

## BEYOND INCLUSIVE SALVATIONISM: EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND THE CAPTURE OF DIFFERENCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL

### PARA ALÉM DO SALVACIONISMO INCLUSIVO: GESTÃO EDUCACIONAL E A CAPTURA DA DIFERENÇA NA ESCOLA CONTEMPORÂNEA

### MÁS ALLÁ DEL SALVACIONISMO INCLUSIVO: LA GESTIÓN EDUCATIVA Y LA CAPTURA DE LA DIFERENCIA EN LA ESCUELA CONTEMPORÁNEA



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#### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes school inclusion as an imperative of contemporary educational policies, problematizing its effects on the production of difference within the school. Using a genealogical approach, inspired by Foucaultian studies in education, it examines how school inclusion, articulated with neoliberal rationality, operates less through explicit exclusion and more through the capture of difference in the form of manageable diversity. The study focuses on the centrality attributed to educational management in public inclusion policies, highlighting how principles such as democratic management, co-responsibility, and the training of inclusive managers function as mechanisms for governing difference. It argues that, when taken as diversity, difference loses its political power and comes to exist as an object of intervention, monitoring, and regulation. In this arrangement, Special Education is repositioned as technical knowledge supporting the governance of inclusion, risking the emptying of its critical dimension. By challenging the naturalization of inclusion as an inherent good, this article proposes conceptual shifts that allow us to think about educational management, Special Education, and difference beyond inclusive salvationism and the logic of capture, betting on the possibility of another Special Education, committed to difference as a human potential.

**Keywords:** School Inclusion. Special Education. Difference. Diversity. Educational Management.

#### RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a inclusão escolar como imperativo das políticas educacionais contemporâneas, problematizando seus efeitos na produção da diferença no interior da escola. A partir de uma abordagem genealógica, inspirada nos estudos foucaultianos em educação, examina-se como a inclusão escolar, articulada à racionalidade neoliberal, opera menos pela exclusão explícita e mais pela captura da diferença sob a forma da diversidade administrável. O estudo toma como foco a centralidade atribuída à gestão educacional nas políticas públicas de inclusão, evidenciando como princípios como gestão democrática, corresponsabilização e formação do gestor inclusivo funcionam como dispositivos de

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governo da diferença. Argumenta-se que, ao ser tomada como diversidade, a diferença perde sua potência política e passa a existir como objeto de intervenção, acompanhamento e regulação. Nesse arranjo, a Educação Especial é reposicionada como saber técnico de apoio à governabilidade da inclusão, correndo o risco de esvaziar sua dimensão crítica. Ao tensionar a naturalização da inclusão como um bem em si mesma, o artigo propõe deslocamentos conceituais que permitam pensar a gestão educacional, a Educação Especial e a diferença para além do salvacionismo inclusivo e da lógica da captura, apostando na possibilidade de outra Educação Especial, comprometida com a diferença como potência humana.

**Palavras-chave:** Inclusão Escolar. Educação Especial. Diferença. Diversidade. Gestão Educacional.

## RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la inclusión escolar como un imperativo de las políticas educativas contemporáneas, problematizando sus efectos en la producción de la diferencia dentro de la escuela. A través de un enfoque genealógico, inspirado en los estudios foucaultianos en educación, examina cómo la inclusión escolar, articulada con la racionalidad neoliberal, opera menos a través de la exclusión explícita y más a través de la captura de la diferencia en forma de diversidad gestionable. El estudio se centra en la centralidad atribuida a la gestión educativa en las políticas públicas de inclusión, destacando cómo principios como la gestión democrática, la corresponsabilidad y la formación de gestores inclusivos funcionan como mecanismos para gobernar la diferencia. Argumenta que, al ser entendida como diversidad, la diferencia pierde su poder político y pasa a existir como un objeto de intervención, monitoreo y regulación. En este arreglo, la Educación Especial se reposiciona como conocimiento técnico que sustenta la gobernanza de la inclusión, con el riesgo de vaciar su dimensión crítica. Al cuestionar la naturalización de la inclusión como un bien inherente, este artículo propone cambios conceptuales que nos permiten pensar la gestión educativa, la Educación Especial y la diferencia más allá del salvacionismo inclusivo y la lógica de la captura, apostando por la posibilidad de otra Educación Especial, comprometida con la diferencia como potencial humano.

**Palabras clave:** Inclusión Escolar. Educación Especial. Diferencia. Diversidad. Gestión Educativa.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This text is born of an insistence. Insistence on continuing to think about what, for about two decades, has been repeatedly presented as an unquestionable solution to contemporary educational dilemmas, school inclusion. It is also born from the refusal to accept that time or the succession of policies, programs and discourses has exhausted the need to problematize the ways in which inclusion has become an imperative, especially when articulated with the training of managers for inclusive education. In this meander, it is understood that there is still a current need to think about the political and pedagogical effects of the inclusion discourses that constitute schools, as it is understood that " *inclusion policies* are not, by themselves, neither good nor necessary" (Veiga-neto, 2008, p. 11, emphasis added), so it is necessary to stress the naturalization of inclusion. Veiga-Neto (2008, p.14) states that this brings "the understanding that inclusion is an imperative, that is, both an unquestionable, indisputable, self-evident truth, and – and for this very reason [...] – a self-justifying need".

