

**UNDER THE NEOLIBERAL FLAG: EXAMINATION PROPOSALS FOR
EDUCATION IN POST OF THE NEW PARTID CANDIDATES ON INSTAGRAM**

***SOB A BANDEIRA NEOLIBERAL: EXAME DE PROPOSTAS PARA A EDUCAÇÃO
EM POSTAGENS DE CANDIDATOS DO PARTIDO NOVO NO INSTAGRAM***

***BAJO LA BANDERA NEOLIBERAL: EXAMEN DE PROPUESTAS PARA LA
EDUCACIÓN EN PUBLICACIONES DE CANDIDATOS DEL PARTIDO NUEVO EN
INSTAGRAM***



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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to examine New Party candidates proposals for the education, based on the discourse analysis of posts published on Instagram. With this, we aim to investigate how these proposals are anchored in relations of knowledge and power, which are linked to neoliberal rationality. For this, the focus of analysis rests on four posts aired on the Instagram profile of Partido Novo candidates. This study follows a descriptive-interpretative approach with qualitative bias. Thus, in order to subsidize the analyzes, we use of Foucault's (2008; 2009; 2010), Dardot and Laval (2016), Laval (2004) and of Sargentini (2015; 2017). The examination of the proposals makes it possible to identify the implications of neoliberal rationality, based on the prioritization of the market and the private sector, through practices such as the awarding of the “best” students and teachers.

KEYWORDS: Political discourse. Education. Neoliberalism.

RESUMO: O intuito deste artigo consiste em examinar propostas para a educação de candidatos do partido Novo, a partir da análise do discurso de postagens publicadas no Instagram. Visa-se, com isso, investigar como essas propostas ancoram-se em relações de saber e de poder, as quais encontram-se atreladas à racionalidade neoliberal. Para isso, o foco de análise repousa sobre quatro postagens veiculadas no perfil do Instagram de candidatos do Partido Novo. O estudo segue uma abordagem descritivo-interpretativa de viés qualitativo. A fim de subsidiar as análises, valem-se das teorizações de Foucault (2008; 2009; 2010), de Dardot e Laval (2016) e de Laval (2004) e Sargentini (2015; 2017). O exame das propostas permite identificar as implicações da racionalidade neoliberal, a partir da priorização do mercado e do setor privado, por meio de práticas como a premiação dos “melhores” alunos e professores.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Discurso político. Educação. Neoliberalismo.

RESUMEN: El propósito de este artículo consiste en examinar propuestas para la educación de candidatos del partido Novo, a partir del análisis del discurso de publicaciones publicadas en Instagram. Con ello se pretende investigar cómo esas propuestas se basan en relaciones de saber y de poder, las cuales se encuentran vinculadas a la racionalidad neoliberal. Para ello, el foco de análisis reposa sobre cuatro publicaciones vehiculadas en el perfil de Instagram de los candidatos del Partido Nuevo. El estudio sigue un enfoque descriptivo-interpretativo de sesgo cualitativo. Con el fin de subsidiar los análisis, se valen de las teorizaciones de Foucault (2008; 2009; 2010), Dardot y Laval (2016), de Laval (2004) y de Sargentini (2015; 2017). El examen de las propuestas permite identificar las implicaciones de la racionalidad neoliberal, a partir de la priorización del mercado y del sector privado, por medio de prácticas como la premiación de los “mejores” alumnos y profesores.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Discurso político. Educación. Neoliberalismo.

Introduction

At the end of the first round of the 2020 municipal elections, which took place on November 15, certain speeches of sarcastic and ironic content circulated in the digital social networks about the fact that the Novo party did not elect any candidate for mayor in the cities where it competed. Some of these speeches were paraphrastically constituted along the following lines: Novo did not make any mayors in the first round of elections. It's time to review core business and benchmarking. The use of terms in English that refer us to the business and corporate universe and mean respectively, the core part of a business and the evaluation process that compares the performance of companies, leads us to think about socially constituted images about this legend. In this perspective, the poor performance at the polls would be strongly linked to issues concerning the field of technical business planning. At the limit, ironic statements resound, according to which the party was not efficient enough and, for a meritocratic issue, did not deserve to achieve the goal of electing mayors.

Based on these questions, the intention is to examine proposals for education from candidates of the Novo party, through the analysis of the discourse of posts published on Instagram of such candidates. We aim to investigate how these proposals are anchored in relations of knowledge and power, which are linked to neoliberal rationality.

