

**POLICIES OF SOCIAL ACTION AND INCLUSION
AND CURRENT BRAZILIAN TENSIONS**

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ABSTRACT

By briefly describing the events that highlight the emergence of policies of social action and inclusion in Brazil, from the 1930's through the mid-2010's, this paper presents reflections about the production of a new type of individual who possesses, in the learning processes, the potency to invert the relationship between absolute poverty exclusion for the lack of competence-in/exclusion. Such policies, as they operate as State strategies for the biopolitical government of the population, produce in articulation with other practices what may be considered a subspecies of the *Homo œconomicus*, namely, the *Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis*. The digital inclusion is discussed as an important and effective operator for inclusion in Brazil.

KEY WORDS

Inclusion; Learning; *Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis*; Biopolitics.



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INTRODUCTION

Dealing with the policies of social action and inclusion in Brazil requires the assessment of events that have been meaningful to Brazilian history since the 1930's until today, the second decade of the 20th century. Here, we do not propose to outline a history of the discussions about such policies, neither to historicize in detail the events that made possible the development of social actions in the country. Our purpose is merely to outline the debates that make us understand the relations between the current economic crisis in our nation and the increasing glorification of learning in educational programs that foster inclusion, digital accessibility and the individual development of competences.

As we have argued elsewhere (Veiga-Neto & Lopes, 2007, 2011), issues such as the strong stimulus to send children to school and the support to actions of school inclusion and accessibility and the educational programs that prioritize learning by means of acquiring competences—in a way where each individual may become an entrepreneur of him/herself—demand strong and continued financial investments. As a result of the current Brazilian economic crisis, all of it seems to be under growing threat.

EMERGENCES

In Brazil, the policies of social assistance, inclusion and digital accessibility have been established quite late in relation to other Western countries. In the 1930's, social assistance was strongly marked by paternalism, aimed at promoting individual actions or directed at just a few social sectors. From 1964, the social legislation became more and more subordinated to the national security precepts, as the military dictatorship was settled in the country, which ran until 1985. During this authoritarian period, strong investments were made by the military government to de-mobilize the opponent political forces and the democratic resistance. In the final years of the dictatorship, crises could be observed in the system, together with a modest start in mobilization of new social entities, with strong democratic character. The scarce resources so far invested in the population, and more specifically on the quality of life in the instances of labor, health and education, led to the rise of reclaiming social movements, which culminated, in 1988, in the promulgation of a new Constitution. In it, also known as the "Citizen Constitution", the advancement in social rights—such as "education, health, labor, housing, leisure, safety, social security, protection of motherhood and childhood, assistance to the poor and helpless [...]" (Brazil, 2001, p.12)—are remarkable.

By imprinting a remarkable difference in relation to the period of military rule, in force in the nation for 20 years, this Citizen Constitution promoted the social rights as a matter of citizenship. The welfare character of the practices on the population was moving to the emphasis on the protection of individual rights. This means moving *from* government actions with emphasis on charity and philanthropy to government actions with an emphasis on law and citizenship. Even though the universalization of rights is still something to struggle for in Brazil until the present day, after the Citizen Constitution there has been a long way in which State actions onto the population have expanded. At first, a highlight must be given to the construction of the Unified System of Social Assistance (SUAS), in 1990.

According to Lasta (2015), the Organic Act of Social Assistance (LOAS), promulgated in 1993, ensured social assistance as a universal policy. In other words, LOAS ensured and recognized Social Assistance as a universal policy and defined guidelines to create and implement the Unified System of Health Service. Since then, the State conducts such policy by means of distinct levels of government: local, state, and federal. The actions taken at



these levels, supported by popular representatives, mapped and started the works on sectors of the population which were under conditions of social vulnerability. Even though LOAS has started the works on specific segments of the population under social vulnerability, it was in 1995, after the 1st *National Conference on Social Assistance*—with the theme of “Social assistance as a citizen’s right and a duty of the State”—that the guidelines to improve the de-centralized and participative system of Social Assistance have been evaluated and proposed. The 4th *National Conference on Social Assistance*, whose theme was “Social Assistance as a policy of inclusion: a new agenda for Citizenship”, held in 2003 in celebration of 10 years of LOAS, and coordinated by both the Department of Social Assistance and the National Council of Social Assistance, meant an important advancement towards the sedimentation of the new terms of the Policy of Social Assistance in Brazil. After great debates, new courses of action were proposed and approved for the Policy of Social Assistance in Brazil. The *Consolidated Report of the State Conferences of Social Assistance*¹ records the discussions of the groups in those debates.