For almost twenty years, Brazil has been systematically investing in the training of managers as central agents in the implementation of school inclusion policies. From the consolidation of the discourse of democratic management, through the centrality attributed to leadership, participation and collective accountability, to the current ways of governing the school through the logic of performance, effectiveness and social risk management, the figure of the inclusive manager has been produced as a strategic subject to make the inclusive school work. It is this rationality, which makes inclusion an imperative and management its privileged operator, that this article proposes to problematize.

The writing presented here assumes a genealogical character, it is a study that is inspired by Foucaultian studies in education. It is not a matter of updating documents, nor of comparing policies in an evolutionary or linear logic. It is about operating with the archive composed of official documents, academic productions and the master's dissertation itself<sup>3</sup> defended in 2016, as a historical materiality that allows us to follow the emergence, the permanence and the updating of certain regimes of truth. The interest is not in what has changed, but in what continues to operate, especially with regard to capturing difference in the inclusive school.

Throughout these years, school inclusion has been progressively naturalized as a good in itself, an incontestable right, an absolute truth. In this movement, Special Education was captured, reconfigured and, many times, emptied as an area of critical knowledge, of

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: [https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/373/2019/04/Disserta%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_Carolina-Noya.pdf](https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/373/2019/04/Disserta%C3%A7%C3%A3o_Carolina-Noya.pdf)

knowledge production, starting to function only as a technical-pedagogical support of the inclusive school. Difference, in turn, is no longer taken as a problem to be eliminated and has started to be celebrated, as long as it is manageable, measurable and compatible with the principles of neoliberal governmentality. It is at this point that inclusion ceases to operate only as an educational policy and starts to function as a technology for the governance of conduct.

This article is based on the understanding that inclusion and exclusion do not constitute opposite poles, nor processes that cancel each other out. On the contrary, they operate in an intertwined way, as parts of the same rationality. As in the studies developed by Lunardi (2001), Lopes (2013), the term in/exclusion is more appropriate, understanding that they are two sides of the same coin. For Lunardi (2001):

[...] inclusion/exclusion are two sides of the same coin, that is, they operate simultaneously, they are not dialectically resolved, they are part of the same system of representation, that is, they are part of the same matrix of power (2001, n.n.).

School inclusion, when taken as an imperative, does not eliminate exclusion; rather, it re-inscribes it in new forms, producing different modes of participation, belonging and visibility. Thus reaffirming the concept of in/exclusion, with Lopes (2010), when he argues that:

With the erasure of the historical processes that previously contributed strongly to the recognition of the excluded and the included, the fragile conditions of the present remain so that we can look, always in a provisional way, at those who live under the tension of in/exclusion. For this reason, in our studies, we created the expression in/exclusion, to show what is peculiar to our time, that is, to attend to the provisionality determined by the relations guided by the market and by a neoliberal State from the perspective of the market (LOPES et al, 2010, p. 6).

It is understood that in this context, educational management, especially under the discourse of democratic management, assumes a central role in the conduct of these plots. The training of managers for inclusive education is understood, here, as a privileged strategy for governing difference within the inclusive school. By shifting the emphasis from administration to management, subjects are produced that are called upon to lead, involve, mobilize and hold the school community accountable for the inclusion of all. This call, apparently democratic and participatory, operates a dilution of the responsibilities of the State and intensifies the centrality of the manager as an entrepreneur of himself, manager of people and manager of difference.

Inclusion thus becomes a collective task, however, marked by the logic of risk, performativity, self-regulation and, as far as we are interested in thinking here, with the

responsibility of capturing difference, since according to Sardagna (2013, p.58) it is not a matter of replacing spaces and placing those who were outside the school, it is "much more the result of a repositioning of the subjects, requiring new control procedures, through the new forms of governmentality that are presented in times of school inclusion". It is in this game of reciprocal exchanges that educational management becomes central, as it starts to operate precisely in the administration of these mobile boundaries between inclusion and exclusion.

## **2 THE EXERCISE OF SUSTAINING QUESTIONS AS A METHODOLOGICAL MOVEMENT**

The writing presented in this text is not born from the security of a previously defined method, nor from the expectation of offering conclusive answers to complex and historically produced problems. It is born of a persistent restlessness, of a discomfort that refuses to be appeased by the well-intentioned discourses that surround school inclusion and democratic management. It is in this movement, closer to problematization than to proof, that the investigative paths of this writing are configured.

By assuming this position, we move away from a methodological conception that understands research as the application of techniques or as a linear path oriented to previously desired results. What is at stake here is not to demonstrate the effectiveness or insufficiency of inclusion policies, nor to evaluate training programs for managers. Rather, it is a question of questioning the regimes of truth that made possible certain ways of thinking, saying and doing school inclusion and, especially, the training of managers as privileged agents of this process.

The post-structuralist inspiration that runs through this writing is not presented as an identity affiliation, but as a way of thinking and placing oneself in front of the world. A way that distrusts universal truths, that refuses to operate through binary oppositions of inclusion/exclusion, good/bad, success/failure, and that is interested in limits, borders, and zones of indeterminacy. As Williams (2012) points out, post-structuralism does not seek to replace one truth with another, but to affirm the productive power of limits. Thinking by the limits means, in this work, refusing the idea that school inclusion can be taken as the final solution to contemporary educational problems.