The work is relevant because it is known that the inflections of neoliberalism in the educational field in Brazil do not emerge through the intentions of the Novo party, in view of, since the 1990s, the insertion of international capital in the constitution of guiding documents of curriculum parameters and, more recently, we could notice the reflections of this in the formulation of the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC in the Portuguese acronym) (BRAZIL, 2018) and the New High School (BRAZIL, 2017). Moreover, in Jair Bolsonaro's government (2019-2022), the Minister of Economy, Paulo Guedes, stated in a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, in January 2020, that he would elaborate a gigantic voucher distribution program for early childhood education.

In this measure, families would receive financial resources to invest in their children's education, thus having the "freedom" to choose the educational institution in which they would enroll their children. The same minister tried, unsuccessfully, to insert this agenda in the voting of the Proposal of Amendment to the Constitution (PEC in the Portuguese acronym) of the new Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Education Professionals (Fundeb in Portuguese), in July 2020. These desires follow the neoliberal primer, as they flirt with the private sector and strip the public sector of its obligations, under the argument that

families would have the decision-making power to apply resources to the development of the human capital of their children.

But, what we want to argue here is the fact that the Novo party, roughly speaking, defends more vehemently the *modus operandi* of the neoliberalism truth regime, unlike other parties, which do it in a more veiled way, so to speak. For this, the focus of analysis lies on four posts published on the Instagram profiles of the following New Party candidates: a) Charbel Maroun, candidate for mayor of Recife/PE; b) Orlando Silva Neto, candidate for mayor of Florianópolis/SC; c) Paulo Henrique Grando, candidate for mayor of Cuiabá/MT; d) Guto Scarpatini, candidate for mayor of Campo Grande/MS. These profiles were chosen because they present proposals for education, considering the specificities of politics in digital social networks.

Regarding methodology, we emphasize that this study follows a descriptive-interpretative approach with a qualitative bias. In order to support the analysis, we sought support in the theories of Foucault (2008; 2009; 2010) about discourse, enunciation, power, knowledge and neoliberalism, in articulation with the studies of Dardot and Laval (2016) and Laval (2004) on the impacts of neoliberal rationality in the field of education, as well as in Sargentini's approach (2015; 2017) about political discourse in social networks.

From the point of view of the text organization, it is worth noting that it is structured in the following format: in the following section, we reflect on the concepts of discourse, enunciation, power, knowledge, and neoliberalism, in addition to a focus dedicated to political discourse. Subsequently, we analyze the four discursive materialities collected in the profiles of candidates of the Novo party on Instagram, taking into account the considerations undertaken in the previous topic. Finally, in the last section, we make an overview of the main aspects discussed throughout this writing.

From discourse to neoliberalism

The French intellectual Michel Foucault left as a legacy a prolific intellectual work that crosses a myriad of fields of knowledge. Given the diversity of themes addressed, some regularities can be noted, which allow us to divide, although there are controversies, the work of this author into three moments, as proposed, among some authors, by Gregolin (2016), namely: a) archaeology - the author researched the formation of a knowledge that engendered the Human Sciences, from books that problematized issues such as madness, medicine and

certain fields of work, language and life; b) genealogy - Foucault pondered the objectification of the subject, based on the analysis of power and the so-called divisive practices that classify and scandalize subjects, through devices of knowledge and power; c) ethics and aesthetics of existence - the thinker analyzed how the modes of subjectivation of subjects, through techniques of the self and strategies of governmentality.

What can be seen from this brief inventory is the constant presence of the subject in the author's approaches. According to Foucault (1995), the general theme that runs through the heterogeneity of his studies covers the subject and the relations it establishes with knowledge (archeology), with power (genealogy) and with itself (ethics and aesthetics).

The notes made by Foucault (2010) in the work *Archaeology of Knowledge*, initially published in 1969, provide analytical subsidies to think about the constitution of discourses in relation to history and the formation of knowledge. For this, Foucault (2010) proposes the archaeological method, according to which it is possible to investigate the different layers that make up the knowledge that objectifies man, which comes to light through discourses. The French author conceives discourse as a practice that constructs the objects of which it speaks and as a set of statements that come from the same discursive formation. While the latter circumscribes the regularities to be flagged within a regime of enunciative dispersion, the utterance, in turn, is understood as the atom of discourse, the minimum unit of analysis, "[...] like a grain that appears on the surface of a fabric of which it is a constituent part" (FOUCAULT, 2010, p. 90).

The existence of the utterance, according to Foucault (2010), entails the following properties: (i) referential - concerns the laws of possibility, the rules that make certain objects of discourse emerge; (ii) subject position - the enunciatee maintains a singular relationship with the enunciating subject, but which is not reduced to the empirical subject, the author and/or grammatical subject, but, an empty position that can be occupied by varied individuals; (iii) associated domain - it concerns an enunciative network through which the enunciates relate to each other, both in relation to already existing enunciates and to those yet to come; (iv) repeatable materiality - the enunciatee lacks a support, a place, a date and an institutional support.