In the second half of the 1990’s, the Fernando Henrique Cardoso Federal Administration opened the doors for international investments, which reached the population and its many ways of social participation. From then on, intense actions to tackle poverty and hunger were implemented, including the creation of the Extraordinary Department of Food and Nutritional Safety, the Department of Social Assistance and the Executive Secretariat of the Inter-Department Managing Board of the Program *Bolsa Família* (“Family Grant”).

In 2004, the Lula da Silva Administration closed the above-mentioned Departments and Secretariat, and created the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger. Its major purpose was to promote social inclusion in addition to whole assistance and minimum income for the families under conditions of absolute poverty. Proceeding with the actions started in the previous administration, funds were considerably expanded for the social programs. The actions taken by the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, in a strategic manner, now began to promote inclusion as one of the main national goals. For such, the actions were conducted in partnership with various public and private sectors, and with the civil society. The National Social Assistance Policy was adopted in 2004; in

1 Retrieved May 20, 2015, from: <http://www.mds.gov.br/saladeimprensa/eventos/assistencia-social/iv-conferencia-nacional-de-assistencia-social>

the following year, is implemented the Unified System of Social Assistance, being responsible for the social assistance services throughout Brazil. Under the umbrella of this policy are all those who find themselves in a situation of social vulnerability.

The scenario briefly described above is the stage where, in Brazil, the State strategies to fight the immense and historical social inequalities take place. Although a lot of advancement has already occurred, such inequalities are still remarkable. It is also in this social and political scenario that inclusion earns great magnitude in the assistance movements, and turns out to be seen, in Brazil, as one of the greatest targets of the State. Among the different sectors and areas committed to promote inclusion, education takes a prominent place since the beginning.

TENSIONS AND IMBALANCES

Unlike the policies of social security, the policies of social assistance and protection seek to include those who need the direct interference of the State for their survival. After all, in Brazil there is still a lot of people unable to contribute to social security in order to ensure the provision of their own protection (Lopes, 2009).

In Brazil, it is taken for granted—at least among those who fight for equal conditions of life and social participation—the need to invest in the population segments which have been historically and negatively discriminated (Castel, 2008). Despite this general agreement, the governmental strategies employed to eradicate absolute poverty in the country and to change the precarious conditions of life among the poor are an issue full of controversies and intense debates. Since the early 2000's, one sees an increasing investment in social assistance and a growing mismatch between the number of those who, through their work, contribute to the maintenance of social security. Out of balance, the scale is tilted to the side of assistance; expenses go higher and higher and tax collection is lower and lower, which gives a picture of part of the crisis which is already being materialized in the nation (Lopes, 2009).

When we mention the crisis, we are not referring to that kind of feeling that is typical of Modernity as Bauman tells us (Bauman, 1998). Nor are we defining Modernity as a time of permanent crisis (Hardt & Negri, 2003). More-



over, we are not talking about *krisis*, in the sense that one of us discussed when defining condition of life (Veiga-Neto, 2008). We have in mind the crisis that has an impact over the 21st century and reaches not only the representatives of the great economic blocks, but also countries as Brazil, which has an emerging economy and, in the social aspect, a situation that is still very alarming. The crisis to which we refer to is that of a typical entrepreneurial and financial capitalism; it is a capitalism that, by creating programs to care the individuals and to strengthen festive identity processes, fade and weaken the notion of society. In Touraine's words (2011, p. 123-124),

[...] in this context, the social reconstruction, which should facilitate the primacy of the action of new actors, is indeed blocked by the crisis and the massive reduction of funds. The crisis in itself does not facilitate the modernization of the political and social field; it is the reverse that is true.

The crisis enunciated in Brazil demand us to understand, in a global level, the moment we are living; and it also requires, even if briefly, the resume of historical events that made up the Brazilian present situation. In the previous section, in a very much summarized way, we pointed out the major national events that were in part determining factors of the conditions of the social struggles for the right to social assistance. As we have seen, amidst such struggles, in the past 50 years Brazil has experienced two decades of military dictatorship, followed by three decades of democracy. In this last period, the country walked briskly in the execution of a kind of neoliberal rationality, which, somewhat oddly, combines itself with the principles of the Welfare State. Maybe it is the case that we should call this new neoliberalism (that we are having in Brazil today) *caboclo*².