It is in this horizon that genealogy, inspired by the thought of Michel Foucault, presents itself as an analytical and political strategy. Unlike a history of origins or an evolutionary analysis of educational policies, genealogy operates as an exercise in denaturalization. She does not ask "when it began", but how it became possible; it does not look for ultimate causes,

bad emergency conditions; it is not interested in linear continuities, but in power plays, ruptures and permanences.

Genealogy, as mobilized in this article, is not a method in the classical sense, but a gesture of writing. A gesture that refuses neutrality, that assumes the implication of the researchers and that recognizes the historical and contingent character of the discourses analyzed. As Foucault (2014) reminds us, the will to truth does not cease to be reinforced, becoming increasingly deep and unavoidable. It is precisely this desire for truth that runs through the discourses of school inclusion, often presented as evident, necessary and morally unquestionable.

The archive that sustains this writing is composed of different materialities, from official documents, public policies, training programs, academic productions and, centrally, the master's thesis defended in 2016. This archive is not mobilized as a closed set of empirical data to be updated or compared, but as a field of visibility from which it is possible to follow the production and circulation of certain discourses over approximately twenty years. The dissertation, here, is not taken up as a point of arrival, but as a condition for the possibility of this new writing.

By treating the archive in this way, we move away from the idea that the documents speak for themselves. They are taken as discursive practices that produce effects on the ways of thinking about school, Special Education, management and difference. As Foucault teaches us, discourses do not only describe the world; they produce it. It is in this sense that the proposed analysis does not focus on updating recent norms, but on identifying the discursive regularities that cross different periods and are re-updated under new guises. Discourse is a practice related to language that brings together elements that, by producing and adjusting discourses, produce knowledge (Foucault, 2000). In addition to determining functions and forms of behavior at a given time, they also define a way of thinking. Events are not understood by a game of causes and effects to establish "the diverse, intersecting, often divergent series, but not autonomous, which allow us to circumscribe the "place" of the event, the margins of its contingency, the conditions of its appearance" (Foucault, 2014, p. 53, emphasis added). In this sense:

If discourses are to be treated, rather, as sets of discursive events, what status should be given to this notion of event that has been so rarely taken into account by philosophers? Certainly the event is neither substance nor accident, nor quality, nor process; The event is not of the order of bodies. However, it is not immaterial; it is always in the realm of materiality that it is actualized, that it is effect; it has its place and consists of the relation, coexistence, dispersion, cutting, accumulation, selection of material elements; it is neither the act nor the property of a body; it is produced as an effect of and in a material dispersion. (Foucault, 2014, p. 54)

By defining what is (what should be and what cannot be) a management for inclusion and/or an inclusive school, in a relationship of knowledge, which is already an operation of power, school inclusion in Contemporaneity is taken as a regime of truth. Therefore, school inclusion is understood, in this writing, as a historically produced and progressively naturalized discourse. When taken as a self-evident right and as a solution, it starts to operate as an imperative. As Veiga-Neto (2008) problematizes, inclusion, when it becomes an imperative, is no longer subject to questioning, becoming a self-justified necessity. In this movement, exclusion does not disappear; it re-inscribes itself in other, more subtle and often more effective ways.

Special Education, in turn, is captured in this discursive arrangement. When it is repositioned as the technical support of the inclusive school, it starts to function as an area of knowledge that manages difference, that makes it visible, nameable and governable. Difference is no longer taken as a problem to be eliminated and starts to be celebrated, as long as it is regulated, accompanied, monitored and compatible with the objectives of the contemporary school. It is at this point that difference is converted into captured power, celebrated as diversity.

The training of managers for inclusive education emerges, in this scenario, as a privileged governance strategy. The shift from administration to management, widely discussed by Klaus (2011) is understood here as a political movement that responds to the demands of neoliberal governmentality. Democratic management, by calling on everyone to participate, co-responsibility and engagement, produces subjects who govern themselves and others. Everyone becomes a manager; everyone becomes responsible for inclusion; Everyone must circulate the difference without interrupting the operation of the school machine. Klaus (2014, p. 10-11) argues that "the shift in emphasis from administration to management is completely linked to these new ways of life that are related to neoliberalism and the reform of the State". We need to manage the school institution in a new way, and this new conception concerns the change of emphasis from a conception of school administration to that of management.

In times of collective disengagement and new forms of engagement in communities, the school is a great place for social risk management. In order for the school community to manage the school and promote mutual governance actions, a new conception of management is necessary (Klaus, 2011, p. 73).

In addition to the capture of managers by the discourse of democratic management, the discourses that circulate in public inclusion policies are productive because they put into operation the logic of everyone's participation and that we are all responsible for inclusion.

Thus, school inclusion is put into operation through school management in school, giving meaning to the productive alliance between educational management and school inclusion. We share with Lopes (et al, 2010, p. 26) when he points out that:

We understand that school management mobilizes certain strategies to govern the conduct of school subjects. Educational management can be defined as a field of knowledge that uses certain discourses, including educational and business, to, within a neoliberal logic of education entrepreneurialization, mobilize certain strategies, make certain devices work that would be responsible for leading an entire school community to a certain end. In this sense, the inclusion of everyone in the school becomes a principle put into operation through management, mobilizing governance and self-regulation strategies that will lead the conducts of school subjects towards the production of inclusive subjectivities, which will be useful not only within the school, but throughout the social fabric.