Thus perceived, the enunciation constitutes, at the same time, a function that crosses different domains and represents the condition of existence of signs. To describe this function, Foucault (2010) postulates the observance of some principles, namely: a) principle of rarity - consists in detailing the enunciation as something rare within the things effectively said, that is,

if not everything can be said at any time, the enunciation presents the singular characteristic before what can be discursivized in a language; b) principle of exteriority - refers to the fact that the enunciation erupts in a specific place and time and it is convenient to specify how the enunciation manifests itself, without referring to a cogito or a transcendental consciousness; c) principle of accumulation - it makes it possible to trace the transformations that the enunciation goes through in the course of time, in order to pay attention to the mechanisms that allow the conservation, the grouping and the recurrence of certain enunciations; d) principle of positivity - when the previous principles are considered, we finally reach the positivity of the enunciation, that is, the modalities that allow us to select certain types of thematic choices, regularities and discursive objects that are part of a given discursive formation.

The enunciative field, according to Foucault (2010), is anchored in knowledge to be conceived as everything that can be said within a discursive practice. Given that the discursive practice is constituted by a set of historical and anonymous rules that define the conditions of exercise of the enunciative function, knowledge is determined by the new objects that arise within the historical continuities and discontinuities. By thinking of knowledge more as a position and less as a specificity of science, Foucault (2010, p. 221) argues that knowledge is not only configuring itself in demonstrations, but "can also be in fictions, narratives, regulations, political decisions." To this end, the author exemplifies the fact that the knowledge of psychiatry, in the mid-nineteenth century, was not reduced to the sum of what was believed to be true, but the strategic set of behaviors, singularities and deviations about what it is possible to talk about in the psychiatric discourse.

When Foucault (2010) reflects on knowledge beyond scientifically framed truths, he highlights an analysis perspective that dialogues with Nietzsche's assumptions about genealogy. For the German philosopher, genealogy rejects beginnings and origins and searches, above all, for cuts, discontinuities, and ruptures. According to this view, genealogy makes it possible to see how knowledge works from the disjunctions, the mechanisms of submission and domination, and the strategies of power. According to Foucault (2006), this means thinking about the role played by discourse in the support of a strategic system in which power is implicated, acting positively.

Power, according to the French author, is not the origin or the cause of discourse, but something that runs through and operates through discourse. The conception of power in Foucauldian theory differs greatly from other perceptions hitherto held in different fields of

knowledge, such as, for example, in the Marxist worldview, in which power is confused with the mechanisms of exploitation and centered under the hegemony of the State and capital, as well as in the perception of contractualists, for whom power obeys strict mechanisms of possession and/or dismissal and legal models, which, according to Fonseca's (2011) reading, are insufficient instruments to examine the power relations to which the subject is trapped.

Contrary to such understandings, power under the Foucauldian understanding is not located in a specific institution nor does it represent a verticality in social relations, since power is pulverized throughout the social body and transversalizes all actions of free men. The idea of a microphysical power will thus move Foucault's analysis of power away from an epistemological construction in which power is seen as a universalizing, repressive, and threatening mechanism. Moreover, it is a way of seeing power as something that incites, produces, and engenders knowledge and behavior. For Foucault (1999), power is congenitally related to knowledge. According to the author, "[...] there is no relation of power without a correlative of a field of knowledge, nor knowledge, nor knowledge that does not suppose or constitute at the same time relations of power. (FOUCAULT, 1999, p. 270).

In the course of Foucault's intellectual career, from the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the following decade, the French philosopher, in courses given at the Collège de France, posthumously published under the titles *Society Must Be Defended*, *Security, Territory and Population*, *The Birth of biopolitics*, *The Government of self and others* and *On The government of the living*, investigates different arts of governing that reveal the connections between power, knowledge, and truth in what he called governmentality. In Foucault's wake, this term is multi-significant and designates, at one and the same time, the set of techniques, procedures and tactics that take the population as the target of power, from the knowledge of political economy and the instruments of the security device, the Western tendency that leads this type of power to surpass other modes of government, such as sovereignty; moreover, it corresponds to the result of processes through which the conception of the State of the High Middle Ages and the Administrative State of the 15th and 16th centuries passed (FOUCAULT, 2008a). Specifically in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, the theorizations focus on the impacts arising from liberalism and, later, from American neoliberalism, in the configuration of politics and population management.

