



Cartographies of the Life Project: subjectivities, controls and resistances in the New High School ¹

Cartografias do Projeto de Vida: subjetividades, controles e resistências no Novo Ensino Médio

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Abstract

This article presents the results of the project "MAPS: Inventive Cartography of the Life Project in High School" which aimed to investigate the inclusion of the life project as a curricular component of the New High School. Using inventive cartography as a methodology, the study involved teachers, students, and researchers in reflecting on the impacts of this school subject, analyzing its implications on the formation of subjectivities aligned with neoliberal logic and individual protagonism. The article discusses how the life project operates as a control device, promoting the adaptation of students to market demands and reinforcing a cis-heteronormative and patriarchal model of subjectivation that excludes dissident bodies. Through six rhizomatic connections, the project points to the need for a more inclusive and emancipatory high school that values diversity and resists the impositions of neoliberal rationality. We conclude with an invitation for reflection: how can we imagine and build an education that is truly a practice of freedom and collective creation? These are the cartographic wagers for the becoming.

Keywords: Life Project. New High School. Cartography. Neoconservatism. Educational Neoliberalism.

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Resumo

Este artigo apresenta os resultados do projeto “MAPAS: cartografia inventiva do Projeto de vida no Ensino Médio”, que se propôs a investigar a inclusão do projeto de vida como componente curricular do Novo Ensino Médio. Utilizando a cartografia inventiva como metodologia, o estudo envolveu docentes, estudantes e pesquisadores e pesquisadoras na reflexão sobre os impactos dessa disciplina escolar, analisando suas implicações na formação de subjetividades alinhadas à lógica neoliberal e ao protagonismo individual. O artigo discute como o projeto de vida opera como um dispositivo de controle, promovendo a adaptação de estudantes às exigências do mercado e reforçando um modelo de subjetivação cis-heteronormativo e patriarcal que exclui corpos dissidentes. A partir de seis conexões rizomáticas, o projeto aponta para a necessidade de um Ensino Médio mais inclusivo e emancipatório, que valorize a diversidade e resista às imposições da racionalidade neoliberal. Encerramos com um convite à reflexão: como podemos imaginar e construir uma educação que seja verdadeiramente uma prática de liberdade e criação coletiva? São as apostas cartográficas para o devir.

Palavras-chave: Projeto de vida. Novo Ensino Médio. Cartografia. Neoconservadorismo. Neoliberalismo Educacional.

Introduction

The context of the reconfiguration of High School Education (Brazil, 2017), arising from the approval of Law No. 13.415 of February 16, 2017, and, more recently, from the amendment of the New High School (Brazil, 2024) with Law No. 14.945 of July 31, 2024, has brought, among other changes to educational guidelines and foundations, the inclusion of the Life Project in the curricula of Basic Education. In this scenario, municipal and state education departments, advised by the Ministry of Education, corporate foundations, and professional associations, initiated a curricular reform process, aiming to include the Life Project as a subject in the New High School (Rodrigues; Rodrigues Araújo Costa; Da Silva Rodrigues, 2024) within student education processes.

This change in High School Education represents a structural shift in Brazilian public education and is part of a broader horizon of reforms aligned with neoliberalism as the predominant rationality of the current phase of capitalism. In this context, Integral Education, in the format envisioned by business elites, is spreading across the country through the actions of non-profit organizations linked to the corporate sector in partnership with various state agencies (Silva, 2022).

While proposing improvements in the quality of High School Education, this reform has been operating towards the construction of a neoliberal subjectivity. Thus, it is necessary to problematize the intended formation of young people, considering the establishment of the Integral Education Program and the emergence of the Life Project, which aims to explore youth protagonism. In doing so, they seek to ensure that students respond to the demands of the contemporary world and its relations with the labor market, developing skills that enable them to be autonomous, supportive individuals, and competent learners for lifelong learning (Vicentin; Silveira, 2021).

Based on the premises of learning to learn and/or lifelong learning – maxims widely disseminated since the report “*Educação: um tesouro a descobrir*” (Delors, 2003) – we interrogate the intentions of this Life Project, observing it within the field of educational neoliberalism, drawing from authors such as Foucault (2010) and Dardot and Laval (2016). For these authors, the neoliberal model or project – which, according to our analysis, is embedded in the New High School Reform and, consequently, in the Life Project – operates as a mode of conduct, a new reason of the world. As such, it produces subjects necessary for its functioning, seen as protagonists of their own lives and entrepreneurs of themselves.

