

The production of teachers in schools: the System of School Protection and its knowledge/power articulations¹

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Abstract

Teachers, in addition to their training courses, are produced on a daily basis through the form in which they go through the experience of being a teacher, which takes place within the very functioning of the school institution. This functioning is based on a series of rationalities that circumscribe and define the teaching practice, thereby establishing the references for a form of thinking and becoming a teacher. Having as a focus the rationalization of the education practice inaugurated by what we can denominate a juridical economy that currently permeates the school institution, we have carried out an analysis of an important public policy that functions/operates at the intersection between education and security: the *School Protection System*, established in the public state system of the State of São Paulo in 2009/2010. The intent of the present article was that of problematizing such policy at the level of the knowledge/power articulations that give support to it, as well as in relation to its productive effects in the constitution of a form of thinking, acting and, ultimately, of being a teacher. Within the school institution, this *juridical economy* produces subjects and a way of relating to life; it therefore produces important effects, which we have here attempted to denaturalize by approaching them from the viewpoint of the power strategies.

Keywords

Teacher education – Security – Protection – Power relations – School daily life.

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A produção de professores nas escolas: o Sistema de Proteção Escolar e suas articulações saber/poder¹

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Resumo

Os professores, para além de seus cursos de formação, são cotidianamente produzidos pela forma como vivem a experiência de ser professor, o que se realiza no interior do próprio funcionamento da instituição escolar. Esse funcionamento está baseado em uma série de racionalidades que delimitam e definem o fazer docente, estabelecendo, assim, as referências para uma forma de pensar e de fazer-se professor. Tendo como foco a racionalização da prática educativa instaurada pelo que podemos nomear de economia jurídica que hoje atravessa a instituição escolar, realizou-se a análise de uma importante política pública que funciona/opera na intersecção entre educação e segurança: trata-se do Sistema de Proteção Escolar, implantado na rede pública de educação do Estado de São Paulo em 2009/2010. A proposta do presente artigo foi problematizar tal política no plano das articulações saber/poder que a sustentam, bem como em relação aos seus efeitos produtivos na constituição de uma forma de pensar, de agir e, no limite, de ser professor. No interior da instituição escolar, essa economia jurídica produz sujeitos e um modo de se relacionar com a vida; produz, portanto, importantes efeitos, os quais se tentou desnaturalizar por meio de uma abordagem do ponto de vista das estratégias de poder.

Palavras-chave

Formação de professores – Segurança – Proteção – Relações de poder – Cotidiano escolar.

I- Este artigo é um desdobramento da dissertação de mestrado intitulada *A judicialização das relações escolares: um estudo sobre a produção de professores, que contou com a especial orientação da Profa. Dra. Flávia Inês Schilling e foi defendida na Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de São Paulo em 2010.*

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It is intriguing how school education is nowadays permeated by a large amount of observations, evidences, opinions, scientific discourses, norms, guidelines, decrees, directions, parameters, laws etc. – everything, of course, grounded in the idea of *improving teaching*. They are all well-meaning formulations which, in their internal movements, try to respond to urgent demands seen as necessary to the adequate functioning of social relations in a democratic society. Being generally justified by the multiple exigencies of the complex reality, their main preferences lie in ideas of searching for justice and happiness. There is here some consensus that the rationalization of the procedures and the objectification of conducts would bring us closer to justice, and that the latter would afford better conditions to achieve happiness for each and every one of us. Nonetheless, we propose here to step back a little from this consensus through a simple exercise of parting with our certainties so that we can temporarily stop repeating them, thereby freeing thinking from its habitual route.

And what happens if we step away for a while and try to observe what kind of life these questions inspire? More specifically, what are the effects of those influences in the way we understand what happens within a school? And, more importantly, how do these references work in developing a method of *being a teacher*?

Broadly speaking, therefore, what interests us here is to problematize what can be understood as the *production of teachers*, taking place within the very functioning of the school institution. The point of departure will be a kind of overturn of the idea that there would be an ontology of the teaching subject. Just as the author does not precede the work, the teacher does not precede the school; they are constituted therein through the forces and discourses that permeate them, and that they accept as theirs. Thus, the teacher is now considered as an object of

permeation, and next we can envisage a kind of erasure of the subject so as to bring out the prevalence of the forces and discourses that constitute him/her. Such analytical strategy has as one of its main references the work developed by Michel Foucault, who devoted himself to analyze the different modes through which in our culture human beings become subjects (FOUCAULT, 1995).

