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## The Information of Business Subjectivity and the Implementation of Performative Culture in Higher Education\*

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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand how the formation of business-oriented subjectivity - productive and competitive - has potentialized the construction of a culture of competitive performance in higher education and impacted on the working conditions and the model/project of life of the teaching workers. The capture of subjectivity by toyotist/neoliberal rationality, responsible for the formation of a new subject (self-governing/manager of itself), leads to an increase in individual performance, in order to reduce the real costs of production, and the development of a new governance of the State, focused on the privatization and commodification of companies and public services. Thus, the capitalist reterritorialization project put in place the process of commodification of higher education, through the expansion of the private/mercantile sector and the increasing subordination of public institutions to market rules. The implementation of mercantilist and economicist policies has stimulated the widespread competition and increased production performance of higher education institutions (public and private). Fear/instability and accountability, resulting from policies of quantitative assessment and flexible working relationships and conditions, comprise the (subjective) training of a new education professional, who is more efficient, competitive and subservient to precarious working conditions. It is an exploratory study, as to the objectives, and bibliographic, of a hermeneutic-analytical nature, as to the procedures.

### KEYWORDS

Business subjectivity. Performativity. Educational policies. Higher education. Teaching work.

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## A Formação da Subjetividade Empresarial e a Implementação da Cultura Performativa na Educação Superior

### RESUMO

O presente artigo tem por objetivo compreender como a formação da subjetividade de cunho empresarial – produtivista e concorrencial - tem potencializado a construção de uma cultura da performatividade competitiva no âmbito da educação superior e impactado sobre as condições de trabalho e o modelo/projeto de vida dos trabalhadores docentes. A captura da subjetividade pela racionalidade toyotista/neoliberal, responsável pela formação de um novo sujeito (autogovernável/gestor de si), enseja a elevação da performance individual, de modo a reduzir os custos reais de produção, e o desenvolvimento de uma nova governança do Estado, centrada na privatização e mercadorização das empresas e dos serviços públicos. Assim, o projeto de reterritorialização capitalista vigorou o processo de mercantilização da educação superior, mediante a expansão do setor privado/mercantil e a crescente subordinação das instituições públicas às regras do mercado. A implementação de políticas de cunho mercantilistas e economicistas têm estimulado a generalização da concorrência e o aumento da performance produtiva das instituições de educação superior (públicas e privadas). O medo/instabilidade e a responsabilização, decorrentes das políticas de avaliação quantitativa e de flexibilização das relações e condições de trabalho, compreende a formação (subjetiva) de um novo profissional da educação, mais eficiente, competitivo e subserviente as condições de trabalho precarizadas. Trata-se de um estudo exploratório, quanto aos objetivos, e bibliográfico, de cunho hermenêutico-analítico, quanto aos procedimentos.

### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Subjetividade empresarial. Performatividade. Políticas educacionais. Educação superior. Trabalho docente.

## La Formación de la Subjetividad Empresarial y la Aplicación de la Cultura Performativa en la Educación Superior

### RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es comprender cómo la formación de la subjetividad corporativa, productivista y competitiva, ha potencializado la construcción de una cultura de performatividad competitiva en el ámbito de la educación superior e impactado en las condiciones de trabajo y el modelo / proyecto de vida de los trabajadores docentes. La captura de la subjetividad por parte de la racionalidad toyotista / neoliberal, responsable de la formación de un nuevo sujeto (autogobierno / autogobierno), conduce a un aumento en el rendimiento individual, con el fin de reducir los costos reales de producción, y el desarrollo de una nueva gobernanza del Estado, centrado en la privatización y mercantilización de empresas y servicios públicos. Así, el proyecto de reterritorialización capitalista puso en marcha el proceso de mercantilización de la educación superior, a través de la expansión del sector privado / mercantil y la creciente subordinación de las instituciones públicas a las reglas del mercado. La implementación de políticas mercantilistas y economistas ha estimulado la competencia generalizada y el aumento del rendimiento de producción de las instituciones de educación superior (públicas y privadas). El miedo / la inestabilidad y la responsabilidad, como resultado de las políticas de evaluación cuantitativa y las relaciones y condiciones de trabajo flexibles, comprenden la capacitación (subjetiva) de un nuevo profesional de la educación, que es más eficiente, competitivo y servil a las condiciones de trabajo precarias. Es un estudio exploratorio, con respecto a los objetivos, y bibliográfico, de carácter hermenéutico-analítico, con respecto a los procedimientos.

### PALABRAS CLAVE

Subjetividad empresarial. Performatividad. Políticas educativas. Educación universitaria. Trabajo docente.

## Introduction

The productive restructuring and the expansion of the market logic, driven by the rise of Toyotist/neoliberal rationality, provided the formation of a new worker mentality, focused on competition and productivity. The new model of capitalist production and accumulation, supported by a broad process of flexible production and work, put in place important mechanisms to capture the subjectivity of workers, namely: fear, instability and accountability. This process of capitalist subjectification aims to train highly competitive workers, fully engaged (mind and body) in their professional activities and committed to maximizing results. The production of a business subjectivity, designed to intensify the competitiveness among workers and increase individual production, is linked, above all, to the improvement of workers' performance. The flexible mode of production (toyotism) and the neoliberal rationality, propellers of the flexible accumulation model, fix their purposes based on the principle of performativity. The capture of subjectivity and the formation of an entrepreneurial rationality requires greater performance from workers, allowing capital to increase productivity and extract added value. Performative is the "result/product" of the Toyotist/neoliberal subjectivation process and the "raw material" used by the hegemonic class to enable the development and strengthening of the new model of production and capitalist accumulation.

In this sense, the present article aims to understand how the process of capitalist subjectivation in the entrepreneurial molds, responsible for the formation of a new subject (self-governing/self-manager), has potentiated the construction of a culture of competitive performativity in higher education, highlighting the impacts on the working conditions and the model/project of life of the teaching workers. It is an exploratory study, as to the objectives, and bibliographic, of a hermeneutic-analytical nature, as to the procedures. Initially, the essay presents an analysis of how business subjectivity is constituted in the face of the hegemonic expansion of toyotist/neoliberal rationality and how it has contributed to the rise of the neoliberal "good governance" model and the toyotist organization of work on a global level. Then, it seeks to understand the process of investing business management standards and market logic in the field of higher education, by postmodern capitalist rationality, whose reforms have prevailed the priority imperatives of efficiency, competition, profitability and performance productive. Finally, it emphasizes the mechanisms of capitalist subjectivity, materialized by educational policies of a mercantilist and economicist nature, responsible for the (subjective) formation of a new education professional, more competitive, highly productive and subservient to precarious working conditions.