Thus, Foucault (2008b) begins his reflections on neoliberalism, discussing how the market is constituted as a kind of practice that starts to interfere, in a central way, in the practices of government and to what extent the knowledges of liberalism emerge through this redefinition

of the power relations in the arts of governing. The market is conceived, by the French thinker, as a place of veridiction, that is, as an entity that produces a truth/falsity, marked by a regime of exchanges that redesigns governmental practice and public power. In short, the market undertakes a new governmental reason that sets the limits by which the state can be useful. According to Foucault (2008), historically speaking, this occurs through important mutations triggered from the 18th century on, in view of the fact that government starts to manipulate interests.

Unlike the sovereignty regime, in which the king was the owner of the reign, and could act directly over his subjects, because the relationship that bound them was personal, in the governmental reason of the State, and then the minimal State, the government no longer acts directly over things, because "[...] can only act, only be legitimated, founded on right and reason to intervene to the extent that [...] the games of interest make a certain individual or a certain thing, of certain interest to individuals" (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 62). To this extent, the government will deal with the political phenomena that involve the interests of a certain individual, compared to the interests of this individual or of a collectivity. It is precisely in this constant exchange, made within a supply and demand relationship, between the desires of each or everyone in the interface with the State, that neoliberal rationality is based.

Another aspect listed by Foucault (2008b) to characterize the grammar of neoliberal intelligibility concerns the notion of freedom. In this view, it is not a universal that would be particularized over time and space, but rather, a practice that can be produced, encouraged, negotiated, consumed and, in the limit, controlled. In the words of Foucault (2008b, p. 87), "[...] It is necessary, on the one hand, to produce freedom, but this gesture implies that, on the other hand, limitations, controls, coercions, obligations supported by threats, etc. are established. The author tells us that freedom branches out into freedom of the market, of exchange, of buying and selling, of expression, of property rights, among others; however, in all these possibilities, control mechanisms are erected that, to a greater or lesser degree, modulate and organize the reach and exercise of freedom.

Framing these freedoms, an axial concept of liberalism comes into play, to be visualized by another logic in the neoliberal rationality: the idea of competition. As Dardot and Laval (2016) discuss, while classical liberalism considered competition as a natural law, at the heart of the *laissez-faire* principle, neoliberalism understands competition as an artificial product of a history and a political construction. In short, the implementation of neoliberal ideas

presupposes a movement that, at first glance, seems contrary to liberal dictates. In this sense, the neoliberal agenda postulates the need for the State to provide conditions for competition to be optimized. Acting this way, competition becomes, in a certain way, nuanced by the political power of the State.

As a corollary of this emphasis on competition and competition, there is the fascination for the figure of the entrepreneur and the charm for the image of *homo oeconomicus* (About the first, Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 147) define it as follows: "[...] It is being endowed with commercial spirit, looking for any opportunity for profit that presents itself and he can take advantage of, thanks to the information he has and another does not. He is defined only by his specific intervention in the circulation of goods". This celebrityization of entrepreneurship finds its conditions of existence in a historical formation essentially marked by the entrepreneurial spirit, as Deleuze (2006) discusses.

The enthronement of the enterprise model in various institutions historically delineated by discipline, such as schools, hospitals, and prisons, paints a scenario in which anyone is given the opportunity to be an entrepreneur and the entrepreneur of oneself, in a race that never ceases. According to Dardot and Laval (2016), neoliberal rhetoric propounds that all individuals are always committed to relations of transaction and competition. In this logic, subjects are continuously driven to exert work on themselves in order to improve performance and performance. They are led to believe that success or failure in the unstable market game depends only on them. The result is a sophisticated series of punishment, evaluation, and auditing mechanisms to create rankings and awards in order to elect the best and reject the worst..

About the *homo oeconomicus*, Foucault (2008b) mentions that, differently from the conception of classical liberalism, in which this *homo oeconomicus* was the man of exchange, the partner conceived in a perspective of utility and the problematic of needs, in neoliberalism, the *homo oeconomicus* is the man of consumption, "[...] being for himself his capital, being for himself his producer, being for himself [his] income" (FOUCAULT, 2008b, p. 311). In this conception, following Foucault (2008c), we understand that neoliberalism extends market rationality to hitherto non-economic domains. This leads to the understanding that this consumer and producer of consumerist satisfaction constitutes a human capital, on which it is imperative to invest.

Human capital, according to Foucault (2008b), constitutes a kind of competence-machine to be permanently built through educational efforts present throughout the entire existence and not only covered by technical knowledge and professional learning. This goes

from the time the mother dedicates to the baby and the affection dedicated to the children by the family, to health care and the continuous monitoring of the subject's development.