A central figure that puts in action a whole series of procedures that give shape to what we know as the *school institution*, the teacher can be understood as a product of a way of living the very experience of teaching. Thus, instead of having as reference for their production the explicitly formative practices – which would probably lead us to conclusions along the lines of denouncing the mismatch between theory and practice, or the fragility of teachers' initial training in higher education, a line that has become recurrent and monotonous –, we shift our attention to the existence of a kind of management that is exercised upon the form of living the experience of being a teacher in its details, in its day-to-day banality.

Such management, far from being related to some type of centrality of command, must be seen as the effect of a rationality pulverized in the daily life. What becomes therefore interesting is to problematize what is understood here as a rationality that gives forms to daily procedures, in the guise of an effort to understand and face the tensions of school dynamics.

Along this path there looms a concern with what we might understand as being the *production of the ways of thinking*. Such rationality of the functioning of the school institution is established by – whilst at the same time establishing – a manner of *thinking oneself* as a teacher and, therefore of living and acting. In this way, attention is focused on the externality of the incitement to a way of thinking and acting, and no longer on the internality of personal character.

Countless forces contribute to produce a manner of thinking and being a teacher within a functioning school. Faced with this variety, we assume as our focus what we might denominate a *juridical economy* that permeates more and more the current educational relations. Therefore, in a first approach, what drives this analytical exercise is the recognition of the need to ask what is the working of this juridical economy that permeates current school in the management of teachers' thinking, and therefore in the production of a way of being a teacher.

By dealing with questions related to school education through the lens of a juridical economy that encompasses them, we have started with a distancing from the references taken for granted – such as *formation of the citizen, common welfare, social contract, expansion of rights* etc. –, which seem to have worked to a large extent as a kind of the consensus to pacify struggles. In the same context, we have observed the wide circulation of terms such as *security, risk management, need for protection, damage, and vulnerability*, amongst others, which points to a situation of intense investment in the spirit of control and vigilance policies. In this respect, the contributions of Robert Castel (1987) on the notions of risk factors and prevention will be the reference employed here.

Viewing school as more than a place for the big reproduction (conservative) or for the big refusal (revolutionary), we shall try to see it as the place for the small management of life and, through that path, we shall move away from the more usual approaches to it, and then consider it within government practices.

Based on the perspective just outlined, we present a brief analysis of an important program of the State of São Paulo Secretariat for Education that deals with life within the schools of its system: the School Protection System.

Observable reality and the only thing possible: the School Protection System

This double aporia is, of course, only the mark of the law's and of science's adherence to a certain system of belief, the system of belief peculiar to the consensus system: realism. Realism claims to be that sane attitude of mind that sticks to observable realities. It is in fact something quite different: it is the police logic of order, which asserts, in all circumstances, that it is only doing the only thing possible to do. [...] Realism is the absorption of all reality in all truth in the category of the only thing possible.

Jacques Rancière (1996)

We propose here to conduct an analysis of the power effects of a discourse on reality which, belonging to *realism*, unleashes practices largely framed within the category of the only thing possible. It will concentrate on considering to what extent certain approach to what we define as *reality* – as well as the procedures that, understood as *inevitable*, unfold from it – comprises exactly the mechanism in which it binds us and prevents us from envisaging other possibilities of existence. It is a proposal that can be understood as a form to exercise and stimulate the boldness of thinking.

The discourse to be analyzed is the one that gives support to the program denominated School Protection System¹, established in the São Paulo State school system in 2009/2010. The focus will lie on the power effects that this discourse has upon the way of constituting oneself as a teacher. For that, we shall consider some documents that established the program, as well as some interviews conducted with the people responsible for its creation and implementation².

The School Protection System, formally established by Resolution SE No 19 of 12 February 2010, is constituted by a series of

1- Information available at: <www.fde.sp.gov.br/PagesPublic/InternaProgProj.aspx?contextmenu=supprot>. Accessed on 20 December 2012.

2- All speeches cited here will be referred to in a generic form due to the anonymity agreement made with interviewees (responsible for the creation and implementation of the School Protection System). Interviews were conducted in June and July 2010.

initiatives by the Government of the State of São Paulo regarding school education, which are defined in the following generic manner in the first article of this Resolution:

The School Protection System is hereby established with the function of coordinating the planning and execution of actions aiming at the prevention, mediation and resolution of conflicts within the school environment, with the objective of protecting the physical and patrimonial integrity of pupils, staff and other workers, as well as of equipment and furniture that belong to the state school system, in addition to the dissemination of Civil Defense techniques for the protection of the school community. (SÃO PAULO, 2010)