Neoliberalism is taken, in this work, not only as an economic policy, but as a way of life. A rationality that crosses practices, discourses and modes of subjectivation, producing self-enterprising subjects, permanently summoned to invest in their capacities and to remain in the game of competition (Gadelha, 2013). In this logic, being out of school, the market, the network is a sign of failure. School inclusion thus operates as a strategy for permanence in the game.

The methodological movement that sustains this writing consists of tensioning this alliance between educational management and school inclusion, questioning its effects on capturing difference. It is not a matter of denouncing inclusion as a mistake, nor of proposing alternative management models. It is a matter of placing under suspicion that which has become excessively natural, consensual and protected by the promise of salvation. It is about sustaining the question as responsibility, as Larrosa (2017) proposes.

To take this investigative path implies accepting the risk of not offering ready-made answers, of remaining in tension and of producing a writing that bothers us. To think genealogically is to refuse both uncritical adherence and easy denunciation. It is to recognize that, if there are captures, there are also possibilities of resistance, not as a denial of inclusion, but as the production of other meanings for it, and especially for Special Education.

More than describing policies or analyzing programs, this text seeks to produce shifts in thought. Displacements that allow us to think about school inclusion beyond salvationism, Special Education beyond the function of technical support and difference beyond the logic of capture. It is in this sense that the genealogy undertaken here asserts itself not only as a methodological strategy, but as an ethical, political and epistemological gesture, committed to the possibility of making another Special Education exist.

### 3 THE PRODUCTION OF GOVERNABLE DIFFERENCE IN THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

School inclusion has been consolidated, in recent decades, as one of the main truths of the contemporary educational field. Its strength lies not only in the legal status of law, but, above all, in the way it began to operate as moral and political evidence. Inclusion has become synonymous with justice, ethical commitment and modernization of the school. In this scenario, questioning inclusion is not just disagreeing with an educational policy. Presented as a right, moral duty and pedagogical solution, it has come to occupy such a place of evidence that any questioning tends to be quickly interpreted as a defense of exclusionary practices. It is precisely in this place of naturalization of concepts that this analytical axis proposes to tension.

It is understood with Thoma (2017, p. 13) that inclusion can also be taken as a strategy for controlling and regulating the subjects:

as a form of government of differences, which operates on the conduct of each and every one of us. It is in this last sense that inclusion is placed as an imperative of our time, that is, as an unquestionable practice that must be put into effect because it is good and necessary for everyone.

When taken as an imperative, inclusion ceases to be one political possibility among others and starts to function as a self-justified need. As Veiga-Neto (2008) problematizes, the imperative of inclusion produces a curious inversion, because the more inclusion is affirmed as an unavoidable truth, the less it becomes capable of being thought. Inclusion in this register is not discussed; it is implemented. He does not question himself; it is operationalized. It is at this point that it ceases to operate only as an educational policy and starts to function as a government technology.

The inclusive school thus emerges as a privileged space for the production and management of difference. It is no longer a matter of excluding or segregating, but of including in a productive way. Including here does not only mean guaranteeing physical access or enrollment in common classes, but producing conditions for everyone to remain, circulate and participate, even if in different ways. The difference does not disappear; it is re-inscribed in new, now manageable forms. Therefore, with Thoma (2017, p. 13), it is understood that:

Inclusion, as a governance strategy, articulates a series of procedures, statistical calculations and knowledge aimed at social organization and the conduct of the population's life. Therefore, inclusion is neither good nor bad, but necessary to put into operation a type of society like the one we live in.

In this movement, the difference is named, classified, followed and monitored. It is made visible through continuous diagnoses, reports, plans, adaptations and evaluations. At the same time that it is celebrated in the discourses of diversity, it is carefully regulated so as not to interrupt the functioning of the school. The inclusive school, in this way, does not eliminate the norm; it multiplies it. An expanded, flexible normativity is produced, capable of accommodating different ways of learning, behaving and being in school, as long as these modes remain within limits considered acceptable/normal.

It is at this point that inclusion is closely linked to neoliberal rationality. By taking neoliberalism not only as an economic policy, but as a way of life, as suggested by authors such as Gadelha (2013) and Lopes (2009), it becomes possible to understand why inclusion operates as a strategy of permanence in the game. In neoliberal governmentality, the rule is not to exclude, but to keep everyone in circulation. Being out of school, the market, the network, becomes a sign of failure.

School inclusion, in this sense, works as a device that guarantees the continuous participation of the subjects, even if in an unequal way. Difference, when captured by this logic, is transformed into capital to be managed. It is no longer seen as an insoluble problem or as a threat to the order, but as a pedagogical challenge, an opportunity for innovation, and an index of institutional quality. The inclusive school thus becomes a space for the production of subjects capable of managing their own limitations. Disability, difficulty and uniqueness are resignified as conditions to be worked on, overcome or compensated for through appropriate pedagogical strategies.

Special Education occupies a central place in this arrangement. When it is repositioned as a support area for inclusive schools, it starts to function as technical knowledge responsible for making difference governable. Their practices of assessment, intervention, guidance and monitoring are mobilized to ensure that inclusion happens without compromising the objectives of the contemporary school. In this process, Special Education runs the risk of losing its critical and political power, being captured as a technology for adjusting difference to the expanded norm of inclusion.