In this scenario, the concepts of entrepreneurship and protagonism function as operators that structure the curricular change, producing a semantics of autonomy and student identity, supported by individual “choices” made during school education. For this reason, the relationship between the subjected subject and the Life Project has been highlighted both by legal frameworks – which define the Life Project as a central axis of Basic Education in Brazil – and by studies on Life Projects published nationally and internationally, formulated by non-governmental organizations.

In the academic sphere, however, the relationship between identity and the Life Project has still been little explored and represented. Brazilian educational literature has taken as a reference the concept of vital projects from the Center for Adolescence Studies at Stanford University (United States), based on Positive Psychology (Damon, 2009). This perspective circumscribes the processes of identity construction and functioning within the approaches of identity states, narrative identity, and moral identity, whose main theoretical foundations are the works of Erik Erikson and Viktor Frankl (Araujo; Arantes; Pinheiro, 2020).

Such production, which has been supported and promoted by private organizations, has not questioned the Life Project as an instrument of governing youth conduct through the docilization of bodies (Foucault, 2010) for a market logic generated within the neoliberal capitalist model. In the way

this regulatory instrument has been/is being proposed, it aims to shape high school students, establishing a professional profile that meets the specific demands of the neoliberal policy that currently organizes labor market conditions and relations.

We recognize the relevance of the Life Project, as the act of projecting is part of our existence at all stages of development; it can also enable reflection and critique of reality, depending on how it is developed. However, considering the ideological framework in which the implementation of the High School Reform has been grounded, we must take precautions regarding the direction this theme may take/has taken, as it is not devoid of meanings and values.

The Life Project, introduced as a mandatory curricular component by the New High School reform, emerges as a point of tension and debate in the educational field (Rodrigues; Rodrigues Araujo Costa; Da Silva Rodrigues, 2024). By being presented as a core axis of students' integral formation, it raises complex questions about the subjectivity that is sought to be constructed in schools and the values that are promoted in the educational process. The justification for this study lies in the urgency of understanding the implications of the High School Reform for the formation of youth subjectivities, as well as in the need to create space for resistances and alternatives to the predominant logic of adaptation and productivity, considering the impacts of the Life Project.

This article, therefore, aims to problematize the Life Project through an analysis involving inventive cartography and research-intervention, questioning: what subjectivities are produced by the Life Project, and which bodies are rendered invisible in this process? How does this device – transformed into a school subject – relate to the neoliberal logic of self-entrepreneurship and to neoconservatism, which reinforce a patriarchal and cis-heteronormative vision of possible trajectories? Would it be possible to reimagine the Life Project in a way that creates new possibilities of being and existing within the school context?

By including the Life Project in school curricula without broad debate and proper structuring, schools have begun to face new challenges. Students and teachers find themselves immersed in a context of uncertainties and impositions that often reinforce exclusion and control over youth. In this article, written based on the results of the “PROJETO MAPAS: cartografia inventiva do Projeto de Vida no Ensino Médio” – approved under Call no 04/2022 of the Universidade Federal da Paraíba within the Programa de Apoio às Licenciaturas (PROLICEN/CPPA/UFPB) – we seek to map how this subject has been implemented in schools, problematizing its connections with neoliberalism and neoconservatism. In this sense, we identify practices and discourses that render dissident bodies invisible, reinforce the binary logic of gender, and promote individual protagonism to the detriment of a collective and solidarity-based approach.

Thus, throughout this article, we will problematize the conversations conducted during our project, discussing how the Life Project operates as a control device. With this, we seek to reflect on the possibilities of resisting and reinventing education within the context of the New High School. If the logic of self-entrepreneurship and individual responsibility tends to produce exhausted and compliant subjectivities, how can we, through pedagogical practices, create spaces of resistance and appreciation of difference? From this guiding question, we will detail the methodological path undertaken in this research.

The production of a map

Considering inspirations from qualitative research and supported by perspectives such as inventive cartography and research-intervention (Passos; Kastrup; Escossia, 2020; Passos; Kastrup; Tedesco, 2016), we set out to develop a space for problematizing experiences related to the Life Project

in the New High School. To this end, we started from speaking from experience and through experience, bringing us closer to the people involved in its implementation, relying on virtual conversation circles for this purpose.