## The Rise of Toyotist/Neoliberal Rationality and the Formation of Business Subjectivity

Contemporary subjectivity has become the new raw material of the capitalist accumulation mode. The neoliberal governance model and the capitalist production model are based on the social construction of a business subjectivity - entrepreneurial, competitive, individualistic and alien to the public financing of social policies. The capitalist machine works with the formation of more active, competitive individuals, “protagonists of their choices” and, above all, responsible for their own personal and professional development. To this end, flexible accumulation mode has put in place two important mechanisms with a view to developing a model of productive and competitive subjectivity, aimed at improving the performance of workers and exempting the State from responsibility for guaranteeing social protection, namely: fear/instability and accountability (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016). In addition, it is worth noting that the adequacy of subjectivity to the interests of post-industrial capitalism is more broadly related to an intense process of production and/or seizure of desire, carried out through collective enunciation equipment, including social networks and the mass media, which stimulate the internalization of a notion of culture, called commodity culture, focused on consumption and the logic of the market. In short, the transformations in the subjects' way of thinking and acting are projected based on statements and reforms that generate instability in relation to employment and expand the levels of competition, demanding a better individual performance (GUATTARI, 1985; GUATTARI; ROLNIK, 1996).

The process of capitalist subjectivation, conducted in line with political, economic and cultural transformations, is possible due to the procedural, social and machinic character inherent in human subjectivity. It is assumed that subjectivity is not the possession of individuals (innate/hereditary), but it is understood that it is produced and constituted in a social context. Subjectivity is the world of ideas, meanings and emotions built internally by the subject from his experiences and social relationships, becoming the source of his affective and behavioral manifestations. The formation of subjectivity in the social sphere allows individuals to adapt to a certain type of social relationship and cultural life. The political, economic, social and technical-scientific transformations, inaugurated in the last decades of the 20th century, allowed the capitalist system new mechanisms to control the subjective element, whose gears established new patterns of domination and exploitation. The mechanisms of empowerment of subjectivity, based on the production and objectification of desires, allow the dominant classes to ensure an increasingly despotic control over production systems and social life. The production of capitalistic subjectivity allowed Toyotist/neoliberal rationality to go beyond political-territorial limits and boosted the process of homogenization with regard to the totality of productive activities and activities of social life across the planet. Through the production of a homogeneous subjectivity, capitalism has become a good example of a permanent system of reterritorialization (GUATTARI, 1985; GUATTARI; ROLNIK, 1996).

The subjectification process aims to adapt workers to the market logic, in order to make them more competitive. The intensification of competition and the demands for better individual performance are strategies used by the capitalist mode of production to expand the extraction of overwork. The process of corporate subjectivation is associated with a set of changes immanent to the post-industrial capitalist mode of production, namely: the restructuring of the productive system (flexibilization/Toyotism), the expansion of a new model of “governance” in the public sector and entrepreneurship and the development of a commodity culture. However, it is important to emphasize that both neoliberalism and Toyotism, central pillars of support for flexible capitalism, cannot be translated and reduced, in a simplistic way, to a political-economic doctrine and/or a production method. These two concepts are presented, in the first place, as a global rationality, whose principles and strategies have fostered a broad and intense process of capitalist reterritorialization. Toyotist/neoliberal rationality employs unprecedented techniques of power over behaviors and subjectivities, which allows it to create new ways/models of life, transform cultural values, establish new rhythms of work and impose new directions on public policies, directly interfering on all spheres of human existence (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016a).

The new structure and/or productive sociability, created by engineer Taiichi Ohno and originally implemented in the Toyota production line, gave rise to new standards of workforce management. Capitalist production, based on economies of scope, was directly confronted with the rigidity of Fordism and the social protection standards inherent in the Welfare State. Just-in-time production, characterized by flexible and small batch production of a variety of types of products geared to demand, required the training of a multipurpose worker, capable of developing multiple tasks and highly competitive. The control of the workforce is based on the emphasis given to the co-responsibility of the worker and the personal payment system associated with productivity, replacing the model of labor discipline and the form of pro rata payment proper to the mass production system of the Fordist era. The Toyotist production model made possible a strategic leap towards more flexible production and working conditions, the versatility of the markets and the control of the workers' subjective element. In flexible accumulation, control is no longer objective, centered on the physical/bodily aspect of the worker, and becomes subjective, through individual accountability strategies and increased competitiveness (HARVEY, 2014; ALVES, 2008; SANTOS, 2012).

The Toyotist ideological-evaluative matrix was directly confronted with the concept of an interventionist capitalist state (Welfare State). Concomitantly with the productive restructuring process, the flexible accumulation model imposed reforms on national states, with a view to overcoming the losses of the world crisis that arose in the mid-1970s. The state, in its current configuration, was unable to cope the countless social demands and the transformations of political and economic life, associated with the process of restructuring the economy on a planetary scale. Structural adjustment programs and policies, recommended by international financing agencies, pushed for the reformulation of the standard of management of the development of capitalism, present in the conception of Keynesian interventionist state, in order to make public administration more efficient and flexible in the face of the new

demands of the globalized world. The economists and politicians linked to the neoliberal project sought to convince public opinion that the government was becoming incapable of governing due to the “excess of democracy”, arising from the increase in egalitarian claims and the active involvement of the governed (in particular, the poorest and most marginalized classes) in political and social life. For the economically neoliberal model, state interventionism and major social programs are responsible for the ills of the contemporary world (unemployment, hyperinflation, economic stagnation, increased public deficit, among others) (DOURADO, 2002).