The facts triggering this initiative were incidents of loss of control that took place in two state schools, Amadeu Amaral (at the end of 2008³) and Professor Antônio Firmino de Proença (in mid-2009⁴), both in the state capital. In view of these events, the Governor of the State of São Paulo determined that these cases should be studied and “effective, systemic, consistent and urgent solutions” should be found (in the words of one of those responsible for the creation of the School Protection System, interviewed for this study). The System was then put in place and its coordination was given to the School Protection and Citizenship Supervision located inside the Cabinet of the Secretariat for Education, where was also to be found the recently created Security Supervision, which kept a Military Police officer in it as a form of direct articulation between the Secretariat for Education and the police force. Both comprise a policy to face what is presented as a need to combat violence in the state schools of São Paulo. Incidentally, a brief observation should be made here: a considerable number

of people that occupied strategic places in the State Secretariat for Education, and that were related to the School Protection System at the time of the interviews, were originally from the area of security, more specifically from the Secretariat of Public Security – the State Adjunct Secretary for Education (General Coordinator of the School Protection System), the President of the Foundation for the Development of Education FDE (one of the mentors of the System) and two of the supervisors of the School Protection System.

The System is basically composed in each school by two supervisors within the Secretariat for Education, two regional managers per Education Directorship and even two school and community teachers-mediators⁵. Besides, it also includes two manuals/documents sent to each school of the system – *Manual of school protection and promotion of citizenship and General norms of school conduct* – and also a virtual channel for direct contact between the principal of each school and the Supervision of the System and, therefore, the Cabinet of the Secretariat for Education, denominated ROE (School Occurrences Electronic Recording System)⁶.

The knowledge/power articulations and their effects

During the interviews conducted with the intent of producing a mapping of the knowledge/power articulations that give support to the School Protection System, our attention was drawn to the effort put by those in charge in claiming a shift from more

5- According with information gathered the exercise of the attributions of the school and community teacher-mediator would be implemented gradually, using as a criterion to define priority what the Secretariat for Education identifies as the mapping of schools and regions of *higher vulnerability*.

6- Formally, there is also another form of virtual communication between the schools and the Supervision of the System called *Free Channel*, but, according to information given by people responsible for it, this resource became inoperative. The difference is that this channel would not be restricted to school principals, but could be used anonymously, and it would be open to any manifestation from the school community.

3- Information available at: <<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/educacao/ult305u467296.shtml>>. Accessed on 22 October 2010.

4- Information available at: <<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/educacao/ult305u566283.shtml>>. Accessed on 22 of October 2010.

objective questions – such as security and combat against violence – towards the notion of protection. What is therefore disseminated as a reference that legitimizes this initiative is the idea of a need for an *integral protection of the school community*.

The basis for this shift can be found in the rearticulation of government initiatives around what are from now on regarded as *vulnerability and risk factors*. Indeed, these terms appear in articles 5, 6 and 7 of the Resolution that creates the School Protection System (SÃO PAULO, 2010). In these articles, the references to them concerned the need for their inclusion, identification and analysis, making it clear that the System works within a regime of truth that establishes them as parameters for its actions. But how is the emergence of these factors to be articulated with the strengthening of the idea of protection?

The emergence of the concepts of vulnerability and risk can be located within the coupling of law and norm, resulting in a sophistication of control technologies. Such sophistication meant incorporating a dimension of ideality around the delinquent person through which he/she becomes

a being who has in his individual past the explaining principle of his actions. The dimension of ideality means that an individual is not judged by what he did, but by what he is: in establishing the sentence and during his punishment the individual's past and what he reveals about his future propensity are at stake. (VAZ, 2004, p. 104)

Thus, the delinquent is not judged only by judges, but also by several experts in normality. This creates the conditions for countless initiatives of a preventive character, because it makes it possible to draw a line of development which, in view of an uncertain future, demands early actions in the present.

In general terms, we can consider that the idea of protection works under the key of what we understand as prevention. In this sense, the

question of protection is the demand of foresight regarding all possible scenarios of eruption of danger. It is a reassessment of the issues of security into a much wider range of factors than those associated with the notion of danger or simply with the combat against violence.