Thus, it was necessary to intertwine participants, territories, and singular semiotics, with the collaboration of teachers and students working with the Life Project, educational administrators from public schools, high school and teacher education students engaged in the Life Project, as well as faculty members from Brazilian public universities, in a movement of DOING-RESEARCH-WITH.

Through listening and dialogue, generated by various strategies (speech, writing, drawing, photography, and games), we sought to collectively constitute the shared plane of reality and knowledge production related to the Life Project. We approached school situations as complex events, which, for this reason, have multiple intersecting angles, making binary, linear, and static judgments inadequate, as they are often constructed. “Welcoming the other indeed presupposes a displacement of oneself.” (Oipari; Timbert, 2020, p. 252).

Thus, ethical issues were addressed from the perspective of trust, but also through the signing of terms approved by the university's research ethics committee for studies involving human subjects, aiming at creating conditions for collective invention, the circulation of speech, and the sharing of meanings. Such choices continuously involved the possibility of posing questions and openness to the effects of encounters, thereby producing points of connection and increasing the power to act. After all, “cartographic research operates by trusting the potency of the encounters established in the research process” (Sade; Ferraz; Rocha, 2020, p. 294).

In the remote conversations we held – with an average duration of two hours and always with more than 15 participants (including students, teachers, researchers), all residing and working in public institutions in Paraíba, using the virtual interaction platform Google Meet, and occurring biweekly – we transformed the experience with the Life Project by composing meanings related to “how?”, “what?”, “where?”, and “when?”. From this perspective, we took the in-between as a workspace – to create space for what is neither expected nor known – and obstacles as a condition rather than a constraint, seeking implication instead of explanation (Eugenio; Fiadeiro, 2016). With collective authorization, the meetings were recorded in audio and video for monitoring, evaluation, and research of the experienced processes, which materializes in this article.

Inventive cartography, as the methodology of our project and this article, was not limited to a static mapping of an educational phenomenon but sought to act in the production of understandings and possibilities within the context of the Life Project. Inspired by the philosophy of difference of Deleuze and Guattari (2011a; 2011b; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c), the cartography developed here is an active and constantly moving process that challenges the traditional representation of reality and focuses on the construction of meanings through the multiple voices and experiences involved. The Life Project, within this approach, was not merely an object of analysis but a territory of encounters and disputes between subjectivities, where the creation of new lines of flight becomes possible.

In practice, cartography operated as a strategy of listening and intervention. Conversations with teachers, students, and school administrators allowed multiple points to be articulated, outlining a complex field of tensions and contradictions emerging in the implementation of the Life Project. By distancing ourselves from an analysis that seeks definitive conclusions, cartography allowed us to observe how subjectivities are shaped and how the processes of control and normalization occur within the school curriculum. More than a binary analysis of right or wrong, cartography enabled us to visualize the flows and intensities that traverse educational practices in schools, identifying both the forces of neoliberal capture and the resistances that emerge from everyday practices.

Through cartography, it was also possible to identify the different ways in which the Life Project acts in the formation of subjectivities. In alignment with neoliberal rationality, as discussed by Macedo and Silva (2020), this school subject often directs students to internalize the discourse of self-entrepreneurship and self-responsibility, encouraging competitiveness and meritocracy. By mapping the experiences of those involved, we also highlighted the resistance of dissident bodies and the emergence of alternative practices that seek to create new subjectivities, distanced from cisheteronormative-patriarchal-neoconservative molds. Thus, cartography functioned as a possibility that not only maps but also intervenes, paving the way for the creation of new possible worlds inside and outside the school.

Regarding the analysis of what was produced, we collectively explored – during the meetings – the forces, flows, and intensities that traversed educational practices and subjectivation through the Life Project, which resulted in the constitution of rhizomatic connections. Cartography did not seek a linear or static representation of reality; on the contrary, it operated as a dynamic process in which contradictions, intersections, and resistances emerged as central elements for understanding the phenomenon. Thus, the analysis was conducted within conversation circles, interactions with students, teachers, school administrators, and observed pedagogical practices.

The first step of the analysis was identifying the discourses and practices that supported the implementation of the Life Project and how they interacted with neoliberal and neoconservative logics. Based on authors such as Foucault, who discusses disciplinary power (1987) and biopolitics (2020), and Judith Butler (2020), with her theory of gender performativity, we problematized how the Life Project shapes and normalizes subjectivities, promoting a notion of protagonism exclusively aligned with market demands and individualization. We highlighted how these discourses, by rendering dissidents invisible, reinforced a subjectivity considered as the standard, excluding the lives and trajectories of bodies that dare to perform otherwise.