For the holders of political and economic power at the global level, it is not enough to stop the growth of public spending, it was necessary to change the way of public management in order to enable the formation of a government of a business nature. The process of capitalist modernization in vogue in the 21st century, associated with fiscal austerity policies and economic growth strategies, caused the subordination of state companies and public services - including social activities that are outside the productive sphere - to the logic of Marketplace. For neoliberals, State services must be directed to the private sector through policies that encourage a broad process of privatization of state-owned companies and the establishment of public-private partnerships. In order to increase the performance of the public service and to please the markets, it is expected that national States internalize the governance characteristics of private companies, in order to raise the levels of competition between public and private services. As highlighted by Antunes (2008, p. 21, emphasis added), “public services, such as health, energy, education, telecommunications, social security, etc., also experienced, as could be expected, a significant restructuring process, subordinating itself to the maxim of commodification, which has been strongly affecting workers in the state and public sectors”. This governance model requires the replacement of an administration that obeyed the principles of public law, committed to social protection policies, with management governed by common competition law.

The rise of neoliberal hegemonic rationality, whose principles supported the economic restructuring and fiscal adjustment of national states, favored the dissemination and consolidation of flexible production. Neoliberal political-economic reforms were based on the precepts of productivism, competition and flexibility inherent in the Toyotist mode of production. Policies to encourage the private sector substantiated the precariousness of contractual relations, the intensification of work, the reduction of deadlines and individualization of wages and the submission of workers to the principle of accountability, whose strategies provide for personal accountability and the need to be accountable and be evaluated according to the results obtained. In the sense of Dardo and Laval (2016a, p. 199), States have contributed “largely to the creation of an order that subjects them to new restrictions that, in turn, lead to compress wages and public spending, reduce “acquired rights” considered very onerous, and weaken the solidarity mechanisms that escape the private assistance logic”. The “good governance” model, advocated by the logic of flexible accumulation, provides for the generalization of competition, in order to increase productivity, reduce public spending and please markets.

The political construction of a global finance governed by the principle of generalized competition was structured based on the formation of a new subject (subject-company/self-company/self-governing). The formation of self-managing and highly competitive subjects became a condition for building a new governance model in the public and business sectors. The productive, political-economic and cultural transformations, inherent to the process of capitalist reterritorialization, tend to throw the weight of competition and performance or personal and professional failure exclusively on the subjects. In order for this to be possible, Toyotist/neoliberal rationality justifies its political actions based on a supposed “freedom of choice” of social subjects, making them responsible for the risks involved. Global capitalism draws on the principles of meritocracy to blame them for unemployment and/or personal failures and, thus, to destroy the rights historically won without suffering the consequences resulting from the social clash, exempting the State from the responsibility to guarantee social protection. Accountability, as a mechanism for the formation of a subjectivity of a corporate nature, requires a prominent behavior of social subjects in relation to their individual performance in the social field and in the labor market. This has made it possible to implement measures aimed at wiping out the state machine and delegating a large part of its functions to private companies (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016a, 2010).

Contractual instability, fear of unemployment and individuation and/or accountability for performance - the main mechanisms of capitalist subjectivity in the context of production - expose workers to exacerbated competition and to more intense work rhythms. The spirit of Toyotism and the political construction of mercantile spheres aim to put human intelligence at the service of capital. The capture of subjectivity by neoliberal rationality, in order to make them fit for the great circuit of production and consumption, produces subjects who are docile to work, flexible, enterprising, capable of governing themselves as responsible individuals. The formation of a business subjectivity (productivist and competitive) aims to adapt individuals to the metamorphoses projected by the toyotist organization of work, whose demands demand a new intellectual-affective disposition, full engagement in the work environment and consent in relation to business ideals. The internalization of the performance norm and the increase of workers excluded from the productive process and the labor market allowed private companies and the public sector to increase the levels of subjection of employees to precarious working conditions and the expansion of individual performance through more intense work rhythms. According to Alves (2011, p. 125), “due to ‘fear of unemployment’ the wage worker ‘consents’ a higher level of exploitation of his workforce and renounces social and labor rights”.

With this, capitalist rationality aims to instill performativity in the soul of individuals. Performativity has become a culture (a kind of technology) adopted by the flexible accumulation mode to compare, regulate, control and enable changes in the behaviors and management of institutions. They have directly influenced both the subjective formation and life projects of students and teaching workers, as well as the construction and implementation of policies for higher education.

## Market Logic as an Edifying Element of Performative Culture in Higher Education

The consolidation of the neoliberal consensus and the flexibilization of working conditions and production methods, immanent to the flexible accumulation model, gave rise to a new strategy capable of raising the productive potential and the supremacy (political, economic and social) of the dominant groups/hegemonic: the capture of subjectivity. Toyotist/neoliberal rationality intends, through an intense process of subjectification, to increase productivity per capita in order to reduce real production costs and develop a new governance centered on the reduction of social policies and the privatization of public services. The development of the post-Fordist capitalist mode of production, aided by information and communication technologies, provided the expansion of market logic beyond the productive and mercantile sphere, homogenizing certain ways of doing and being for the whole of society. The subjective formation of the new subject-worker, oriented towards a marketing bias, has been conducted through the intensification of competition, linked to the consolidation of the Toyotist spirit, and the increase in the level of insecurity of workers, resulting from the process of flexibility and/or precarious working conditions. These transformations implied the mass commercialization of educational activities and the decline of the working class, including education workers, and a reduction in the power of organized labor to negotiate economic policies and the constitution of the social pact (ALVES, 2011; DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016b, MARROW; TORRES, 2004).

The global formation of a productive and competitive subjectivity is related, above all, to the rise of a new model of State governance, centered on the privatization and commodification of public services. The development of a competitive and entrepreneurial culture within the scope of public administration, whose strategies supported the neoliberal “good governance” category, is an increasingly totalizing process and forms part of a new global political agreement. The internalization of market logic by nation-states has made the political, economic and legal conditions necessary for the development of the post-industrial mode of production viable - flexible, competitive and performative. In the sense of Ball (2004, p. 1105), “the values of the private market are celebrated in almost all western states, giving legitimacy and impetus to certain actions and commitments - entrepreneurship, competition and excellence - and inhibiting and delegitimizing others - social justice, equity, tolerance”. This expansion of the business management model stimulated a set of political-economic reforms and the modernization of the public administration of national states, including Latin American countries. Capitalist restructuring, along the lines of business, led to the shift from the provider/executing state to the regulating/supervising state. Neoliberal restructuring imposed changes in the functions of the State, the capital, the public sector institutions, the citizens and the public and private sector workers.

