 21st century". In this context, there is a need to build educational policies that not only meet the technical demands of the present but also are committed to the principles of social justice, equity, and critical education.

The Law No. 12.616/2012, which establishes the State Policy for Entrepreneurial Education, sets forth as its objective "to promote the development of entrepreneurial skills in high school and technical students, fostering creativity, innovation, and problem-solving in real contexts" (Brasil, 2012, art. 1). This law emphasizes that entrepreneurship is not limited to business creation, but also encompasses initiative, autonomy, and collaborative work as forms of engagement with the demands of contemporary society. This conceptual expansion reinforces the alignment of educational policies with the principles of neoliberal rationality, while subordinating school formation to market demands, transforming education into a functional good focused on productivity and individual adaptation, at the expense of critical and socially committed education.

The Base (Brasil, 2018) then consolidates the formative itineraries as central tools for the development of competencies related to autonomy, problem-solving, and collective work. The BNCC-EM emphasizes that "students must develop the ability to make responsible and well-founded decisions, acting with flexibility and determination in different contexts" (Brasil, 2018, p. 45). Furthermore, the BNCC-EM emphasizes the role of general competencies in promoting "respect for human rights, socio-environmental awareness, and cooperation for the construction of a more inclusive and sustainable society" (Brasil, 2018, p. 48), connecting individual learning to ethical and social dimensions.

The high school curriculum, according to Brazilian legislation, "will be composed of the Base Nacional Comum Curricular and formative itineraries, which must be organized through the offer of different curricular arrangements, according to the relevance for the local context" (Brasil, 2018, Art. 4). However, this structure privileges an approach aligned with a conservative and technicist view of education. In this sense, the BNCC-EM (Brasil, 2018) verticalizes the educational process and privileges knowledge that meets the demands of a

neoliberal market more than the needs for the integral formation of students (Aguiar, 2018; Nogueira; Borges, 2020), highlighting a mismatch between economic demands and the humanistic education of young people.

From the neoliberal perspective, these guidelines transfer to students the responsibility for managing their educational and professional paths, as Pinto (2017, p. 112) points out: "Contemporary educational policies emphasize curriculum flexibility and student autonomy, holding them accountable for their choices and the management of their life." Thus, youth leadership, promoted as a central principle by BNCC-EM, encourages young people to adopt innovative and resilient profiles, aligning with the logic of "entrepreneurship of the self," where the individual is shaped as autonomous and adaptable, according to the market rationality – governmentality (Foucault, 1980).

Moreover, Article 36 of Law No. 13.415/2017 emphasizes that the formative itineraries must be aligned with the demands of the contemporary world, promoting "the integral formation of the student and the development of competencies for their performance in complex and dynamic scenarios" (Brasil, 2018, art. 36). These competencies include creativity, initiative, and the ability to work collectively, integrating ethical values with educational practices. However, as Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 45) point out, this approach may "naturalize competition and self-responsibility, disregarding the structural factors that influence educational success".

In conclusion, the connection between entrepreneurship of self, student autonomy, and collective work, as promoted by educational and curricular policies, highlights the tension between preparing students for the market and promoting a critical and civic education. Although youth leadership is presented as an opportunity for emancipation, it is essential that it does not become an individual burden. It should be supported by pedagogical practices that value the teaching-learning relationship and reaffirm the role of teaching in the construction of knowledge.

## Final Considerations

This study developed a critical analysis of the Brazilian High School curricular reforms considering neoliberal rationality, with special attention to the device of entrepreneurship of the self as a central operator in the production of subjectivities aligned with market demands. By examining educational and curricular documents, the study investigated how these regulations structure a formative proposal that shifts the responsibility for educational and professional

success from individuals to the realm of individual self-responsibility.

The implications of this reconfiguration are diverse. On one hand, it promotes the figure of an idealized school subject as autonomous and innovative, capable of managing their own trajectory. On the other hand, it intensifies the precarization of school relationships, the weakening of the teaching role, and the strengthening of a meritocratic logic that ignores the historical and material conditions that impact students' performance and retention, especially in public education systems. As discussed, such a perspective depoliticizes school formation by naturalizing inequalities and overshadowing the centrality of pedagogical and institutional mediations in the educational process.

The study, therefore, challenges the notion of youth protagonism when mobilized as a rhetorical tool to legitimize policies that, rather than expanding rights, shift the exclusive responsibility for one's trajectory to the individual, without ensuring equitable structural conditions. Based on the analyses presented here, future studies are opened up to further explore the concrete effects of these reforms in daily school life, especially in contexts of greater social vulnerability, as well as investigations that give voice to teachers and students in the processes of curriculum implementation. Furthermore, it becomes urgent to explore pedagogical alternatives that, without ignoring the competencies required by contemporary society, preserve the ethical and political commitment of education to critical, emancipatory, and solidarity-based formation. Repositioning the school as a space for resistance and the production of collective meaning is, more than a possibility, an imperative considering the intensification of the processes of commodification of education.

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