To identify the emerging rhizomatic connections, we conducted conversation circles with the voices involved, and thus, the reported experiences were mapped collectively. These conversations gradually organized around themes such as the impact of the Life Project on subjectivities, the normalization of bodies, and resistances to neoliberal protagonism. Sensitive listening and the horizontal exchange of perspectives allowed latent issues to connect and lines of flight to emerge, forming rhizomatic networks that revealed the multiplicity of meanings and tensions within the educational field. The analysis of emerging discourses, combined with the discussion of pedagogical practices, enabled the identification of six possible connections that synthesize the forces at play in the implementation process of the Life Project. The cartography of these connections was constructed as the narratives intertwined, shaping a rhizomatic and dynamic understanding of school reality.

Finally, the cartographic analysis also highlighted continuities and lines of flight, pointing to the practices of resistance that emerged in educational encounters. Through the experiences shared in these conversations, we mapped how teachers, students, and school administrators navigated the tensions between the imposed neoliberal control and pedagogical alternatives that sought to value diversity and collectivity. These lines of flight were fundamental in rethinking curricular practices that challenge normalization and open space for the creation of other modes of subjectivation, focused on freedom, solidarity, and the recognition of multiple ways of existing.

What kind of Life Project is this?

In the problematization of the Life Project as a curricular element, whose inclusion in the New High School has divided opinions and generated intense and necessary dialogues, we do not seek a linear description or a simplification of conflicts; on the contrary, we recognize that the richness of the process lies in the complexity of encounters and the multiplicity of perspectives (Deleuze; Guattari, 2012b). Thus, when confronted with criticisms of the Life Project as a neoliberal machine, our role was not to reject dissident voices but to give them space to unfold and coexist with other visions and experiences.

By implementing the Life Project as a mandatory subject, the New High School reinforces a specific vision of the subject: one who is the protagonist of themselves, who must manage their own life as a business, always striving for maximum performance, always available to adapt. This subject is what Byung-Chul Han (2017) describes as belonging to the “burnout society” – an individual who has internalized the logic of “I can” as a constant demand, leading to exhaustion and other forms of violence against youth.

When observing the Life Project as a constitutive element of the New High School curriculum, we noticed, through our conversations, how its implementation – without proper dialogue and consistent support – contributed to it becoming a space of confusion and, in some cases, anguish for students and teachers. The curriculum, under the neoliberal framework, is no longer conceived as a space for critical and holistic education but rather as a strategy to shape individuals who fit the demands of the market.

The concept of the “entrepreneur of the self,” so central to neoliberalism, has become a lens through which many students began to see themselves, carrying the belief that failure was solely the result of their lack of effort; rather than a consequence of multiple factors, including social inequality and the precarization of living conditions. For this reason, some embraced the Life Project as an opportunity to explore their aspirations and outline paths – partly influenced by their friendly relationships with teachers, who ventured into teaching the subject (incidentally, the entire teaching staff argued that they lacked academic and professional training to work with this curricular component but accepted the challenge due to the need to complete their teaching hours). Other students, however, saw it as an unnecessary imposition that overlapped with traditional disciplines and, for this reason, neglected the formation of specific knowledge essential for academic development. For example, one student stated: “I’d rather learn more geography than waste time with the Life Project, which feels like a social media coach at school. Just nonsense!”

Throughout the conversations, we realized that “projecting” is part of the human condition—we all project, dream, and imagine possible futures. However, for the Life Project to be truly emancipatory, it must be constructed collectively, respecting each subject's singularities, histories, and desires. With this, we understand that we can no longer accept education being reduced to mere preparation for the market; we need an education that prepares us for life – a life worth living, in all its complexity, encounters, and differences.

In the meetings we conducted, we observed how different perspectives were articulated and how students either resisted or appropriated the Life Project in diverse ways. For some, the subject became a space of frustration, where failure seemed inevitable in the face of the unrealistic expectations imposed upon them. For others, there was an attempt to subvert the proposal, using the space to express desires and dreams that did not align with what the system expected of them. This movement of resistance is fundamental, as it reveals that even within a context of neoliberal control and management, there are spaces for creation, for becoming, and for the invention of other ways of being.