Nation-states have come to consider several potential service providers, namely: public, voluntary and private. The new “architecture” of the State allows the operationalization of several markets within the scope of public administration, the development of alternative financing models, the participation of private financiers to collaborate and/or develop the public sector infrastructure and the evaluation of the results by

the State controller. This binary relationship between State and private institutions absorbs from the public administration the exclusive responsibility for the direct provision of services and dissolves the boundaries between the social and economic fields. With this, nation-states, together with private companies, seek to break the limits that circumscribe the spheres of the public and non-market activities, in order to lead them to commodification and the production of profits. The neoliberal governance model, also called managerialism, represents the insertion, in the public sector, of an organizational culture of a business and competitive nature. In this sense, an intense movement started towards the implementation of a new model of public administration capable of overcoming bureaucratic services. These initiatives have, over the past decades, been guided by the development of a set of more flexible and less standardized administrative procedures, guided by more accurate data on the results achieved. The objective of neoliberal governance is to improve productivity (efficiency), the degree of achievement of results (effectiveness) and the impacts generated for society (efetividade) (BALL, 2004, 2005).

The reforms and modernization of national states, implemented since the 1990s, especially in the countries of Latin America, made it possible to disseminate and legitimize structural adjustment policies, embodied by international financing agencies (World Bank, IMF, WTO, IDB , among others). Nation-states have incorporated the metamorphoses that are taking place in the capital/labor relationship and the political-economic guidelines inherent in the new capitalist accumulation regime. The subordination of national strategies to the requirements established by the global economy implied changes in the field of public policies, especially social policies, interfering with the logic of financing education. The economism and privatism adopted by several developing countries, including Brazil, in favor of the economic adjustment proposed by Toyotist/neoliberal rationality, mainly focused on the management and financing of higher education. The way in which higher education is being organized and structured in recent decades includes the transformations propagated by the flexible accumulation regime: reduction of public spending; introduction of management mechanisms inspired by the private initiative; consolidation of market logic; opening to foreign capital; flexible production and work; linking public funding to increased productivity; and the prevalence of productivist logic and competitiveness (BECHI, 2017; BRINHOSA, 2009; MAUÉS, 2005; SILVA JUNIOR, 2008).

National states were instructed to encourage the expansion of private institutions and guarantee greater autonomy for public institutions of higher education, challenging them to diversify their sources of financing and to use financial resources more efficiently. This is because, for the precursors of neoliberalism, educational policies would respond better to the social and financial needs of the State when subsidized by the private initiative and guided by the laws that govern the markets. According to Goergen (2010, p. 905, emphasis added), the most “controversial point that involves this issue is the understanding of the Bank and its technicians that higher education cannot be seen as a strictly public good. Based on this premise, it is argued in favor of competitiveness, alternative financing and privatization”. The reforms in the educational area, linked to the neoliberal political-economic model and the spirit of Toyotism, allowed the State (regulator) to maintain the bases of the system of

accumulation, social control, competitiveness and structural adjustment. In the phase of contemporary globalization, education is conceived as a political strategy related to economic development, becoming an important instrument for the reproduction of capital..

Budgetary measures and the restructuring of capitalist production stimulated the process of commodification of this level of education, through the expansion of the private/mercantile sector and the increasing subordination of public universities to market rules. The recommendations by the international financing organizations (World Bank, IMF, WTO, IDB, among others), with a view to adapting the public policies of the national States to the dictates of world economic rationality, naturalized the education trade, contrary to the historical principle of education as a public good, as a social and human right. As a result of this new stage of the development of world capital, the National States “assume the doctrine of“ human capital ”and the guidelines of the World Bank, transferring to the private sector their responsibilities in the field of public policies, educational policies, and educational investments” (GAMBOA, 2009, p. 99-100). The current phase of the globalization of capitalism, driven by collective enunciation equipment, linked knowledge and the pedagogical process to the laws of the market, transforming higher education into a profitable business. This process of commercialization of higher education, ensured by the political-economic reforms of a neoliberal character, led to a fierce dispute between universities, educational groups and companies, for their presence in the most promising “educational markets”.

The introduction of market logic in the educational field enables the development of human capital in line with the priority imperatives of productive efficiency and professional insertion, breaking with the “classic” principles of political emancipation and personal expansion. Educational policies are designed and materialized in view of different concepts based on the principle of business management, including: efficiency, free enterprise, competitiveness, productivity, profitability, profit and consumerism. As a result, reforms aimed at education have stimulated the widespread competition and increased production performance of higher education institutions (public and private), in order to provide the rationalization and optimization of financial resources. The business management model imported the principles of Toyotism into the public administration, including: the emphasis on worker co-responsibility; wages and bonuses linked to productivity; optimization of the workforce; entrepreneurship; and, the increase in competitiveness. In the interpretation of Laval (2004, p. 11), “the school and the university must become quasi-companies operating under the model of private firms and restricted to maximum ‘performance’”. In this commercial context, the dominant economic and political forces provide for the formation of a flexible and autonomous teacher, capable of giving orders to himself, disciplined and responsible for his professional performance. The objective is to make possible an intense process of capitalist reterritorialization centered on the establishment of a new culture of competitive performance in the context of higher education.

Managerialism, characterized mainly by the flexibility of public administration and the internalization of the business management model, guided its purposes and actions towards

the principle of social responsibility, accountability and the obligation of accountability to the population. For neoliberals, stimulating the expansion of the educational market tends to make institutions more free and flexible to develop services and activities. This flexibility is conferred, according to Sobrinho (2003, p. 105), “to the processes, to the means, to the administration, decentralized, to the contractual relations, with the purpose of facilitating the efficient management, increasing the productivity and expanding the freedoms for the private expansion”. However, actions based on the expansion of market logic are widely processed by the State through intense evaluation processes. The ideology of effectiveness and performance, materialized in business management, becomes synonymous with the notion of quality. The quality of higher education, including the performance of the teaching worker, has its most accurate and clear expression in the quantification and later qualification of production. This process of measuring the quality of the activities carried out by the HEIs follows the logic of quantitative assessment. This is because evaluation is central to the transformations advocated by the new capitalist mode of production, including, in particular, reforms in higher education.