Importance is now given to the anticipation that characterizes the notion of *risk*, and turns it into something highly efficient as a management strategy for each and every one. This point is perhaps made clearer through the distinction between risk and danger made by Paulo Vaz (2004):

The latter [danger] designates a contingent evil, identified and attributed to something, some person or situation as an intrinsic characteristic of them. Risk, on the other hand, refers to the possibility of damage and measures the exposure to danger. In simple terms, risk is a measure of the probability of potential danger. [...] Another difference is that risk, unlike danger, cannot be removed immediately and indefinitely. Risk factors can only be reduced or augmented, bringing the need for a chronic, permanent care of oneself for the whole life. No one is under zero risk and risk factors act in the long-term; the prudence regarding any risk must be daily and endless. Thus, avoiding an undesirable future event becomes the basis for individual and collective decisions; indeed, it becomes a duty, a moral obligation. Failing to take action against risks is more and more socially viewed as negative. (p. 112)

According to the author, the existence of calculations about the future is something rather ancient among men. However, a characteristic of these calculations when incorporated to the idea of risk is the need for an exhaustive data gathering associated to a statistical treatment and monitoring of variables. Hence the so-called *risk factors*, which are then configured as a dynamic

framework into which all behavior, gestures, conducts, life histories, attire, desires, tastes, forms of expression, friendships, habits, among other aspects, are subsumed, defining the protection actions to be taken.

According to Robert Castel (1987):

The new medical-psychological and social strategies strive to be, above all, preventive, and modern prevention sees itself first and foremost as a tracker of risks. A risk does not result from the presence of a precise danger, brought to bear by a person or group of individuals, but from the positioning with respect to general impersonal data or (risk) factors that make more or less likely the emergence of undesirable behavior. [...] Thus, prevention means first to watch, that is, to put oneself in a position of foreseeing the emergence of undesirable occurrences (illnesses, anomalies, devious behavior, acts of delinquency, etc.) amidst statistical populations signaled as bearing risks. (p. 125)

We can understand that this movement is articulated with the proposal of protection that acquired momentum in current educational reality. Such proposal is characterized by investments in the management of variables that aim at foreseeing possible happenings; therefore, it redimensions the control techniques so that the use of force becomes the exception, even though it continues to be *always present on the menu*. In this respect, one of those responsible for the School Protection System says:

The word is no longer *security*, because security leads to the idea of clashing, but the idea of protection. We are here to protect people, the function of the school is to equip the individual and society to have more protection against conflicts that degenerate into violence and, therefore, violence is seen there as consequence not as cause, because if you work with the idea of security you will be working with

the consequence. Me having to simmer the situation down: sometimes that's the situation that has to occur really. The State cannot give this up. To guarantee the protection of society it has to intervene with force [...], but that is an ephemeral situation, a limit case, it is an extreme medicine that you use from the viewpoint of a political action. [...] However you see police action, it is an action that cannot be out of the menu, it has to be on the menu. Now, what use do you make of this force? Or, how do you make use of the force in the sense of guaranteeing that that environment has its conflict managed? Our option was to say: "listen, we have to have protection measures".

Such redimensioning of the control techniques seems today to be connected to a strategic shift from the formerly common idea of keeping order to the promotion of a *culture of peace*, an expression that appears in the materials produced by the School Protection System, and that is used to give support to their initiatives. We can consider that the old demand for keeping order was less efficient from the point of view of the government, because it left room for an understanding that such order was not interesting, that it was arbitrary, that it could be questioned etc.; the discourse of the defense and promotion of a culture of peace, on the other hand, has been more effective in the sense of producing a consensus around initiatives of vigilance and control, adopting an appearance of non-arbitrariness since, after all, it is presented as dealing with issues concerning *humans living together*, representing a demand made by the so-called *well-meaning people* – "it is not a question of moral and civic education, it is a question of humans living together" (says one of the people responsible for the System). Pure positivity, a new neutrality.

Grounded in these redimensionings of power, the System under study here manages to eliminate the greater part of the resistance

against its procedures, and thus makes possible the following statement, made by one of those responsible for its formatting:

We were never so arrogant as to think that we had the solution and that we had to impose it. We have enough experience to know that if it doesn't come from the bottom up, you can forget it; it's not going to happen.

From this statement, recurrent throughout the interviews, we observe that the idea that one has to listen and give voice to what comes from below, to those on the fringes, was incorporated by the administrators of the System, a demand that is present in all popular movements in response to the centralized power apparatus. We can consider, however, that this possibility is given by the fact that the demands coming from *below* were now under a management field, they were now working within a sphere of administrative predictability that uses them, with some skill, to create and implement policies and programs to manage each and every one. In this way, we currently have, coming from below, a series of demands for expansion and intensification of vigilance and control techniques.