It is a rationality in which the State and the business company make significant and productive partnerships to promote better conditions of life for the population that now has access to social assistance as a right guaranteed by protection policies. This “means to ensure protection to those who need, with no prior contribution to the provision of such protection” (Brazil, 2004, p. 10). The way of access to the social protection policies is easy to be obtained, as it is enough to fulfill some conditions that prove the situation

² In Brazil, *caboclo* is the word used to designate the persons resulting from a cross between Indigenous Brazilian and European people.

of poverty or misery, of vulnerability and exclusion. It should be noted that the category “social exclusion” is the most difficult to be sized, insofar as it is, unlike the other ones, in a relationship of immanence with inclusion. Stated another way, the exclusion always appears in relation to inclusion, that is, someone is excluded from a situation of inclusion or vice-versa (Lopes & Dal’Igna, 2007).

Although the contributions to social security are paid by vast portions of the Brazilian population, by themselves such contributions do not manage to meet the demands from the (also large) groups of extremely poor people. They need investments in their lives, so that they can, after all, change themselves. It is precisely at this point that appear the partnerships between the State and business corporations, the State and private institutions; or, if you wish, the State and the market.

Partnerships between the State and the Market grow stronger and stronger, with the purpose of eradicating poverty and promoting, through education, new forms of life and of understanding the world. In these new forms, what really matters is the individual autonomy and independence, and no longer the traditional principles of solidarity with a feeling of stable allegiance to a given collectivity and the common good.

For Sposati (2002), the autonomy of individuals comes with the capacity of the citizens to supply their vital, economic, political, social and other needs, ensuring the conditions for individual and collective dignity. Such provision, in the political, economic and market configurations of the present, takes place, partly, through the (personal and educational) conditions faced by each individual to provide their own livelihood and, in part, through the conditions supplied by the State, in partnership with the market (in providing funds that are missing for the maintenance of minimum conditions of life). In this case, some kind of paradox is settled in the relationship between individual and society. By means of the collective work force, we produce part of the conditions that ensure assistance to the individuals; but, by capitalizing the individuals aimed at survival, at the change of life, at self-overcoming, at the acquisition of individual competences without an ethical commitment towards other people, we end up producing individuals who turn their back on the social reality.

Rocked by the policies of social assistance and action, inclusion became both an imperative and a strategy to lead the conducts of the population (Lopes, 2009, 2015), which naturalized the presence of all in the fringes

of society and, consequently, of the market. It is seen as natural that everyone has rights, all are invested of conditions of self-governing, of learning, of participation, of being connected. The main question is: “everyone must be within”, even if many continue to be “imprisoned” within one of the fractions of the wide gradient of social and economic participation.

We are facing a type of inclusion that is immanently connected to exclusion. As we have already argued, it is an excluding-inclusion in an in/exclusion (Lopes & Dal’Igna, 2007). The autonomy—or lack of it—of individuals becomes a function of the offering, even if local, of the conditions so that everyone has access “to all”, as well as the capacity of learning certain strategies of self-entrepreneurism and annulment or reduction of the disabling factors.

Thus, autonomy is related to the conditions offered within a gradient of inclusion. This means that inclusion takes place considering a variation of magnitudes along a “spatial dimension”. In other words, inclusion takes place within a gradual variation of certain characteristics of a given milieu. Conditions of work, of social participation, of health, of cultural capital and of education are fundamental to define the capacities of the individuals who are in circulation in the gradient. This means that inclusion does not imply in changes in the very gradient, but results in positioning the individuals in the gradient and make operate, within each degree of variation, a gear that allows modifying the positions taken by them.

In Brazil, a way to measure the effectiveness of the inclusion policies is the expansion of the number of individuals accessing education and capable of incrementing both their respective scores of consumption and their participation as opinionative subjects, politically more participative. It is not, however, a change in the sense of those advancements speculated by the socialist ideologies. Even though there are some improvements in the income share, changes in the economic model did not happen and there are no signs that they will happen, and furthermore no one knows if those improvements will last. Strictly speaking, a greater economic homogeneity is not underway and not even a remarkable and decisive improvement in the share of wealth is taking place; but instead, a multiplication of differences can be seen. Therefore, it is not a turn in the economy, neither the victory of the ideal of social equality and better distributiveness. It is, in fact, the multiplication of diversity, settled and incremented by the expansion of competition and consumption.