This movement does not take place in an imposing and authoritarian way. On the contrary, it operates through positive, convening and apparently emancipatory discourses. Inclusion is presented as a civilizational achievement, as an ethical advance and as a collective commitment. The responsibility for inclusion is distributed among teachers, managers, families and students, producing a co-responsibility that dilutes the boundaries between institutional obligation and personal engagement. Everyone is called upon to make inclusion work; Everyone must be involved in the success of the inclusive project.

This alliance between educational management and inclusion is powerful, precisely because it is housed in the contemporary neoliberal rationality, which seeks to put everyone in the game of competition, which creates the feeling that we are autonomous, free and that we can make choices, that we can and should invest in ourselves to become competitive and be included. In this sense, we become subjects of a given time, captured by the neoliberal rationality that positions inclusion and promotes the circulation and permanence of subjects in the game of being responsible for inclusion (ours and that of others), and thus, we circulate to compete and circulate so that there is competition. Thus, everyone needs to circulate in the 'nodes of the network', in this logic, being excluded is also failure, and in relation to the development of society:

(...) It must be achieved through management, which involves entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur subject himself, the creation of numerous short-term projects and innovation. Now, how would free competition work if subjects thought about long-term projects, fostering stability and routine? In neoliberal governmentality, it is necessary to circulate through the nodes of the network, and standing still is a sign of failure (Klaus, 2009, p. 201).

The register of the discourse of school inclusion is in this matrix of intelligibility that allows us, in different movements, to produce ourselves as subjects of a given time, a given time and a certain culture. And this matrix is neoliberal. We take neoliberalism as a way of life, according to Lopes (2009), anchored in the studies of Foucault (2008b), we understand the existence of a common point between the economic and the social as a rule of non-exclusion, and the possibilities of inclusion being taken as a neoliberal imperative, because, in this order, it seeks to keep everyone within the school and the market. It goes like this:

(...) the current policies of inclusion become a strategy of control and regulation of the subjects to put into operation a State that is characterized as neoliberal. By conducting conduct, both of individuals and of the population, the State employs strategies to minimize the risks produced by social exclusion, seeking greater security for the population (Thoma, 2017, p. 13).

The production of governable difference, therefore, is not carried out by explicit exclusion, but by regulated inclusion. It is not a matter of denying difference, but of making it fit. Fit into the curriculum, fit into school time, fit into assessments, fit into pedagogical projects. The difference that escapes, that interrupts, that resists being translated into acceptable pedagogical terms, tends to be quickly brought back to the devices of specialized support, accompaniment and intervention. Inclusion, in this sense, works as a strategy to contain excess, to capture difference as a human power, since "in a way, we can say that the

concept of difference present in the discourses that speak of the inclusive school ends up reducing difference to diversity" (Santos, 2010, p. 39).

The production of governable difference is understood as the set of discursive practices, specialized knowledge and management strategies that not only recognize difference, but constitute it as a legitimate object of intervention, monitoring and regulation within the inclusive school. It is a process in which difference is made visible, nameable, measurable and manageable, coming to exist as a synonym for diversity. The production of governable difference is inscribed in the field of governmentality, understood as the set of techniques and rationalities that aim to guide the conduct of the subjects, not by direct coercion, but by the organization of the ways of living, learning and participating in school life. The production of governable difference does not occur in spite of inclusion, but through it. It is precisely because inclusion is affirmed as an imperative that difference needs to be made manageable, in the logic of diversity.

By problematizing the production of governable difference in inclusive schools, this axis does not intend to deny the historical advances associated with the discourse of inclusion, nor to defend segregating practices. It is a matter of placing under suspicion the naturalization of inclusion as a good in itself and of questioning the political and pedagogical effects of this imperative. Thinking about inclusion beyond salvationism implies recognizing that it also produces captures, regulations, and normalizations. The production of governable difference operates within a regime of in/exclusion, in which inclusion does not eliminate exclusion. Thinking about the production of governable difference allows us to shift school inclusion from the field of salvationism to the field of government practices; to shift Special Education from the function of technical support to that of knowledge implied in truth regimes; and to shift the difference from the condition of human power to that of an object captured by management rationalities.

In public policies for school inclusion, diversity begins to operate as a central discursive category, often mobilized as a synonym for difference. However, this semantic shift is not neutral. By transforming difference into diversity, policies produce a specific form of visibility that neutralizes conflict, dilutes power asymmetry, and makes difference manageable. Excerpts from the documents analyzed in the dissertation that made such problematizations possible can be read in full in the original document file<sup>4</sup>. The centrality attributed to diversity in public policies for school inclusion does not represent an expansion of the recognition of difference, but a strategic shift that makes it manageable. By talking about diversity, the

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<sup>4</sup> File available online at:

[https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/373/2019/04/Disserta%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_Carolina-Noya.pdf](https://www.ufsm.br/app/uploads/sites/373/2019/04/Disserta%C3%A7%C3%A3o_Carolina-Noya.pdf)

documents produce a difference that can be managed, monitored and evaluated, emptying their political power.

The production of governable difference, as analyzed in this work, finds in the notion of diversity one of its central operators. By converting difference into diversity, public policies for school inclusion make it possible to manage, measure and normalize it, moving it from the field of political conflict to the field of pedagogical administration.