In the field of education, these demands find fertile soil in the sensation of insecurity fed by a network of social agents (journalists, researchers and other alarmists in a wider sense) that articulate – although they are disarticulated from an objective point of view – needs of response by the public power before what is presented as reality. They are the countless cases, statistical data, researches etc., that circulate and integrate the repertoire of teachers, parents and pupils, bringing closer the limits between war and peace. This can be identified in the speech of one of those responsible for the System, when saying that between teachers and principals there is the following idea:

Even if something like that never happened in your school, you talk about “that one”,

you identify yourself, you map it... “I know that one day it could happen here”, so this goes on confirming it.

Among other things in your interviews, the concept of risk that gives support to the School Protection System is articulated with a notion pointed out as an important focus of the program's action: the *perception of security*. The interesting point is that the objectification of this perception brings about the consideration of possibilities of action not just in the field of what is understood as the sensation of security or insecurity. Thus, it is observed that these possibilities operate always within the valuation of the *perception of security* itself, and, therefore, of its intensification. What is configured here is an administration of ways of living in the school dynamics articulated by a management of what has been constituted as the *perception of security*. The latter is highly functional for the creation of projects, systems, policies and campaigns that pile up in schools, putting everyone in a state of bewilderment and, therefore, dependent on more projects, systems, policies and campaigns. In this respect, one of those responsible for the System says:

In school violence there is more than the question of violence pure and simple, there is the question of the perception of security. This is one of the things that have indeed influenced people's lives, much more than violence pure and simple. [...] The profile of the person victim of homicide is generally that of the young male, dark of skin, living in a periphery, who left school and so on, but in spite of that, everybody feels him/herself as a potential victim of homicide.

What makes everybody feel like a potential victim? And what if we suspect for a moment that what is meant to face this problem in schools, acting in the key of the *perception of security*, such as the School

Protection System, in fact intensifies the generalized feeling of being a victim? This idea is based on the consideration of a strategic relation between knowledge and power. Generally, we think that the researches do nothing beyond reading reality and therefore prepare us to face it. Now, presently reality is a product of an understanding established to a large extent by researches, so that we can move towards the idea that knowledge produces reality, creating the conditions for a series of procedures and measures that reaffirm power relations. In this sense, the relentless objectification of violence – of its cases, statistical data, testimonies, analyses etc. – creates strategically the conditions to affirm a set of initiatives that appear as well-meaning, but that turn every person into a hostage to a cycle of generalized feelings of being a victim and asking for protection.

In this sense, after presenting several studies on violence and the feeling of being a victim at schools – conducted by the *Núcleo de Estudos da Violência* [Centre for Studies of Violence] of the University of São Paulo, by UNESCO in partnership with Brazilian research institutes, by the *Sistema de Avaliação de Rendimento Escolar* [System of Assessment of School Performance] (SARESP) of the State of São Paulo and others –, one of those responsible for the System comments that:

There is then a series of information, only that none of them remained constant, with the same methodology, that is, what this indicates is that it is a big problem in everybody's head, they are worried about it. Everybody puts it as one of the main problems in education [...]. Apart from our objective responsibility, there is a subjective character which is important because it permeates the daily life of a teacher, and there is this concern. It is not just the teacher, pupils also have this concern, parents have this concern, the school's neighbors have this concern.

With the progress of the interview we recognize that the large incidents of violence that mobilized the concern of all occurred in fact in extremely small numbers, if we consider the universe of around 5 million people involved in education within the state of São Paulo school system; however, the sense of insecurity that spreads through the system justifies a System that objectivizes and monitors the trivial and daily incidents of any school as if therein lay the germ of violence. The boundaries between war and peace, good and evil, are then everywhere and in every action. Trivial incidents of resistance to a hierarchical relation, which could be understood as mere lack of discipline, rebelliousness or something of that kind, compose now a picture of risk and demand external monitoring together with the growing demand for *specialists*, references that usually characterize the daily functioning of a large part of schools.

Along these lines of problematizing, we consider that the concept of risk and the idea of the perception of security seem to promote a disempowerment of the teacher's capacity for action, a kind of subtraction of a know-how that was likely to constitute the being of a teacher in the day to day of the singularity of their own experience. A procedure that makes this quite clear in the School Protection System is the one that appears as a professionalization of the mediation of conflicts and of the management of people's relations under the form of a *school and community teacher-mediator* (SÃO PAULO, 2010, art. 7). It represents the creation of an expert in people's relations who is supposed to act in school relations so as to pacify them through the use of techniques and scientific-juridical discourses that enable him to mediate conflicts. This is part of the interview on this subject:

Where did this idea of the teacher-mediator come from? In fact, it is a collection of various projects, of various actions that already existed, done by some of our partners. It has to do with the *Aprendiz*