Somehow, it seems more and more difficult to talk about social classes in Brazil. The elements of the traditional sociological and economic theories that define the classes prove to be increasingly fragile, inconsistent and inconstant. At all times the economic, financial, educational, cultural diversities are multiplied.

It is interesting to note, then, that the expansion of the conditions for participation of a greater number of people does not necessarily result in the expansion of movements towards the ideal of social equality. On the contrary, as Lazzarato (2014) has argued, diversity strengthens competition and stimulates the production, the multiplication and many crisis of subjectivities.

There are varied and extensive gradients along which individuals are distributed, according to the criteria that are used to classify them. In each gradient there is diversification of identities and types of life conditions that range from industry workers, self-employed, waged workers to—since the first decade of 2000 in Brazil—the assisted people. The latter are not taxpayers, although they are essential to the market and to the functioning of the gradient in which they are included.

In this century, many were the investments³ in Brazil to reduce the fringe of absolute poverty that threatened the development and the participation of the nation in the international rankings. Pointed out by the magazine *Exame*⁴ as the 13th country that most invested in the fight against poverty in the past two decades, Brazil invested in the reduction of inequality in terms of income and wealth, with the purpose of getting more balance in its development. It has also invested in other dimensions, in addition to the economic one, such as health, education, culture, race/ethnicity, etc. The combination of the outcome of such investments is what may result in more substantial changes in the people's lives. Therefore, the investments made in the two past decades need time and continuity to bring more solid and permanent social gains. The current Brazilian crisis, made well visible in the second half of 2014, threatens precisely the continuation of the programs whose purpose was to reverse the life conditions of the Brazilian population.

3 For more details about the development indices, see document *Indicadores de Desenvolvimento Brasileiro 2001-2012*, available in Portuguese at www.uff.br/observatoriojovem/materia/relatório-indicadores-de-desenvolvimento-brasileiro-2001-2012-revela-que-brasil-eleva-escola. Retrieved on May 20, 2015.

4 Available at <http://exame.abril.com.br/brasil/noticias/brasil-e-120-pais-que-mais-gasta-com-combate-a-pobreza>. Retrieved on May 26, 2015.

Many *desfiliados* (unaffiliated)—to use a category by Castel (2008)—or many excluded—to use a relational category which is, as a result, rather fragile in terms of its characterization—were captured by the social action programs and “promoted”, even without a permanent guarantee that they would remain in the new level they occupy as included. Assisted people were converted into an economic/financial category and, even if under constant threat of losing the status they have, they retain some participation guarantee in the financial game. Such game relies on the State as a sponsor, not only for the individual getting a benefit, but also for the social gradient in which the individual is located.

Official documents insist: from the first decade of the 21st century on, Brazil goes through changes in the life conditions of the poorest. According to data published in the *Report on Brazilian Development Indicators* (Brazil, 2013, p. 14),

The economic growth in the last decade benefitted more significantly the population of lower income, which contributed to reverse the historical inequality in the country. Between 2001 and 2011, the income of the 20% poorer increased in a pace seven times higher than the richer (5.1% per year in the average above inflation at 0.7%). The monthly average household income *per capita* of the 20% poorer went from R\$ 102.00 in 2001 to R\$ 167.00 in 2011.

A sponsoring State, which operates as a business company, affording for the cost of investments that aim to ensure favorable publicity to promote its image, sees itself currently threatened by the present financial and moral crisis that it has been facing.

One cannot deny that the social and the assistance policies contributed to change the life conditions of the Brazilian population. Then, it is not the case to say that the Brazilian biopolitical investments mostly did not pay back in improvement for the population and, consequently, for Brazil as a whole. However, we say that there is a mismatch between such investments and a medium and long-run social policy for social, economic and financial security. The risk taken by Brazil, due to a wild expansion of social and assistance investments, was to generate part of the crisis we are going through currently.