It is in this terrain marked by the production of governable difference that educational management emerges as a strategic element. If difference is converted into diversity and inclusion needs to function as an imperative, it becomes necessary to have an operator capable of organizing, monitoring and regulating these differences within the school. Educational management does not emerge, therefore, as a neutral response to a technical problem, but as a technology for the governance of diversity, responsible for making the rationalities of inclusion operate in the school routine. It is to this centrality of educational management in capturing difference, when taken as diversity, that the next analytical axis is directed.

#### **4 EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT, DIVERSITY AND THE CAPTURE OF DIFFERENCE IN SCHOOL INCLUSION POLICIES**

If, in the previous axis, the production of governable difference was problematized as an effect of the imperative of school inclusion, in this second axis the gaze shifts to a central operator of this process, which is educational management. It is about understanding how difference, when converted into diversity in public policies for school inclusion, starts to be activated, organized and regulated through management devices. It is not, therefore, a matter of analyzing management as a neutral instance of policy execution, but of questioning it as a government technology that makes it possible to make inclusion work and, with it, the capture of difference. It is necessary to consider intentionality in the change of emphasis from a conception of school administration to that of management, because:

In times of collective disengagement and new forms of engagement in communities, the school is a great place for social risk management. In order for the school community to manage the school and promote mutual governance actions, a new conception of management is necessary (Klaus, 2011, p. 73).

The mapping of the documents that make up the school inclusion policy in Brazil can be easily found on the internet, including in the excerpts that made the aforementioned master's research possible. From the Inclusive Education Program: Right to Diversity (BRASIL, 2005), through the Political-Legal Frameworks of Special Education in the

Perspective of Inclusive Education (BRASIL, 2010) and the National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education – Diversity and Inclusion (BRASIL, 2013), it is observed that diversity is activated as a guiding principle that demands institutional responses. These answers, in turn, are attributed primarily to educational management.

In these documents, diversity rarely appears as a tension or as a destabilizing force of the traditional school format. On the contrary, it is presented as a positive value, as a right to be guaranteed and as a challenge to be faced through appropriate practices. The school is called upon to review its pedagogical projects, reorganize curricula, mobilize resources and articulate intersectoral actions, always under the coordination of the management. Thus, diversity becomes a legitimate object of educational management, shifting the difference from the field of political conflict to the field of pedagogical administration.

This movement is visible in the teacher and management training materials produced within the scope of inclusion policies and listed in general above. Collections, fascicles and programs such as Educating in Diversity (Brasil, 2005), teach not only to recognize diversity, but, above all, to know how to deal with it. Diversity becomes formative content, professional competence and an indicator of institutional quality. Thus, the profile of the inclusive manager is produced, as one capable of leading teams, articulating partnerships, managing human and pedagogical resources and ensuring that diversity is incorporated into the school daily life without compromising the functioning of the institution.

By being activated in this way, diversity operates as a discursive technology for capturing difference. Instead of sustaining difference as a political power, as that which escapes, interrupts and puts the norm in crisis, public policies for school inclusion translate it into diversity, that is, into something that can be recognized, classified, monitored and evaluated. For Lopes (2007, p. 20):

The concept of difference present in the discourses that speak of the inclusive school, especially those commonly conveyed by public policies, reduces difference to diversity. In the specific case of legal discourse, difference presupposes a materiality that ends in itself; in other words, it presupposes something negative that the subject carries and that needs to be corrected/normalized.

Therefore, diversity does not negate difference, but re-inscribes it in manageable terms. It is in this sense that it is affirmed that the production of governable difference finds in educational management one of its main operators. The centrality of educational management in this process is not accidental. It is inscribed in the neoliberal rationality that runs through contemporary politics, in which governing means conducting conduct through accountability, participation, and self-regulation. By calling on managers, teachers, families,

and students to get involved in inclusion, policies produce a diffuse co-responsibility that blurs the boundaries between institutional obligation and personal engagement. Everyone must make inclusion work; everyone must manage diversity; everyone must answer for the results.

In this scenario, Special Education is once again repositioned. Instead of operating as a critical field capable of tensioning the limits of the inclusive school, it is often called upon to advise management, offering technical subsidies for the management of diversity. Assessments, guidance, adaptations and follow-ups are now part of a set of practices that aim to ensure that the difference, now named diversity, remains within the limits of what is acceptable. Educational management, supported by this specialized knowledge, becomes responsible for keeping the difference in circulation without it interrupting the functioning of the school machine.

It is from this articulation between educational management and diversity that this analytical axis develops. By problematizing how school inclusion policy documents trigger diversity via management, we seek to highlight inclusion as a sophisticated governance strategy. Educational management thus emerges as a privileged instance of capturing difference, operating in the production of an inclusive school that recognizes diversity, as long as it can be organized, monitored and governed.

This analytical displacement allows us to advance in the problematization proposed by this text, which is to think about school inclusion beyond salvationism, Special Education beyond the function of technical support and difference beyond the logic of capture. By bringing educational management to the center of the analysis, it does not seek to blame subjects or delegitimize practices, but to make visible the political effects of a regime of truth that transforms diversity into an object of management and difference into a governable power.

#### 4.1 DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSION IN OPERATION

Democratic management occupies a central place in public policies for school inclusion, appearing as an organizing principle capable of sustaining the effectiveness of diversity in contemporary schools. Presented as a political advance in relation to authoritarian and technicist models of school administration, democratic management is repeatedly associated with the participation, dialogue and co-responsibility of the different subjects that make up the school community. However, when analyzed genealogically, this association demonstrates effects that go beyond the promise of democratization of the school.