The fact that human capital, as understood by Foucault (2008b), is not guided by educational investments limited only to formal learning spaces does not mean that neoliberal rationality has had a discrete impact on school education. On the contrary, as we have discussed so far and in the next topic, the neoliberal ethos has occupied a privileged place in the implementation of educational policies, including public ones. According to Veiga-Neto (2018), the triad education, introjection, and neoliberalism is the basis of robust educational projects developed by large corporations and private companies, sometimes in partnership with the State, sometimes in the form of grants, training, and courses. At the core of such projects, dwells "[...] the special attention to the formation of flexible, entrepreneurial, and resilient individuals" (VEIGA-NETO, 2018, p. 42).

A similar observation is found in Laval (2004), when he highlights that the neoliberal sign leads to the perception that teaching and learning, once dedicated to the desires of capital and the market, needs to prioritize knowledge and skills that will generate a benefit in the future. In this logic, curricula should be modified in order to adapt them to a utilitarian bias that despises all knowledge that is not immediately related to an applicability in practical life. The school as a humanist and republican institution, focused on the formation of critical thinking and on a project to overcome social inequalities, is hidden behind a logic of adaptation to market flexibility and risk management. (BARZOTTO; SEFFNER, 2020).

When the political-electoral discourse appropriates this rationality to convince voters to adhere to such an agenda, one can verify the use of strategies that show the productivity of the neoliberal school, in a criticism of the school institution as being doomed to failure and disconnected in the present time. The political discourse, as we will see below, has changed sensitively in its forms of production, circulation, and reception, in order to meet a new language, especially in digital social media, marked by the brevity of the forms of communication, by the appeal to marketing that seeks to bring candidates closer to voters and make electoral campaigns less stern and more relaxed, through the use of various verbal-visual and sound resources. For Sargentini (2017, p. 13), "[...] the analysis of political discourse in its complexity involves linguistic utterances, images, gestures, facial expressions, and other forms of expression".

Focusing on the scope of the Novo political party, it is worth noting that it was registered with the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) in mid-2015, chaired by businessman João Amêdo, who contested the elections for the presidency in 2018 and obtained more than 2 million votes, about 2.5% of the total valid votes. According to Faria and Turtelli (2020), Novo has grown by about 154% since 2018, as it went from 19,000 affiliates that year to 48,000 in January 2020. According to Oliveira (2020), the party grew the most in proportional numbers, since in 2016 it had four councilmen and in 2020 it made twenty-nine members of the City Councils. The acronym was congenitally connected to the business field, mainly because it explicitly defends neoliberal agendas and bets on candidates who have experience in the private sector, so as to distance itself from individuals who build a career in politics. According to the Novo website, specifically in the section called *Conheça* ("Get to know"), we see that the party emerges through "clean record subjects, who had never been involved in politics and decided to go from indignation to action" (NOVO, [21--]). Also according to information on the site, it appears that the party seeks to produce this novelty effect, given some specific characteristics, in order to differentiate itself from other political parties, namely: i) it is the only party that does not use public resources; ii) it is the only party maintained by affiliated donors; iii) candidates go through a selection process; iv) those elected choose to give up office privileges and their own salaries; v) candidates and representatives do not participate in party management; vi) board members act as volunteers and do not receive salaries; vii) the party's members do not receive salaries or other benefits; viii) the party's members do not participate in the management of the party..

As can be seen, to do justice to the acronym's name, there is a rupture in the modus operandi of parties in general, especially regarding the use of public resources and the internal organization of the legends. Besides, it is possible to ponder that the party's logo itself frames certain meanings that distance it from traditional political parties. Unlike symbols like the star of the Laborer's Party (PT) or the Luxembourg rose of the Democratic Labor Party (PTD), Novo's design does not produce discursivities linked to a higher value in terms of the constitution of citizenship and democracy. It is an artwork in orange, with the word "new" written in white and a detail on the letter "n" that, in a domain of memory, leads us to the logos of companies and services. This, therefore, contributes to the effect that this is a party that rejects history and the configuration of politics itself.