In the context of quantitative assessment, professional competence is measured according to individual productivity levels. The logic of merit, associated with the quantification and classification of academic production, has been legitimized, in the Brazilian context, by the evaluation policies of higher education institutions (HEIs), as in the case of law no. 10,861, of April 2004, which institutes the National Higher Education Assessment System (SINAES). The process of "ranking" through the quantification of production, widely valued by the business society and by the bodies that promote research, has raised the competitive spirit among teaching workers in the search for higher levels of productivity. The results undertaken by the HEIs, which are highly articulated to the teaching production, are objectively demonstrated and compared in order to strengthen competitiveness and the productivist logic. The quantification of performance exposes workers, including education professionals, to the risk of unemployment, the afflictions of instability and individual accountability for professional advances, maintaining employment and increasing monthly earnings (productivity bonus) (BECHI, 2019).

Competitive performance goes beyond the boundaries of the private/mercantile sector and directly affects the public sector and immaterial labor. The adequacy of higher education to the process of globalization of capital, recommended by international financing organizations (BM, IMF, WTO, among others), was based, above all, on maximizing results by increasing productivity and minimizing public spending. Neoliberals believed that, with the consolidation of reformist strategies aimed at higher education, centered on the expansion of private financing and the reduction and optimization of public spending, the efficiency, performance and quality of this sector would transcend the limits imposed by public financing. Neoliberal educational policies were structured based on the logic of productivity and meritocracy, with a view to providing greater funding for extra-budgetary resources, expanding the offer of places at federal universities and rationalizing financial resources through the optimization of human resources (working time) and the physical structure of

higher education institutions (HEIs), the expansion of the private/mercantile sector and the entrepreneurship of public HEIs (SILVA JUNIOR, 2008; BANCO MUNDIAL, 1995).

This process of entrepreneurship in higher education, whose reforms and policies emphasize the reduction of public investments and the establishment of a culture of competitive performance, was enhanced by the rise of (extreme) right governments in Brazil, namely: Michel Temer (2016/2018) and Jair M. Bolsonaro (2019/2022). In the last five years, a wide process of lamination of political singularities and the formation of a right-wing subjectivity - conservative in customs, committed to market values and averse to the social needs of the less favored classes, was established in Brazil. This process of subjectification, led by different opinion makers (social movements, journalists and politicians), was constituted from the proliferation of criticisms of the PT's (Workers' Party, in literal translation) governance model and the presentation of political, economic and social solutions to Brazil's problems, based on the ideas of anti-communism and the principles of the minimum state (cutting of social policies), the supremacy of private property (privatization), free enterprise (entrepreneurship) and meritocracy. The rise to the presidency of (extreme) right-wing politicians favored the implementation of political and economic reforms that support the post-industrial production model and the metamorphoses imposed on the job market at a global level. The guidelines and policies aimed at education at the national level understand and highlight the market, management capacity and performance - key elements of flexible production (toyotista) and neoliberalism.

Performance technology produces new institutional profiles, which are more competitive and less assistential. With regard to access to higher education (undergraduate and graduate), the current process of entrepreneurship in education has been based on the principles of accountability and meritocracy. Entrepreneurship in higher education has encouraged the collection of tuition fees, the reduction of strictu sensu postgraduate scholarships, the restriction of access through affirmative ways, the dismantling of public HEIs, the offer of scholarships in foreign institutions, in order to include, preferably, students with high academic performance and coming from areas with greater commercial potential, the expansion of the private-commercial sector and the increase in the number of students per class/teacher (optimization of human resources and the physical capacity of the HEIs). Policies for accessing this level of education have been structured based on the transfer of responsibility to students and teaching professionals. This has occurred because the neoliberals defend the inversion of the representation of the individual as a “product of his environment” and start to consider him fully responsible for his personal and professional performance (BECHI, 2019).

The governance model, associated with the Toyotist spirit, gave rise to policies that leveraged higher education entrepreneurship and the adaptation of teaching work to the interests of capital. Neoliberal reforms and policies, implemented in the direction of hegemonic economic adjustment guidelines, imposed changes in the working conditions of public servants and workers in the private sector. These metamorphoses in the world of work are directly linked to the new model of production management (toyotista) and to the process

of easing labor laws and labor relations, whose reforms allowed greater exploitation of wage earners and increased profit margins by private companies. The reforms of higher education, structured on the basis of profitability, productivism, quantitative assessment, competitiveness and optimization of public resources, have affected the subjectivity of teaching workers. In this mercantile context, the dominant economic and political forces provide for the formation of a flexible and autonomous teacher, capable of giving orders to himself, disciplined and responsible for his professional performance (FÁVERO; BECHI, 2020).

In short, to improve personal and professional performance, capitalist rationality forces individuals to learn to be an active and autonomous subject, capable of transcending time and the work space - an entrepreneur of himself. The neoliberal governance model is based on the social construction of a business subjectivity - entrepreneurial, competitive, individualistic and alien to the public financing of social policies. The rise of market logic and the principle of business management, advocated by postmodern capitalist rationality, depends on an intense process of capturing the subjectivity of social subjects. Among the subjectivation mechanisms inherent to the process of entrepreneurship in education, the following stand out: the dismantling of labor rights and the weakening of solidarity mechanisms; new contractual relationships; the yield linked to productivity and the prevalence of the productivist logic; the subjection of education professionals to quantitative assessments; and, professional judgment subordinated to performance. With that, it is valid to affirm that the internalization of the standards of the private companies and of the market logic comprises the development of a new culture of competitive performance in the scope of higher education.