The end of the military dictatorship in Brazil and the openness both in democracy and in the market, which began to happen in the early 1990s, made



several conditions possible so that, in the following decade, most of the investments in the population emerged as a structural need, both national and global. If historically the Brazilian social and economic inequalities undermined the nation's image, in the late 1990s—and mainly in the mid-2000s—, the State investments in the population drew the attention of international investors, as Brazil was now seen as a country *with a and of the future*. The country's image was turned upside-down as now it was under threat both by the internal shakes of moral and legal nature, and by the internal and external economic imbalances (of the *entrepreneurial* and *financial capital*).

Gros (2011), discussing the last courses delivered by Michel Foucault in the *Collège de France*, but with special attention to the course *Birth of bi-politics*, held in 1979, mentions three forms of capitalism uttered by the philosopher. They are: the *mercantile capitalism*, the *industrial capitalism* and the *entrepreneurial/managerial capitalism*. Gros adds another form to these three types of capitalism, which he calls *financial* or *stock-holding capitalism*. For him, the latter form of capitalism emerged in the last decades, produced by the variation in the stock markets. We will not explain each one of them, as we believe this would be unnecessary for the context of this paper; but we focus, even though quickly, the two latter forms mentioned above: the *entrepreneurial/managerial capitalism* and the *financial* or *stock-holding capitalism*.

For the *entrepreneurial/managerial capitalism*, production is associated with planning and strategic actions. The human dynamics are central to mobilize the sophisticated gears of production. Among the strategies that we are able to see emerging in this form of capitalism is *inclusion*. Although inclusion may be interpreted in many other ways, we understand it as we have already discussed earlier, both as an *imperative* and as a *strategy* of the State. An *imperative* since it is imposed with the power of the Law. A *strategy* because, after exceeding the school institution and earning social and assistance expression, it is configured as a set of actions aimed at eradicating extreme poverty, at the social development and the growth of the labor market (Lopes & Fabris, 2013).

There are a lot of assistance programs that could be quoted here, as they dealt with inclusion as a strategy to reverse a present situation. However, as an example, we highlight two of them: the *Program Solidarity Community* (created in 1995) and the *Program to Eradicate Child Labor* (created in 1996).

The Solidarity Community strategy aimed at fighting poverty in Brazil. Its purpose—based on the articulation of resources coming from the State, the private enterprise, and the third sector—was to mobilize economy with

the opening of new jobs. Supported by the “principle of solidarity, the program operated, in 1995, in 302 small towns which faced high percentages of poverty, especially in the Capital cities and metropolitan areas. In 1996, actions were expanded to 1,111 towns and cities”. (Lopes & Rech, 2013, p. 215)

The *Program for the Eradication of Child Labor* had the purpose of withdrawing children from child labor by supplying income to the family whose minimum income *per capita* was up to half minimum wage and with children aged 7 to 14 years. One of the conditions to get the grant from the Program was to keep the child going to school. Such fact, including others, shows how productive school seems to be in the process of social reeducation and implementation of a new social culture. According to Lopes and Rech (2013, p. 216), “according to 2001 data, by the *Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA)*, the Program took actions such as: grant “citizen child”, plan to support states of lower human development (PADH), expanded work day, and generation of productive occupations for the families served by PADH”.

For the *financial or stock-holding capitalism*, speculation and indebtedness are major conditions for its best functioning. There were many campaigns of “responsible consumption” which misleading individuals to new needs. For example, people in the context of the *Program My House My Life* were encouraged to consume electric appliances, and they even got a funds card with which they could buy things, with the purpose of keeping the economy functioning and contribute to maintain Brazil’s economic growth even in the moments of crisis. The same happened with technology, when computers could be purchased cheaply, so that a new digital culture of social participation would be disseminated, as well as a culture of digital accessibility. Schools are therefore committed to institute and spread this new culture, as they were encouraged by public educational policies intended to democratize the digital access and inclusion.

Touraine (2011, p. 37)—analyzing the atmosphere of unbridled consumption which was widespread in many countries and benefitted great leaders in detriment of others going poor, as well as when analyzing the dismantling of the banking system and the crisis of capitalism, mainly in the United States—, preserving the differences, gives us clues that we can utilize to interpret the current Brazilian crisis. After all, also in Brazil we have a feeling of the capitalist crisis experienced in several parts of the world. That author (Touraine, 2011) points to two reasons for the decline of a type of capitalism. One of them is the sophisticated and uncontrolled credit operations;



the other reason is the increasing inequalities. Both reasons haunt Brazil, as the investments in the country, along the 2000s, were precisely towards the openness to international markets, the expansion of credit to a greater number of people and the investments in social, educational, and assistance policies. Such policies improved the life conditions of many Brazilians, who now relied on the State in a very close way to get personal and family aids. The education, however, had no time—or faced resistances—to invest in new practices of subjectivation capable of forming, on the long run, subjects for a new culture intended *by and for* the capital.