Now, this does not mean to say that this effect of distancing from standard politics makes the Novo party neutral or devoid of interests. On the contrary, the party bets heavily on

neoliberal rationality as one of the pillars of its constitution. Born in the core of the business community, Novo is in line with the agenda of "leaning" and debureaucratization of the State, especially through the privatization of public companies, massive investment in entrepreneurship, and market competition. As Dardot and Laval (2016) remind us, the market is conceived as a free space for every individual in particular, since each one has an entrepreneurial spirit and it is up to the market economy to release and stimulate this entrepreneurship. This occurs through a certain phobia of the State, according to the perception of Foucault (2008b). In this view, the excess of governmental mechanisms of the State would hinder the flow of the free market and would stagnate the development of entrepreneurial skills to be introjected from an early age. In light of this, the efforts of neoliberal rationality in education have been visible since the mid-1980s, starting with the ideals of governments such as Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in the United States. The reformist pretensions of transnational organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) help to establish a school model based on a perspective that considers "[...] education as an essentially private good whose value is, above all, economic" (LAVAL, 2004, p. IV). In Brazil, according to Guimarães and Pereira (2020, p. 42), the advance of neoliberalism in the national scenario has been effective since Fernando Collor's government (1990-1992) and intensified during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's administration (1995-2002), from "[...] the intensification of productive restructuring, flexibility of labor laws, financialization of the economy, free movement of capital, and privatization of the state productive sector".

This emphasis on the market aspect, whose business logic is permeated by the cost-benefit ratio, reflects sensitively on how the school was constituted over time. About this, Sibilia (2012) reinforces that the school institution is a technology of the time that arises to meet the demands of a societal project engendered by the bourgeois classes. Although over the years, the school has been democratized (SEFFNER, 2020), in order to welcome the economically unassisted social strata, several power relations in the political field threaten the achievement of a democratic, republican and citizen education. Among these relations, we can mention, in the wake of Laval (2004), the undisguisable advance of market interests in the construction of curricula, teaching methodologies, teacher training, management, and school funding. Thus thought, education loses its transformative and critical capacity, in view of the unrestricted

attention to market designs and the development of human capital (FOUCAULT, 2008) - mantras of neoliberal rationality. Under this logic, the Novo party, as can be inferred from information on the party's website, raises the banner of neoliberal values, especially from the implementation of public-private partnerships, the focus on a culture of competition, the ranking, the rewarding of teachers and students, and the emphasis on entrepreneurship among the school public.

Examination of proposals for education in posts by Novo party candidates on Instagram

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 municipal elections were postponed and took place in the month of November, unlike previous elections that took place on the first Sunday in October. The electoral propaganda, more than ever, used the digital social networks as a viable communicative support and of significant reach, since the social isolation measures made it impossible, or at least, should prevent close physical contact and hand-to-hand campaigning, in order to avoid agglomerations and, as a consequence, contagion by the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). In Marques' (2016) understanding, online campaign strategies need to create mechanisms that capture the attention of an increasingly dispersed audience in the diversity of texts and images they deal with on their portable devices.

From these notes, as stated above, we will analyze here four posts of candidates of the Novo party on Instagram, in order to investigate how the proposals for education tune in with neoliberal rationality, through knowledge-power relations. The first post circulated in the profile of the candidate for mayor of Recife/PE, Charbel Maroun (@charbelmarounbr).

In this discursive materiality, three photos appear that are given view to the reader-navigator by Instagram's viewing mechanism. The first photo is divided into two parts: in one of them, the image resolution is dark and shows a place in which a school precariously functions, there is an adobe construction with pau-a-pique covered with palm leaves; the students are seen with their backs, sitting on worn chairs and one notices an improvised blackboard; in the other part, the scenario shows, in an image with good resolution, a school scene in which the students are concentrated and read attentively; the desks are comfortable and the structure of the educational institution, from what one can deduce, is of adequate quality. In the center of the two images there is the following verbal statement: "What if all inequality was a thing of the past? When we click on the arrow on the right of the image, we are taken to the second picture: a young black man smiling with books under his chest, on the right side, and a backpack hanging under his left shoulder; in the background, in a blurred effect, bookshelves

with books appear, suggesting that it is a library. As in the first image, a verbal statement inquires, "What if it were possible to offer quality education for all?" We click once more on the arrow and the last picture appears the photograph of the candidate Charbel Maroun, wearing a white shirt, with the previous image of the young student with the books as the background. In the center of the picture, it reads, in capital letters, "It is possible, and I will do it!"

We see that the conditional expression "What if" points to the possibility of the realization of a desire and/or dream, of the construction of a possible reality. The last image expresses the condition for this change: voting for Charbel Maroun. By inserting himself in a subject position that commits to make the changes desired by society, because such transformations are possible to be achieved, in the sense of improving education, the caption of the post details the proposal for the creation of an education voucher.

You just have to want to do it. I've already talked here about Voucher Education and every time I post it many questions arise. Let me explain: The Voucher can only be used to pay tuition, something very similar to what is already done. It is called PROUNI; The Voucher will not eliminate public education. We will expand, improve and professionalize public schools and day care centers; The Voucher will be available, initially, for students with the best grades and the ability to keep up with the pace of private schools, with more advanced education. We want to offer opportunities, break the cycle of misery and present new horizons for these children and young people. The little Recife people deserve this. Let's do it for them! (MAROUN, 2020, *online*).