In the documents of the school inclusion policy analyzed and widely circulated, democratic management is activated as a condition of possibility for diversity to be

incorporated into the school routine. By calling on managers, teachers, families and students to actively participate in the construction of inclusive schools, policies produce an important shift in which inclusion is no longer just a responsibility of the State and becomes a collective commitment. This movement, apparently emancipatory, dilutes institutional responsibilities and intensifies the accountability of the subjects, because "in school, techniques of self-governance and of the governance of others are put into action, with the self-management of the communities becoming extremely productive and economical" (Klaus, 2009, p. 203).

In neoliberal rationality, it is necessary that each one becomes able to participate in the social and economic game governed by the market, while investing in others, since no one can fail to participate. To ensure the inclusion of each and every one, it is necessary to create spaces that allow self-investment, self-management and self-entrepreneurship of the subjects. Co-responsibility thus emerges as a central governance strategy. By distributing the task of inclusion among all, policies produce subjects permanently involved in the success of the inclusive project. Democratic management ceases to operate only as a political principle and starts to function as a device for regulating conduct. Everyone must participate, everyone must collaborate, everyone must answer for the diversity present in the school.

Within neoliberalism, as a way of life of the present, certain norms are instituted not only with the purpose of positioning subjects within a network of knowledge, but also of creating and preserving interest in each one in particular, so that it remains present in social and market networks. We are all, in a way, being led by certain implicit practices and rules that lead us to enter and remain in the economic game of neoliberalism (Lopes, 2009a, p. 155).

This call to participation does not take place in a political vacuum. It is inscribed in the neoliberal rationality, as already highlighted in this text, in which to govern means to make subjects govern themselves and each other. By assuming inclusion as a collective responsibility, democratic management contributes to the production of subjects who internalize the obligation to make diversity work. It is no longer a matter of questioning the structural conditions of the school, but of finding local, creative and efficient solutions to manage differences (taken as a synonym for diversity).

In this sense, democratic management does not break with the logic of control; it reconfigures it. Instead of imposing norms in a centralized way, it mobilizes strategies of engagement, participation and consensus, making the government of differences more capillary and, therefore, more effective. Diversity is welcomed, as long as it can be organized through participatory and co-responsible practices.

## 4.2 THE PROFILE OF THE INCLUSIVE MANAGER: LEADERSHIP, DIVERSITY AND GOVERNANCE

It is in this scenario that the profile of the inclusive manager is produced, a central figure in school inclusion policies. Far from being just a resource manager or a conflict mediator, the inclusive manager is constituted as a strategic subject, responsible for articulating policies, pedagogical practices and discourses in the name of diversity. The training of this manager appears repeatedly in official documents as an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of inclusion.

In the texts of the Inclusive Education Program: Right to Diversity (BRASIL, 2005), for example, the manager is called upon to lead processes of cultural change in the school, mobilizing teachers, families and the community for the commitment to diversity. This leadership is presented as an essential competency, associated with the ability to plan, organize, monitor and evaluate inclusive actions. The inclusive manager must be able to identify demands, articulate resources and ensure that diversity is incorporated into the school's political-pedagogical project.

This discursive production of the inclusive manager is not neutral. By emphasizing skills such as leadership, proactivity, flexibility and mediation capacity, policies produce a subject aligned with the logic of self-entrepreneurship. The manager is called upon to continuously invest in his training, to innovate, to solve problems and to answer for the results of inclusion. Diversity thus becomes a challenge to be managed, a problem to be solved through good management practices.

In addition, Lopes (et al, 2010, p. 26) points out that:

We understand that school management mobilizes certain strategies to govern the conduct of school subjects. Educational management can be defined as a field of knowledge that uses certain discourses, including educational and business, to, within a neoliberal logic of education entrepreneurialization, mobilize certain strategies, make certain devices work that would be responsible for leading an entire school community to a certain end. In this sense, the inclusion of everyone in the school becomes a principle put into operation through management, mobilizing governance and self-regulation strategies that will lead the conducts of school subjects towards the production of inclusive subjectivities, which will be useful not only within the school, but throughout the social fabric.

In this movement, the difference is translated into terms of diversity precisely so that it can be managed. The inclusive manager is not the one who sustains the conflict or the indeterminacy of difference, but the one who manages to transform it into an object of planning and intervention. Inclusion needs to work for society in general, and the manager is the subject called to ensure this functioning.

When mapping the central documents of the school inclusion policy, it is observed that diversity appears systematically associated with the need for institutional organization. In the Political-Legal Frameworks of Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (BRASIL, 2010), diversity is presented as the foundation of the policy, but immediately linked to the school's ability to ensure access, permanence and learning through coordinated management actions.

Similarly, the National Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education – Diversity and Inclusion (BRASIL, 2013) emphasize the need for education systems to organize themselves to meet diversity, calling on school management to review curricula, pedagogical practices and forms of evaluation. Diversity, here, does not appear as a force that puts the school form in crisis, but as an element that must be incorporated into it through adjustments and reorganizations.

This recurrence shows that diversity functions as a discursive category that legitimizes the expansion of management practices. When talking about diversity, the documents produce a difference that can be known, classified and monitored. Educational management appears, then, as the instance responsible for translating diversity into concrete actions, ensuring that it does not become disorder or threat to the functioning of the school.