(Apprentice), it has to do with the Fernand Braudel Institute, which has a series of projects around: restorative justice, mediation of conflicts. It is a collection of knowledges, of proven techniques, and we put this all together in a catalogue, like a menu, and we created a figure that is supposed to do it just for the school. Of course each school has its own reality, its own public, its own problem, so it's not "do this" or "do that"; it is the possibility of a teacher dedicating himself completely to specialize in the mediation of conflicts, in bullying, in the abuse of psychoactive substances, in sexuality... You cannot just say "look, you'll have to know this and that, be an expert in everything", because school protection and human relations depend on a series of competences. So, "look around, understand your school, fine tune your look to your school, notice what the problem is", because this, what you think at first sight about a question of human relations or a security relation, is probably wrong, because it is always much more subtle... Then "think about this", let's take a teacher who thinks about this, who has only this to think about, and that from this thinking, from this understanding a little more precise, he can develop a project, and let him have the means, let's have the Secretary give him the means, so that he can train himself, educate himself to develop this project well in one of those areas.

We can understand that this initiative consists in a movement of subtraction of something from the teachers: of a know-how that was constituted in the day-to-day dealings. In this way they are now produced as subjects of a miss, somewhat infantilized, weakened, for they no longer know how to intervene in the field of human relations; they need help, support from a specialist in what is perhaps the most interesting and recurrent aspects of school relations. We do not share in the currently

popular idea that this movement is a result of a supposed complexification of social relations that would justify a specialized intervention. Obviously, things change in time, but we take as a reference that with respect to life there are no experts. The changes before which we feel relatively lost and disorientated are also an opportunity to change ourselves, to review our expectations, to step back from our convictions and therefore, perhaps, advance bravely towards the new. Viewed in this way, the supposed complexification of social relations can be understood as an expanding opportunity for the possibilities of life, and not just as a bundle of risks to be monitored and managed.

Moving a bit further along this line of reasoning about what is understood by the problem of violence at school, which means to say, to a large extent, faced with the daily and recurrent incidents in a school, teachers are constituted/constitute themselves as bearers of intense anxiety and in need of support. In this respect, one of those responsible for the System says:

It is something that we also notice... an anxiety. This question of violence in general, at school, generates a lot of anxiety in the team. [...] So it comes a little from this feeling of a lack of support that we noticed they have.

Teachers anxious and helpless. In this context, the School Protection System does not appear as an imposition, but as a service.

Indeed, one of the main forms of service implemented by this system is through the ROE (School Occurrences Electronic Recording System (SÃO PAULO, 2010, art. 9). The ROE is a tool created to allow all school principals to report through the Internet directly to the supervision of the School Protection System – therefore, directly to the Cabinet of the Secretariat for Education of the State – any occurrences associated to the daily life of the institution. In the definition of the tool, it

calls attention, next to the determination of the recording as compulsory, the generality of what has to be reported: any incident that “sharply perturbs the school environment and the performance of its educative mission” (SÃO PAULO, 2010), and other generic situations. Effectively, it is a monitoring and support instrument that, in capillary form, articulates all schools with central administration.

This articulation can be seen to occur through a weakening process that reaffirms the hierarchical dependence. This is present in the understanding that the simple communication with higher levels of hierarchical power produces positive effects. Let us observe what one of the interviewees states:

The fact that the principal has an online direct communication with the Cabinet of the Secretariat, that is, that he writes an ROE that is read the next day in the Cabinet of the Secretariat and that in perhaps two days the Cabinet gives a return about what they wrote, this has a very positive effect. It is curious because it is psychological: it's not that you solved the squabble; it's not that you improved relations between that school and the Juvenile Council, but they feel that they are no longer alone.

Therefore, nothing is improved, nothing is solved, “but they feel that they are no longer alone”. What is understood here as positive is the production of a dependence on the state power structure to deal with what is often a typical characteristic of daily life.

It is interesting to observe that the reporting of situations is stimulated even if they have already been solved, effectively turning them into occurrences. One must record every situation that “sharply perturbs the school environment and school relations” (SÃO PAULO, 2010, art. 9), and one of the motivations for that is clear: it is the production of documents that ultimately attest to one's *own innocence* before any charge; it is, therefore, a mechanism to

protect oneself that stimulates the recording of the occurrence, the accusation, the production and centralization of information. It is what one of the interviewees points out,

Sometimes, in an administrative process against a person, the principal may even comment: “look, I sent 10 ROEs to the Secretariat about this, I gave warning”. We care very much here about this question of the security of the school administrator: “so, report”.