Although Brazilian education has been summoned to participate in the game of the financial capitalism and to conduct training for competences, education was not able to produce, in such a short time, new subjectivities which, being able at the same time to self-entrepreneur themselves, they would also be capable of taking responsibility for the others. Such responsibility does not mean solidarity and collective strengthening; on the contrary, it means to afford minimal maintenance of competition, able to ensure the economic life of one of the most fragile portions in the gradient of inclusion.

LEARNING SOCIETY, DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY, AND THE *HOMO ŒCONOMICUS DISCENTIS ACCESSIBILIS*

By seeking to know the objectives of a number of Brazilian governmental programs aimed at the educational field, it is almost inevitable to ask two questions. We do not intend to answer them in this paper, but only bring some elements to think about them: *What is the use of education?* and *How do we understand learning and what is the place learning takes in Brazil today?*

Noguera-Ramirez (2011, p. 230), summarizes:

[...] if the concepts of *doctrina* and *disciplina* have governed the pedagogical reflection along the Middle Age; if *institutio* and *eruditio* have dominated the pedagogical thinking in the 16th and 17th centuries; if *education*, *instruction* and *Bildung* have prevailed between the late 18th century and the early 19th century, the concept of *learning* will be the predominant pedagogical concept in the 20th century and, it seems, the early 21st century.

Still according to the same author, the concept of learning, in its contemporary meaning, is directly linked to the Anglo-Saxon tradition⁵, associated with Biology and the evolutionary theories of the 19th century. The expansion of the concept along the 20th century may be perceived in many documents where the language of education was replaced by the language of learning. Biesta (2013a), arguing the notorious ascent of the concept of learning, exemplifies the fading of education through the more and more faded concept (which many think is now outdated) of teaching and adult education. In Biesta's words, "teaching was redefined as the act of supporting or facilitating learning, as well as education is now often described as conducive of learning opportunities or experiences. Students are now called learners, and adult education became adult learning". (Biesta, 2013a, p. 32). Such an event is in line with elements that characterize a type of neoliberal rationality, insofar as such rationality has in freedom a principle of mobility and constitution of individuals increasingly autonomous, independent, and entrepreneurs of themselves.

Aimed at developing entrepreneurs of the self and individuals who are more autonomous and competitive, Brazil has invested in the formation of subjects who, as they are entrepreneurs and learners for their entire lives, are capable of mobilizing a local business creatively. They are also capable of understanding the lack of jobs as a temporary situation resulting of an alleged individual incapacity of managing one's conditions of employability. In this state of affairs, the lack of learning opportunities ends up being a bigger problem than the lack of work, as the former adversely affects the individual right to learning and the effects of the latter may be minimized by the entrepreneurial spirit of the entrepreneur of the self.

Let's see an example of investments made on learning opportunities. In 2009, the Department of Labor and Employment released the *Manual of Learning*. Such document aimed at clarifying issues associated with the Act of Learning, as well as providing guidance to entrepreneurs about what to do when hiring apprentices. The introduction, signed by Carlos Lupi, then the Secretary of Labor and Employment, reads: "More than a legal obligation, therefore, learning is an action of social accountability and a major factor to promote citizenship, resulting, ultimately, better productivity." (Lupi, 2009, p. 9).

5 For Noguera-Ramirez (2011), the notion of learning would be found rather in the francophone tradition than in the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon traditions.

Biesta (2013b) exposes four tendencies that justify the expansion of learning. They are: 1) the emergence of new learning theories; 2) post-modernity; 3) the silent explosion of adult learning; 4) the erosion of the Welfare State.

The first trend—the “emergence of new learning theories”—, advocates the active nature of those who learn and the active methodologies used for learning, and thus contributes greatly to displace *from* the attention about the activities conducted by the teachers to the attention about the comprehension of learners. In this tendency, teaching loses ground to activities that may be characterized as being the *support* to and *facilitation* of learning.