When the position taken in the profile of the candidate of the Novo party for the mayor of Recife/PE on Instagram points out the urgency to solve the doubts arising from the proposal of implementing the education voucher, it can be assumed that this is not a common proposition in the political discourse and from there emerges the uniqueness of this statement within the conditions of possibility of the Novo Party itself and the neoliberal banner raised by it. An attempt to bring the proposal defended by Maroun closer to the social reality of the public is to compare it with the University for All Program (PROUNI), which, after all, synthesizes this link between the public and private sectors, at the core of higher education. To undo statements from the associated domain that the program would end public education, Maroun's subject position states the opposite and vaguely justifies the investment in such a sector. He then explains that, in a first moment, those who will be contemplated by the project will be the students with the best performance, since they could equal the level of private education. The neoliberal reflexes in Maroun's proposal reside especially in a kind of individualization of

student attendance through the voucher program, since only a portion will benefit, in opposition to the universality and the democratic character that should guide education in Brazil, as defined by the knowledge of the constitutional field.

In this logic, according to Laval (2004, p. 26), "[...] the more 'profitable' students benefit from larger investments than those of lower 'performance'. The knowledge effects that govern the voucher plan align with a position that only a portion of students, those who can win the competition among their peers, will be granted the right to study in a private school. Power relations permeate the introjection of neoliberal rationality in students, since, as in the competitive market and lifelong learning configurations, there is no room for everyone. This selection of the "best", therefore, already occurs at the earliest age, so that it is up to the subjects, from an early age, to create favorable conditions for the development of human capital. Under this understanding, there are no possibilities of transforming the unequal reality, contrary to what the post of candidate Maroun claims, because the tendency is that the gap between public and private schools will increase even more. The "cycle of misery", which the subject position in the enunciation of the post is talking about, will not be dismissed only with the "transfer" of some students to the private sector, but with the proper valuation of public and free education.

We can identify enunciative regularities in the constitution of the political discourse of the Novo party candidates on Instagram, because in addition to the emphasis on the culture of ranking and competition, a post on the profile of Orlando Silva Neto (@orlandosilvanovo), candidate for mayor of Florianópolis/SC, reinforces the neoliberal vision of building small entrepreneurs. For this, among the proposals for the field of education, we have: "We will introduce notions of logic, entrepreneurship and programming, to encourage our young people to know [sic] think logically and be able to employ in the technology market" (SILVA NETO, 2020, online). In the same post, we also read: "Floripa can have a public school with the same quality as private schools" (SILVA NETO, 2020, *on-line*).

The focus of the proposal is on the insertion in the school curriculum of certain topics such as logic, entrepreneurship, and programming, which would allow students to enter the world of work. In the repeatable materiality of the statement, we emphasize that such proposal is in accordance with the neoliberal rationality, due to the fact that there is an incentive to the development of skills, knowledge, and practices related to competition and profit, given the interest in addressing in the school institution the demands of a professional training for employment. According to Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 152), "[...] the culture of employment and the spirit of enterprise can be learned from school, just as the advantages of capitalism over

other economic organization. This educational conception is based on relations of knowledge-power that instill in the subjects the valorization of useful knowledge, aiming at the formation of human capital, in order to make the gears of the capitalist system work, mainly nuanced by technologization and flexibility.

When, in the enunciation of the post of the Novo candidate to the mayoralty of Florianópolis/SC, appears the positioning according to which it is possible to raise the quality of public schools, following the standard of proven schools, underlies a knowledge of neoliberal order that points to the efficient performance of the private sector, in contrast to the outdated model of public management. In the signifying materiality, there is an effect of opacity and homogenization in the comparison between public and private on the issue of quality. Now, not all private schools have a standard that would be considered sufficient, and the opposite is also true, since there are public institutions of excellence. The very term quality can be questionable, which can be measured under different parameters (passing exams and vestibulars, obtaining expected standards in external evaluations). The way the discourse of the post is organized, it is as if all private schools were of good quality, which should be pursued by public institutions, starting with the implementation of the government proposals of candidate Orlando Silva Neto.

The third post analyzed circulated in the profile of Paulo Henrique Grando (@paulohgrando), candidate for mayor of Cuiabá/MT. In the discursive materiality, appears the picture of smiling Grando, at the bottom right, and a summary of the proposals, of which we can mention: "reward the best teachers for performance, with decisive impact of the parents' evaluation, not only financially, but in terms of recognition and career progression" (GRANDO, 2020, online); "create pilot program of scholarships in private schools for low-income students" (GRANDO, 2020, online).