From this point of view, with genealogical inspiration, it is possible to affirm that diversity operates as a technology for capturing difference. When it is named, celebrated and organized, difference loses part of its disruptive power and begins to exist as a pedagogical variable. Diversity makes difference visible, but only to the extent that it can be governed.

#### 4.3 SPECIAL EDUCATION, MANAGEMENT AND THE PRODUCTION OF GOVERNABLE DIFFERENCE

Special Education, in this arrangement, occupies an ambiguous position. On the one hand, it is recognized as a fundamental area for the effectiveness of inclusion; on the other hand, it is progressively captured as technical knowledge to support diversity management. Evaluations, guidance, curricular adaptations and follow-ups are now mobilized to ensure that the difference remains within the limits of what is acceptable.

By supporting educational management, Special Education contributes to the production of governable difference. It is not a matter of denying its historical importance or its pedagogical contributions, but of questioning the effects of its repositioning in school inclusion policies. It is a question of asking what Special Education do we defend? By functioning as a technical support for management, this area runs the risk of emptying its

critical and political dimension, becoming part of the apparatus that regulates and normalizes difference.

Educational management, supported by this specialized knowledge, takes on the task of ensuring that diversity circulates without interrupting the functioning of the "normal" of the inclusive school. The difference is welcomed, as long as it can be accompanied, monitored and adjusted. What escapes these devices tends to be quickly redirected to the support and intervention mechanisms.

By analyzing the articulation between educational management, diversity and school inclusion, this analytical axis seeks to show that the production of governable difference is not an effect of the inclusion policy, but a condition of its functioning. Educational management emerges as a central operator of this capture, making diversity manageable and inclusion possible in terms of public policies.

Thinking about this movement allows for important shifts, which are: shifting democratic management from the field of moral evidence to the field of governance practices; shifting diversity from the field of recognition to the field of administration; and to shift Special Education from the function of technical support to that of knowledge implied in truth regimes. These displacements are fundamental to sustain the possibility of another Special Education, committed not to the capture of difference, but to the maintenance of its political power.

## **5 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVISIONAL CLOSURE**

### **5.1 THE DEFENSE OF DIFFERENCE, MANAGEMENT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATION**

By problematizing the ways in which school inclusion has been consolidated as an imperative, this work sought to shift the gaze from inclusion as a redemptive promise to inclusion as a government practice. It was not a question of denying the historical advances associated with inclusive policies, nor of defending the return to segregating models, but of questioning, of asking about the effects produced when inclusion is affirmed as unquestionable evidence and when difference comes to exist only in the form of what can be managed.

The analysis developed along the analytical axes allowed us to understand that the production of governable difference constitutes one of the central gears of the contemporary inclusive school. Difference is not suppressed, but captured; it is not denied, but translated; it is not eliminated, but made functional. When it is re-inscribed as diversity, difference loses its power of interruption and begins to operate as a pedagogical category, as a management variable, as a legitimate object of institutional intervention.

In this scenario, educational management emerges as a strategic operator. The centrality attributed to democratic management, co-responsibility and the profile of the inclusive manager is not only explained by a concern with participation or with the improvement of the school, but by the need to make inclusion work. Diversity needs to be organized, monitored, evaluated. Inclusion needs to produce results. Management appears, then, as an instance capable of articulating discourses, practices and knowledge in the name of the governability of difference.

This movement is not imposed through coercion, but through adherence. Inclusion summons, mobilizes, engages. Managers, teachers, families and students are questioned as co-responsible for the success of the inclusive project. Democratic management, in this register, operates less as a rupture with the logics of control and more as a refinement of governance strategies, distributing responsibilities and internalizing norms in the form of ethical commitment.

Special Education, by being repositioned as a technical support of the inclusive school, actively participates in this process. Their knowledge and practices are mobilized to make difference adjustable to the expanded norm of inclusion. Evaluations, plans, adaptations and interventions start to function as technologies that guarantee the permanence of difference without interrupting the functioning of the school. By occupying this place, Special Education runs the risk of being captured as an instrument of normalization, losing its critical and political power.

It is at this point that this text bets on the need for a displacement. Thinking about inclusion beyond salvationism implies recognizing that it also governs, regulates, and captures. Thinking about educational management beyond democratic evidence implies questioning it as a practice of conducting conduct. Thinking about diversity beyond recognition implies understanding its normalization effects. And, above all, thinking about difference beyond the logic of capture implies repositioning it as human power, as that which resists being fully translated, measured or managed.

Defending the possibility of another Special Education does not mean denying its insertion in the field of public policies, but refusing its reduction to the function of technical support of inclusive governance. It is about sustaining a Special Education ethically implicated with difference, capable of tensioning the limits of the school form, of sustaining the discomfort, the excess and what does not easily fit into the management devices.

By shifting the analysis of inclusion from the field of consensus to the field of government practices, this study seeks to contribute to the production of fissures in the hegemonic discourse of school inclusion. Fissures that do not offer immediate solutions, but

that open space for thought. To think, here, not as an abstract gesture, but as a political act. To think of school, management, Special Education and difference not as natural data, but as historical productions crossed by power relations. It is in this exercise of thought that the bet of this work is inscribed to keep alive the possibility that difference is not only included, but that it can produce other ways of being, learning and existing in school.

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