The second tendency—“post-modernity”—argues that teaching is no longer effective to explain the differences experienced in the present day, and takes identities as referents to meet the individual demands; by acknowledging that school is no longer formative for this new age, it says that the education project is entirely modern and linked to the Enlightenment thinking, therefore it is incapable of meeting the contemporary needs.

The third trend—the “silent explosion of adult learning”—shows how much adults seek new ways/objects of learning in an increasing variety of places. Such places focus on the individual, strengthening certain competitive and individualistic practices.

Tendency number four—the “erosion of the Welfare State”—may be easily associated with the market and neoliberalism. According to it, the learner is a consumer. Families, deemed as responsible for the education of their children, choose the school where they will enroll the children depending on what that specific school offers in terms of the variation of learning and how much the families can interfere with the pedagogical practices; thus the family determines *what, when* and *how* their children’s learning must be unleashed.

In many ways, Noguera-Ramirez (2011)—by problematizing the notion of passivity of the one who learns and by advocating the idea that the learner is an *agent*, that is, he or she acts over him/herself—approaches the arguments sustained by Biesta (2013a, 2013b). In that author’s words, “[...] learning is today the form of pedagogical government, no longer the government of the citizen, but of the “constant learner”, of the *Homo discentis*. Learning throughout life, learning to learn is motto of contemporary government”. (Noguera-Ramirez, 2011, p. 230)

Homo discentis becomes productive in the contemporary time and is useful for a neoliberal rationality because, due to his/her cognitive plasticity

and ability to learn from experience, he/she becomes more skillful in finding individual solutions for everyday problems, as well as he/she is more open to the formation of new interests. Therefore, *Homo discentis* is mobilized by curiosity, by dissatisfaction and interest. The notion of *interest* is linked strategically to the notion of learning, and the interest is found in the very heart of learning as conceived in Modernity and, more specifically, by the pedagogues of the Progressive Pedagogies. Thus, Noguera-Ramirez claims that interest is the core of the modern concept of learning, and justifies that “interest places the individual’s capacity of action in the center of analyses, agency as what distinguishes and particularizes the individual from the liberal society, to the cosmopolitan citizen of the Enlightenment”. (2011, p. 233)

Then, it is through interest that we can bind the *Homo discentis* or the learner to (neo)liberalism throughout life and to the *Homo œconomicus*. Moved by interest, the individual becomes the target of *noopower* and the object of oneself.

When considering the articulation between *Homo œconomicus* and *Homo discentis*, it is possible to realize the construction of an educational process aimed at a capitalism that is occupied with the investors and with the permanent negotiation of values. Inspired in Biesta (2013a, p.37-38), this means:

[...] the learner is the (potential) consumer, the one who has certain needs, in which (2) the teacher, the educating action or the educational institution are seen as the provider, that is, the one that exists to meet the needs of the learner, and in which (3) education itself becomes a commodity—a thing—to be supplied or delivered by the teacher or the educational institution, and to be consumed by the learner. (p. 37-38)

In the course *Birth of biopolitics*, Foucault (2008) sees the *Homo œconomicus*, as an individual who takes him/herself as a target and as capital. In other words, he or she places him/herself an entrepreneur of the self. The individual, instituting him/herself as a business company, fights constantly with the others and with him/herself to aggregate value to what he/she already possesses. As it is all about his/her own capital, he or she fights to satisfy their own interest. In a narcissistic, individual and individualistic action, they compete with themselves. In this Sisyphean game, being available and accessible to others is a fundamental condition so that interests are



remedied by the active practice of permanent learning and, simultaneously, other interests are produced.

Taking further our own investigations and, especially, the insights developed by Noguera-Ramírez (2011), Loureiro (2013) problematizes the Brazilian policies and programs for digital inclusion. By seeking reasons for the strong investments to develop a digital culture among the population, she argues that the abilities required from the *Homo œconomicus* are more and more connected with the access and the use of digital technologies. Loureiro (2013) says more: the programs intended to disseminate digital technologies and promote digital inclusion in education seem to build strategies whose target is the government of those who, due to their precarious life conditions, are not captured or are not accessible to a society of digital educative type.