Once again - now the target is the teacher - it is evident the awarding and the focus on competition and performance to define the parameter of quality in education. The proposal does not specify clearly how this teacher performance would be and how parents would evaluate the teacher. In any case, we can identify the knowledge-power relations that underlie this proposal. As Dardot and Laval (2016) emphasize, neoliberal rationality produces a knowledge that excels in the internalization of performance standards, self-surveillance, and constant evaluation that seeks to align public services to a production typical of the private sector. In other words, the proposal of Paulo Henrique Grando mischaracterizes the identity of the teacher as a public

servant, by conditioning him to progress in his career based on the evaluation made by third parties, as it is done in a commercial relationship.

Also in relation to the post of the Novo candidate for Cuiabá mayor, we highlight the enunciative regularity that contributes to the insertion of school students in the private sector, a finding present in the post of Charbel Maroun, analyzed before. This hypervaluation of the private sector as a governance model to be followed by the State is one of the main slogans of the neoliberal primer. About this, Laval (2004, p. 55) emphasizes, "[...] school in the face of neoliberalism that considers all institutions, including public ones, should be placed at the service of the economic machine to the detriment of any other purpose." The insistence in enrolling students, whose families are economically unassisted, according to Grando's proposal, in private schools as the solution to solve the educational problems is based on this knowledge of the neoliberal order and, thus, produces power relations that seek to regulate the relationship of the students with the school and the families. We cannot fail to consider that this is a political-electoral discourse (SARGENTINI, 2015), which presents apparently feasible and "magic" actions to solve highly complex issues.

In the post of Guto Scarpantini, Novo's candidate for mayor of Campo Grande/MS, the same regularity present in Maroun and Grando's posts is present. In the discursive materiality, the enunciative subject defends a program with the goal of ensuring partnerships with the private sector, in an attempt to zero the line of daycare centers in the capital of Mato Grosso do Sul. Let us see an excerpt of the post, which is accompanied by Scarpantini's photo and the party number (30), "We will establish agreements with community and private daycare centers, through public-private partnerships" (SCARPANTINI, 2020, online). As we presented earlier, since neoliberalism argues for a minimal State, partnerships with the private sector seek to compensate for this supposed excess of the public sector. In Scarpantini's proposition, the main solution to solve the lack of vacancies in daycare centers would be through this cooperation with private institutions.

According to Foucault (2008b), neoliberalism works as a principle of intelligibility, a principle of deciphering social relations and behaviors. We observe, therefore, how this comes into play in the composition of enunciates, whose rarity singularizes certain ways of enunciating about education, within a political party marked by the referential of neoliberal rhetoric. We saw in the analyzed posts the unraveling of social practices that, to a greater or lesser extent, prioritize the market and the private sector, reward the "best", question the value of public management, and exclude the "losers" of this uninterrupted competition.

Final remarks

In this article, we seek to examine how the discourse of posts by candidates of the New Party, in the 2020 municipal elections, mobilizes relations of knowledge-power intricate to neoliberal rationality in the constitution of proposals for the educational field. The analytical exercise allowed us to glimpse, in enunciative positivity, some regularities that cross the constitution of political discourse in digital social networks. In the repeatable materiality of the propositions for education, the brevity of the social network communication forms intersect with strategies to convince potential voters. The solutions presented in the proposals are connected to the knowledge that will characterize the New Party at the heart of the neoliberal logic. We can summarize the main regularities found: (a) the understanding that private sector management is the desirable and efficient model, hence the recurrence of establishing partnerships with private schools, as well as inserting children and public institutions in private schools, through voucher or scholarship programs, in order to empty the universal and equitable character of public administration; (b) as a consequence of the celebrization of the business model of neoliberalism, one can see the enthusiasm in electing, through a system of evaluation and performance, those who deserve or not to be contemplated with the benefits of this social and economic order. For Rolnik (2018), the establishment of a neoliberal State erodes the democratic and republican bases, since, at the same time, it homogenizes the subjects to the designs of capital and accentuates inequalities within a game where only a few are successful.

It is necessary, therefore, to resist the subtlety of these power strategies that, little by little, make even more fragile the constitution of a public, free, and quality education. Even if the New Party makes visible what already exists, in a surreptitious way, in other political parties in the country, it is convenient to start insurrectionary movements, which can raise the flag of an education that forms, above all, for citizenship and not only to meet the unstable desires of the financial market, because, as Laval warns us (2004), school is not a private company.

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