We observe here the implementation of a mechanism of control and vigilance in which, in order for each one to save his or her own skin, one has to save the structure: “the teacher, the principal, the Governor are co-responsible for the same situation”, says one of the interviewees. It is, therefore, a way of protecting the pupil that requires the teacher and the principal to also protect themselves, thereby protecting the institution and, ultimately, a certain functioning of social relations that we call State.

With regard to the use made of the ROE, we notice some confusion in the interviews. However, we understand that its productivity lies exactly in the different possibilities of its understanding and use: there are those who avoid reporting something for fear of, in so doing, attest their own incompetence in running the school, or of having their bonus decreased⁷ by the end of the year; there are also those who report everything, any happening, because in this way his or her school can be considered as being in an *area of vulnerability*, so that the team receives additional payment for workplace location (ALE). Either way, what matters is that the ROE, for the consequences it may have, is now part of the life calculations that occur in schools, and operates as a variable in the games

7- This is a reference to a financial reward program for the school team implemented by the Government of the State of São Paulo, which has been functional as a management policy of the conducts of its servants, especially with regard to the indetermination of what can be considered in the calculation of the reward.

internal to the educational system. We can also observe the fact that this tool is one more weapon in the power game in which the whole school is involved, creating a new micropower front that feeds the network of favor exchanges and micro-benefits or difficulties that permeates school relations.

The General norms of school conduct document

Within the initiatives made by the School Protection System, the Secretariat for Education of the State of São Paulo published in 2009 a document addressed to all schools in its system: *General norms of school conduct: school protection system* (SÃO PAULO, 2009)⁸. It is basically composed by pupils' rights and duties/responsibilities, containing also a list of disciplinary faults and punishment measures and procedures. In its introduction we observe that it is addressed to "all members of the school community" since, although having as its specific focus the conducts of pupils, the document defines an understanding of how education is supposed to be, points out what are its objectives and parameters for its conduction, and establishes specifically the role to be played by those in charge of the functioning of the school.

It is therefore interesting to approach this document from the perspective of the production of a mode of being a teacher; after all, by defining an understanding of the function of education and by explicitly standardizing pupils' conduct, it is clearly establishing a form of being a teacher, delimiting a role to be played by this important school agent.

The reference for considering this legal instrument as directed to the life that is lived within the school is that

contrary to the effect of distance and uniformization that the legal instrument intends to inscribe in reality, one has to

understand the phenomena from the set of practices, that is to say, from all types of relations that establish a *way of doing*. (Ó, 2009, p.102)

The present approach to the document under study is configured, in fact, as an exercise of thought that sees it in its exteriority, in the knowledge/power articulations that give support to it and make it possible.

It is therefore important to consider that the demands upon school education, along several fronts of the understanding of its role, start from some common ideas, such as that of *imperfection*, and in this case believe and invest in an ideal, utopic school. However, Jorge Ramos do Ó (2009) alerts us to the fact that "the thesis of imperfection justifies that the action of power is expanded" (p. 105).

Either from left or from right, therefore, the thesis of imperfection claims more control and an expansion of a managerial rationality of conducting conducts. Michel Foucault analyzed this process with respect to the State and called it governmentalization. In the movement of governmentalization of the State, a whole group of technologies for the management of the populations' lives gains strength (quantification and management of health, birth rates, death rates, fertility, hygiene, instruction, etc.), in an attempt to turn the population more active and productive (Ó, 2009).

Based on these considerations, it is interesting to note the first sentence of the document mentioned above:

The integral protection of child and adolescent is an obligation to all of us. It implies guaranteeing a *socially healthy environment* that offers conditions indispensable to allow men and women in formation to expand their horizons, work with their aptitudes and express their interests, thereby becoming citizens able to participate – *in an active, peaceful and productive manner* – in the various aspects of social life. (SÃO PAULO, 2009, p. 5, our emphasis)

8- Available at: www.fde.sp.gov.br/PagesPublic/InternaSupervisao.aspx?contextmenu=manuoco. Accessed on 20 December 2010.

School education, being a variable capable of making the population more active and productive, can now be understood in the movement of the constitution of a rational government which is able to increase the power of the State. We have here a whole machinery capable of making coincide the state and individual interests. Thus, “the signs of a logic of power tend to fade, perhaps even disappear, in this process of construction of personal identity” (Ó, 2009, p. 108-109).

More than a simple form of organizing people’s relations, we can see the *general norms of conduct* as a way of making the individual receive and be dominated by a populational order, after all these norms generally issue from a kind of statistics of infractions⁹. This populational order has as one of its main features to produce in the individual the need for security, and imperative that requires risk prevention mechanisms. Perhaps because of that in various passages along the text we find ideas and expressions linked to the question of security, such as *risk to the school environment*, *threat to security*, *representation of danger*, *maintaining a safe environment*, *conducts or information that imply risk*¹⁰.