As we have already argued, according to the logic of inclusion as a strategy to capture everybody, all must be accessible, as well as all must possess minimum conditions to provide their own life conditions. In Saraiva's words (2013, p. 170): "the notion of *Homo œconomicus* is expanded, the economic objectivation must be expanded to all realms of life, including by touching those considered so far as being out of the economic scope". Thus, governmentality is affected as the *Homo œconomicus* unfolds him/herself, that is, by being accessible and having access to a digital world, he/she is capitalized, making investments in his/herself and keeping as a lifelong learner.

Be accessible to access and be accessed seems to be an important condition in the constitution of *Homo œconomicus discentis*. Loureiro (2013, p. 174) points the connection in network and the availability to access and to be accessed as strategies that enhance inclusion, the constitution of entrepreneurs of the self and the electronic governmentality, and asserts that being accessible is a non-negotiable condition in our time. As a result of investments in accessibility and the unbridled struggle for information, the condition of being permanently accessible must translate into a feeling that composes the subjectivity of the individuals. For the author, accessibility, together with the condition of being a lifelong learner, are conditions that make up the *Homo œconomicus*. She calls *Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis* all those who today are mobilized by learning and called upon by the need to be accessible in order to be the entrepreneur of the self, or to keep themselves included in a higher number of communities which feed differentiated interests. Her argument is quite interesting when she says that digital inclusion works as an extremely important and effective operator for inclusion at large.

Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis is a polymorphic variant within the species *Homo œconomicus*. Although we are utilizing the concept of species and, linked to it, the concept of polymorphism—both strongly associated with Biology—we are certainly not naturalizing those concepts. We propose a biological analogy just with the purpose of pointing out that cultural-identity, economic, and social variations are not sufficient to define other “species”, but they are only polymorphic variations that allow us to read some variants of the “species” *Homo œconomicus*. *Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis* may be understood as a sub-species that is identified by the presence, the manifestation and maintenance of some economic behavior.

In the *Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis*, it is possible to see the operation, in addition to what has already been mentioned in this paper, of a number of policies and programs intended for digital dissemination and inclusion. The target of such policies and programs are those who are more exposed to social risks and, at the same time, they are exposing Brazil to the risk of failing to conquer new positions in the international development and security rankings. Among the many programs spreading digital technologies in the population, put into operation since the 1980's in Brazil, we quote: *Project EDUCOM*, implemented in 1983; *National Program of Educational Information Technology (PRONINFE)*, implemented in 1989; *National Program of Information Technology in Education (PROINFO)*, implemented in 1997; and *Program A Computer per Student*, implemented in 2010.⁶ In all these programs, education is mentioned as a condition for change and school appears as a crucial element to create a new culture of rights, of autonomy and of permanent learning for all.

CONCLUSION

Closing this paper, produced in the seam that we have developed in our research groups, we aim to have shown how social action and inclusion policies operate in Brazil as strategies of biopolitical government over the population. Operating with educational, economical and financial discursive practices, among others, about the life of every individual in particular, such strategies create a subspecies of *Homo œconomicus*, that is, *Homo œconomicus discentis accessibilis* (Loureiro, 2013).

6 For a detailed discussion about such Programs, see Loureiro (2013).



In the constitution of the lifelong learner or the constitution of a kind of learning subjectivity lies the current condition for the maintenance of the government of the individuals' behavior. In other words, in capturing the interest of the one who learns is the possibility of transforming the individual into an entrepreneur of himself; it is, also, the possibility of changing certain individual difficulties into new challenges to be overcome with more investments in learning and in the development of competences.

In Brazil, there is a bet in the education of individuals so that they will replace the relationship poverty–exclusion by the lack of competence–in/exclusion. In this logic of investment, there is not an exclusion that is not thought in relation to some situation of inclusion. Therefore, the situations of exclusion, resulting from extreme abandonment of the individual by the State, are reduced; but the situations of temporary exclusion due to the competences of individuals to revert the game of exclusion into in/exclusion increase.

Finally, in the production of the *Homo oeconomicus discentis* is the possibility for Brazil to write a different history, although under the constant threats of making life and work more precarious, side by side with an increasing political, moral and economic fragility. Moreover: in the production of the *Homo oeconomicus discentis accessibilis* is the possibility of the State to control more effectively its population, especially those social fractions hitherto marginalized and, so even, less accessible to such controls.

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