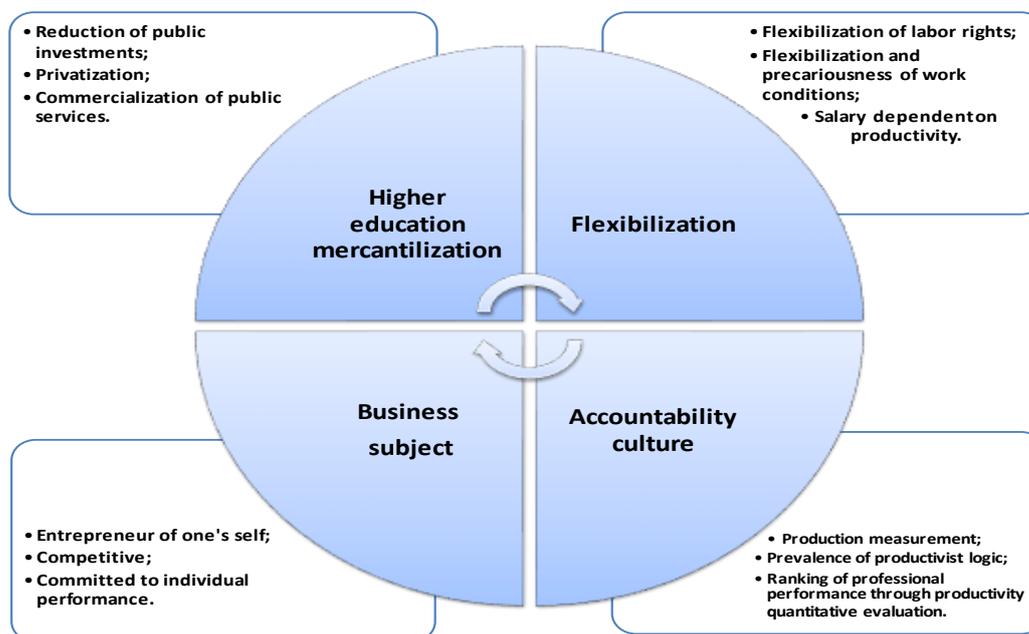
### The Path of Teacher Performativity in Higher Education in Brazil

The transformations in the productive and political structure of capitalism, established in the midst of global society, decisively influenced the construction and execution of educational policies, directly affecting the process of teacher subjectivation. The implementation of mercantilist and economicist policies, based on the rationalization and optimization of invested resources, requires the (subjective) formation of a new education professional, more efficient, competitive and submissive to the transformations of the world of work (contractual relations, models of management and evaluation, labor reforms, among others). Subjectivation mechanisms aim to instill performativity in the worker's soul. The formation of a productive and competitive mentality, driven by the fear of unemployment (instability) and by accountability, requires a prominent behavior of the teaching workers in terms of their efforts and the results obtained at the individual and / or collective level (organization). Performativity has become a culture (a kind of technology) adopted by the flexible production method to compare, regulate, control and enable changes in the behaviors and management of institutions. Capturing the subjectivity of education professionals has been one of the main strategies used by capital to reduce financial investments and adapt HEIs to market logic (BECHI, 2019; BALL, 2002; SILVA; SANTOS, 2011).

The educational policies materialized in Brazil, especially after the 1990s, caused the subsumption of teaching work to the logic of flexible capitalism. This is allied to the fact that the reforms in the educational area were conceived in favor of maintaining the capital productivity margins and the construction of a new model of State governance, centered on the reduction of the public sector and expansion of market logic. The negotiations on the transition from the Provider State to the Regulatory State, with the aim of reducing social spending and expanding the market's functions in economic and social development, impose organizational demands that cause, among other elements, the flexibility of teaching work. The regulatory state is constituted in several ways, such as, for example, by making labor laws more flexible, privatizing, commercializing public services and publicizing. This new form of governance, based on the private companies' own management model, aims to optimize efficiency in achieving the aims pursued by the State, in order to increase productivity with a lower contribution of public resources. (CAMPOS, 2005; SILVA; SANTOS, 2011; BRITO; PRADO; NUNES, 2017).

The capture of the subjectivity of the professors of the HEI stems mainly from the elaboration and implementation of policies that excel in expanding the logic of the market in the educational field. The neoliberal project advocates the reduction of the State's capacity to make inclusive public policies, centered, for example, on the development of a possible public, free and quality education project (AZEVEDO, 2011). Because of this, higher education institutions, especially universities, have been structured and acted in line with hegemonic interests. Teaching work has been constantly shaped by economic imperatives. The understanding of education as a marketable good, combined with the logic of flexible accumulation, has deepened the process of commodification of the teaching workforce and its knowledge. The reduction of investments in education and the constant search for higher levels of competition in the educational market has led public and private HEIs to make teaching conditions more flexible, restricting rights and expanding individual productivity. Changes in teaching work are structured along the lines of transformations in the world of work in general. The flexible capitalist production model tends to transform teaching work into productive work, subjecting it to the strategies of economic growth and expansion of the educational market (WALKER, 2016; GARCIA; HIPÓLITO; VIEIRA, 2005; MAUÉS, 2005; BRITO; PRADO; NUNES, 2017; CAMPOS, 2005). To facilitate the analysis of this problem, Figure 1 presents a summary of the main factors that have conditioned teaching workers to the culture of performativity.

**Figure 1.** The Path of Teaching Performativity



Source: Elaborated by the author based on: Alves, 2008; Alves, 2011; Antunes, 1999; Antunes, 2005; Antunes, 2018; Azevedo, 2011; Ball, 2004; Ball, 2005; Bechi, 2017; Bechi, 2019; Brinhosa 2009; Brito; Prado; Nunes, 2017; Burbules; Torres, 2004; Campos, 2005; Carvalho, Wonsik, 2015; Dardot; Laval, 2016a; Dardot; Laval, 2016b; Fávero; Bechi, 2020; Feldfeber, 2007; Garcia; Hipólito; Vieira, 2005; Harvey, 2014; Tello, 2011; Machado; Bianchetti, 2011; Mancebo, 2007; Marrow; Torres, 2004; Miranda, 2005; Maués, 2005; Maués, Souza, 2016; Oliveira, 2009; Pinto, 2000; Santos, 2012; Severino, 2008; Sguissardi, 2009; Silva; Santos, 2011; Sobrinho, 2003; Walker, 2016.