Easily recognized as a progress within democracy, since it is phrased in the tone of rights and duties of a democratic citizenship, the document is permeated by addendums that refer to a state of exception justified by the poorly defined figure of the risk to security. It is interesting to observe that, in the majority of cases, the questions of security serve as legitimate justification to establish exception as the rule. For example, its item 2.5 refers to personal attire, as well as to other kinds of furnishings and accessories, stating that

deciding to use them is up to the individual/user; however, it says next: “except when their use represents danger” (SÃO PAULO, 2009).

Now, that is quite enough to make most teachers, coordinators and principals indulge in their desire for control, delighting in vigilance and disseminating the distrust and fear by attributing danger to students wearing simple baseball caps, as is commonly the case in many schools today. Hence the exercise of a power that is authoritarian and arbitrary, but that has the *unquestionable* seal of the need for safety and, even worse, the equally *unquestionable* backing of a legal instrument to recognize rights inscribed in the juridical framework of democratic citizenship.

In this manner, lacking security and a well thought citizenship, the individual not only must accept the external rule, but has too feel it as a condition for his happiness; he must see it not as coercive, but as protective and necessary to his own well-being; he must, still, have the satisfaction and pleasure of accepting it. Through the generally sure action of the teacher, impregnated with some feeling of salvation – references that the document in question here dutifully reinforces –, the school has been efficient in mobilizing the power of individuation in each one (COSTA, 2009), and it is in this manner that it has collaborated pedagogically to accomplish the feat of governmentality: “to govern always without governing” or “to accomplish government through the free choice of the subjects” (Ó, 2009, p. 113). It is a manner in which we *democratically* – therefore, *freely* and *consciously* – learn (or teach) to live the state of exception as a rule for the good of each one of us.

Final considerations

With the intent of stimulating thinking instead of an objective search for solutions and proposals that tend to be piled up on schools and their agents, we have tried to problematize the productivity of a public policy that acts at

⁹- Statistics operate as a technology that individualizes, in so far as it imposes homogeneity. It establishes an average framework on the basis of which everyone find their bearing, so that each one now references his own lifestyle against labels and categories that the power/knowledge made available.

¹⁰- These terms were extracted from the document *General norms of school conduct* (SÃO PAULO, 2009). We notice the undifferentiated use of *risk* and *danger*; however, as already pointed out, these are concepts that work at different levels with regard to the modulation of security strategies.

the intersection between education and security, having as its focus its effects on the inducement of a manner of being a teacher within what we can understand as a juridical economy that permeates education nowadays.

An important consideration about what has been analyzed here refers to the idea that at schools, instead of producing forms of living that are strengthened by the confrontations at the ethical sphere, we have been producing forms of living that are weakened by the submission to the normative need and to the compromises indispensable to self-protection. This movement may be at the root of a narrowing of the political action that has been restricting it to the guarantee of formality and to individual convenience. As those legally responsible for incidents occurring within the period of their professional activity, teachers and other operators of the institution learn to behave with prudence, keeping themselves free of any risk. In this case, inventing, experimenting or thinking differently may be risky.

In a text about education, Silvana Tótoro (2005) says:

Work is hard in the sense of getting rid of the profusion of clichés that are established about writing, speech, gestures and body postures. They are what make us feel safe about being in conformity with society or with a must-be approved by general opinion. Now, is that what we understand

by agreeing with reality? Being opposed to that means we are idealist? Poor real! Shaped like that, it cannot expand its power. But opinion wants it domesticated like that, because in order to establish itself as a majority representation it has to exorcise that which escapes it; its *modus operandi* is to be provident.

It is this *modus operandi* that, within a movement of *defense of society*, gives shape to a whole bureaucratic-juridical-administrative arsenal to defend its institutions and, particularly, a mode of governing through the commitment of individuals to defend what is presented as their own interests.

It is worth observing here that *their own interests* are not constituted as the effect of an ideological oppression to which they are subjected, and from which *their real interests* have to be extricated. We have to understand that it is in the very movement of production of the subjects that their interests are produced. It seems therefore fundamental to look closely at the idea developed by Michel Foucault that it is not about unveiling our true reality, freeing ourselves of ideological layers that make us take as ours the interests of others, supposedly alien to our own interests, but of distrusting even that which we recognize as our own and true interests. It is, ultimately, about “refusing what we are” (FOUCAULT, 1995, p. 239).

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