There follows, then, some measures that acted in the process of building a culture of competitive performance in the scope of Brazilian higher education, during the last decades: the Gratification of Stimulus to teaching (GED), by law nº 9.678/98, which the increase in the workload of teachers, as a condition for receiving a bonus to be incorporated into their salary; law no. 10,861, of April 2004, which institutes the National Higher Education Assessment System (SINAES). Institutional evaluation mechanisms (self-evaluation and external evaluation), designed to enable the quality control of educational services, directly interfere in the routine of university professors, causing the loss of autonomy, alienation and the development of activities that spread beyond punches from the institutions; the implementation of Law nº 13.243/2016 that alters law nº 10.973, called the Technological Innovation Law, of December 2, 2004, which provides for incentives to innovation and scientific and technological research in the productive environment. The measures established for the purposes of the Technological Innovation Law have intensified the process of internal privatization of public institutions of higher education and the consequent submission of teaching work to the logic of capital; the Normative Interministerial Ordinance MEC/MP nº 22/2007, amended by nº 224/2007 (Teacher-equivalent bank), whose measures gave preference to public HEIs to establish employment bonds of 20 hours per week (BECHI, 2017, 2019).

The reconfiguration of teaching work in higher education, conducted under the prism of the emerging productive organization, was supported by the implementation of the Support Program for Federal University Restructuring and Expansion Plans (Reuni). The Program, established by Decree No. 6,096, of April 24, 2007, aims to provide federal universities with the necessary conditions for expanding access and the permanence of young people in higher education. It would be up to each educational institution, which adhered to the restructuring plan, to increase the completion rates of undergraduate courses to 90% and the ratio of undergraduate students in classroom courses per teacher. Studies on the impacts of higher education reforms on teaching work led to different criticisms of Law No. 12,772/2012, which provides for the structuring of the Federal Teaching and Career Plan and the Teaching of Federal Basic, Technical and Technological Education. As interpreted by Maués and Souza (2016, p. 77-78), instead of bringing benefits and making the career more attractive, the measures caused a large flattening of wages. Law No. 12,618/2012 is also included, which creates the supplementary social security system for public servants and limits the amount of pensions to the ceiling of the benefit paid by the National Social Security Institute (INSS) and its operation is linked to the capitalization of workers' contributions (BECHI, 2017, 2019).

The elaboration and implementation of policies and actions that interfere in the teaching work conditions continue at an accelerated pace in the neoliberal governments of Michel Temer (MDB/2016-2018) and Jair M. Bolsonaro (No party/2019-2022). Among them, the following stand out: Law No. 13,325/2016, which changes the remuneration, promotion rules, incorporation of performance bonuses to pensions and pensions of public servants in the area of education; the Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) to the Public Spending Ceiling - (PEC 241/Senado Federal - PEC55), the so-called PEC da Morte (Death PEC, in literal translation), which froze public spending for 20 years; the Labor Reform (Law 13,467/17) and Outsourcing (Law 13,429/17); the Pension Reform (Law 13,467/17); the Entrepreneurial and Innovative Institutes and Universities Program (Future-se), proclaimed by the JMB government, whose proposals are aimed at “strengthening the administrative, financial and management autonomy of Federal Higher Education Institutions (Ifes), through a partnership with social organizations and promoting the raising of its own resources”. This program includes the dismantling of careers in higher education and the end of public classificatory examinations for hiring teachers, since social organizations have the power to hire professionals, including teachers, via CLT (Consolidation of Labor Laws), without examinations. In addition, it encourages the “accounting culture” and the prevalence of the productivist logic, due to the need for accountability, to be developed in accordance with management contracts, based on goals and performance indicators and deadlines.

Higher education policies have caused substantive changes in teaching working conditions, among which the following can be highlighted: contractual flexibility in labor relations through the incorporation and/or proliferation of temporary (sub) hiring of teachers; academic performance based on productivist and quantitative logic; flexibilization of work resulting from the increase and/or diversification of tasks to be accomplished and acceleration

of production rhythms; and the constant submission of the teacher to different evaluation systems. In private HEIs, other precarious actions are added, including: dismissal and (re) hiring of teachers according to the new labor laws; the dismissal of professors with more extensive experience, giving way to hiring specialists and graduates; the turnover of teachers hired on a temporary basis; and, the reduction of wages, with no prospects of recovering wage losses. Higher education reforms rapidly bring education professionals towards the contingent of workers who experience the most disenfranchised conditions and daily instability, given by part-time, temporary, subcontracted work and the increasing contingents who experience the structural unemployment (BECHI, 2019; ANTUNES, 2018; MAUÉS; SOUZA, 2016; CARVALHO; WONSIK, 2015).

In private institutions of higher education, there is an increase in the number of teachers hired per hour, based on the CLT regime or without any legal protection, whose functions and working time are limited to the development of activities related to teaching, exempting them from teaching, research and extension activities. The precariousness of temporary contracts and the low amount paid for class hours put pressure on teachers to increase their weekly workload to the maximum, to work in more than one institution, sometimes with different employment relationships and to assume a routine of intense commuting to work, handle daily tasks. In the face of higher education reforms and the current process of productive restructuring, teachers have been living with strenuous working hours, the insecurity of temporary contracts, the alternation of hiring and dismissal, the reduction of autonomy, alienation, fear of unemployment and getting sick. The constant climate of threat and instability, resulting from the downsizing/optimization of the production machine and the production control strategies, has generated the intensification of competitiveness and individualism, the increase in the potential for psychological and interpersonal conflicts and the responsibility of teachers in relation to their individual performance (SANTOS, 2012; FÁVERO; BECHI, 2020; MIRANDA, 2005; LEDA, 2006).

The proliferation of teacher subcontracting in public and private HEIs arises from the need, imposed by the logic of capitalist production, to reduce production costs and intensify control over their subjectivity. The capture of subjectivity is one of the main strategies adopted by flexible capitalism to manage the productive time of the worker. The expansion of labor productivity happens through the internalization of the competitive and entrepreneurial spirit, stimulated by the processes of accountability (accountability) and flexibility. In the context of higher education, the teacher is subjectively conditioned to establish a new relationship with time, portrayed in the acceleration of production and extension of the workday. The capture of teaching subjectivity is one of the main strategies embodied by flexible capitalism to raise the (self) intensification of work. Competition and productivism are assumed by workers as a personal life project. This is because the Toyotist/Neoliberal project supports its political, economic, cultural and productive structure in the principles of autonomy and freedom. The economist view presupposes that all workers are able to achieve professional progress, it is enough to combine performance and flexibility (CAMPOS, 2005; BRITO; PRADO; NUNES, 2017).

In the context of flexible accumulation, teaching workers have been pressured to increase production quantitatively in order to meet the goals of scores defined by research promotion bodies, institutional evaluation indicators and policies for diversification and rationalization of financial resources. The quantification of results obliges HEIs and teaching workers to exercise their competitive capacity, in order to increase productivity and optimize the installed capacity of the physical structure and human resources. The teacher's performance is quantified and the "quality" of his work is determined by productivity. The preferential option, of the business management model, for the quantitative procedures comes to constitute itself as a true "quantophrenia" in the scope of higher education, making the evaluation a kind of "race", in which the one who scores the most points wins. The need to organize comparative and classificatory results reduces university autonomy and submits teachers to the productivist and marketing logic. According to Sobrinho (2003, p.109), "evaluation materializes as an instrument of control over individuals, institutions and the system and operates as if they were essential values, efficiency, profit, productivity, competitiveness, operationality, instrumental rationality".

Higher education teachers are in a complex work situation, in a context marked by the constant increase in the level of labor demands and the prolongation of working time. The multiplicity and the lightening of tasks gave rise to a process of expansion of the teacher's activities. The new production model, advocated by educational reforms and the educational market, forces the increase of tasks, the establishment of atypical schedules, the acceleration in the development of activities. By assuming various functions and responsibilities, the productive time of the teacher exceeds the prescribed working time. In addition to classroom activities, teaching professionals carry out research, extension and management activities, linked to their training, in which activities such as filling out numerous reports, forms, issuing opinions, raising extra-budgetary resources, among others, are added. Productivity invades the time of leisure, rest, family activities. The work becomes exclusive in the context marked by flexibility and versatility. The productivist dynamics matters to the interior of the HEIs, the society of urgency, as it comprises hurried readings of the last launch, the immediacy of research, the lightening of courses and the formation of more students in less time. Therefore, the logic of productivity is inserted in the professional and academic life, causing several damages to the interpersonal relationships and to the subjectivity of the education professionals (MANCEBO, 2007; WALKER, 2016; BRITO; PRADO; NUNES, 2017).

The objective of educational policies for higher education, combined with the global hegemonic project, is to adapt HEIs and, especially, teaching work to capitalist interests. The improvement in the quality of education is linked, strictly and/or narrowly, to the formation of an effective, competitive and highly productive worker. Individual performance is measured based on quantitative assessments, which allows greater accountability of the worker in relation to the results of education, job stability and obtaining financial bonuses on salaries. Teacher professionalization, through the neoliberal approach, is based on the subjective adaptation of the teacher to the productivist logic and the consequent docilization in the face of new working conditions and the weakening of labor rights. With that, capitalist

rationality had made possible an intense process of capitalist reterritorialization centered on the establishment of a new culture of competitive performance. Performance technology, combined with the principle of meritocracy, produces new institutional profiles (more competitive and less assistance). In short, the flexibilization of employment contracts, academic productivism, evaluation policies and the commercialization of higher education, characterized by the expansion of the private mercantile sector and the commercialization of educational services in public institutions, triggered phenomena such as intensification and precariousness of teaching (BALL, 2004; TELLO, 2011; BECHI, 2017; SANTOS, 2012; FÁVERO; BECHI, 2020; MIRANDA, 2005; LEDA, 2006).

## Final Considerations

The flexible accumulation model excels in the formation of a performative society, conditioned to the toyotist/neoliberal principle of meritocracy. The principles of meritocracy and free enterprise justify State actions against policies and programs to promote social justice and reinforce the condition of “free choice”, individual accountability and entrepreneurship. In this sense, the construction of a performative society requires the formation of a subjectivity of a corporate nature - productivist and competitive. The broad process of capitalist reterritorialization, based on the capture and leveling of subjectivities according to hegemonic interests, has a new model of work management and political-economic strategies that determine the improvement of the productive performance of workers in general. This relationship between subjectivity and work is mediated by mechanisms that configure new ways of being, thinking and acting, according to the moral / cultural code and the current (flexible) capitalist production model. The flexible production method and the market logic stimulate the formation of a proactive mindset and the widespread competition in the work environment in order to reduce labor costs and maximize their productive capacity. The need for performance validation and the speed/intensity of work rhythms, applied by the flexibilization processes, capture the subjects and immobilize them, flattening their subjectivity to the neoliberal hegemonic rationality (BECHI, 2019).

Capitalist rationality conditioned public policies, including educational policies, to the dictates of financial and economic rationality. Policies and priorities in the field of education were defined within logic and economic analysis, generating a growing process of commodification of education, especially in higher education. The market logic has transcended the management of private companies and has directly affected the public sector and immaterial work, with strong repercussions on teaching work. Neoliberal educational policies aimed at reforms in higher education have changed the nature and conditions of teaching work, in order to respond to fiscal adjustment strategies and the new way of organizing work and production. The expropriation of rights, the afflictions resulting from instability and the search for professional recognition, in face of the incipient madness of the demands of performativity, raises the subjection of teachers to more intense rhythms and precarious working conditions, exhausting their lifetime (leisure), social interaction and family relationships in search of better wages and job stability. The corporate project

recommended by capital makes them vulnerable to fear, boredom, anguish, existential lack of control, anxiety about the future, personality corrosion, demoralization, disenchantment, absence of life project, generalized depression and physical illness.

The transformation of higher education into a field of capitalist expansion, characterized by the predominance of private/commercial interests, subjected teaching work, more than at any time, to the needs of the market, extracting rights and demanding better competitive performance. Teaching workers are called upon to make their academic products and existence itself a commodity, subject to economic interests and “utilitarian morality”. The business management model applied to education subordinates professional judgment to the demands of performance and the market, where the privileged focus is on stimulating competition and increasing productivity. The new logic of capitalist expansion, based on the processes of flexibility and accountability, conditions the formation of a new teaching subjectivity, through which they are charged with the control of their own work. Within the framework of performativity, as stated by Ball (2010, p. 51, emphasis added), “academics and teachers are represented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals who calculate themselves, who add value to themselves, who improve their productivity, who live a calculating existence. They must become enterprising subjects who live their lives as an enterprise of the self”. The new forms of managerial power applied to education and the subjectivity of teachers comprise the attempts to reduce public spending and the introduction of market values, especially through the commodification of education and the increase in the performance of institutions and teaching workers.

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