The teachers of Basic Education involved in this web of meanings also brought diverse perspectives, which were both critical and affirmative toward the model. Some saw the Life Project as a transformative possibility, an opportunity for students to explore their singularities and dreams more deeply. Others, however, denounced the subject as a tool of control, aligned with the governing strategies of neoliberalism (Dutra-Pereira; Tinoco, 2025; Santos; Tinoco; Dutra-Pereira, 2024; Silva; Dutra-Pereira; Tinoco, 2023; Dutra-Pereira; Tinoco, 2022; Silva; Santos; Tinoco; Dutra-Pereira, 2021), which turns the educational field into a machine for capturing subjectivities.

In this second case, the critique of the formation of a neoliberal subject was strongly present; teachers questioned the reduction of the educational role to a mechanism that privileges individual success and places full responsibility for failure solely on the student, without considering the social and institutional networks in which they are embedded. Thus, based on our conversations, the Life Project emerges as an ambiguous space: while it promises autonomy and empowerment, it places the absolute responsibility for their futures on the shoulders of young people, disregarding the structural conditions that limit their possibilities.

Teachers also presented a strong critique of the Life Project as an educational public policy. For some, the inclusion of this subject in the curriculum appeared as a strategy for governing youth conduct, in which students were encouraged to assume responsibility for their success or failure, ignoring the structural conditions that shape their possibilities. This critique was not limited to the ideological field but was reflected in everyday pedagogical practices, where teachers sought alternatives to the discourse of individual protagonism. Instead of reinforcing the idea that each student must be an “entrepreneur of themselves,” teachers attempted to create practices that favored the collective, valued interdependent relationships and emphasized the importance of a solidarity-based education.

The meetings and conversation circles promoted during the project allowed students and teachers to question their perspectives on what it means to have a Life Project as part of the high school curriculum. Many realized that their aspirations did not fit within the standardized format proposed; that their lives, hopes, and ways of being in the world could not be shaped by a curriculum designed to create a flexible and adaptable workforce. These perceptions reflected the complexity of the school context, where different experiences and expectations coexist, often in conflict. The lack of an approved textbook under the National Textbook Program (PNLD) at the time further destabilized the subject, reinforcing the idea that it was a poorly planned experiment—an uncertain field that generated more anxiety than reflection.

Another aspect raised by participants was the idea of youth protagonism as an imperative. “The Life Project, as implemented, often turns protagonism into a burden, where students are not protagonists of their own lives but of a pre-established script that aligns with market expectations,” said one teacher. Although they do not explicitly use the term, Deleuze and Guattari (2012b) invite us to think about protagonists that are not a burden but an opening for creation – a way to express what each person has that is singular, irreducible, and multiple. In this sense, youth protagonism does not need to be a solitary and individual responsibility but can be understood as active participation in constructing a collective.

The more we conversed, the more we constituted ourselves and were traversed by forces that opposed, contested, and reconfigured one another. Neoliberal logic, with its discourses of entrepreneurship and protagonism, encountered fierce resistance, both from teachers – who understood the formative role of school as a space for collective emancipation – and from students – who felt the weight of a curriculum that imposes the obligation to adapt to market expectations, disregarding their everyday realities.

As cartographers of high school education, our task was to follow these movements, creating spaces for listening and dialogue where these issues could be collectively raised and problematized. In this scenario, conversation circles, pedagogical practices, and virtual meetings became territories of creation, in which we attempted, together, to reimagine what the Life Project could be. From the perspective of the philosophies of difference, we did not seek to homogenize opinions or reach a consensus. Instead, we embraced the multiple nature of these discussions, as described by Deleuze and Guattari (2011a, 2011b), allowing them to expand in various directions, creating unexpected connections and generating new possibilities of being and learning in school.

The inventive cartography we undertook sought what Deleuze and Guattari call “lines of flight” – forces that escape, that deviate from the norm, that create forms of existence. In cartography the Life Project, we went beyond merely criticizing its limitations; we sought the cracks, the spaces where other forms of subjectivation could emerge, where protagonism was not an individual burden but a collective creation. In this context, “cartography” the Life Project is not about mapping what is already given, but about tracing lines that open new possibilities.

The critique of the logic of individual protagonism led us to think about other forms of protagonism—ones that were neither exclusionary nor competitive, that were not solely about market adjustment but could instead be spaces of creation and experimentation. For this, it was essential that it be redefined, that it be appropriated by school communities in ways that made sense for their realities. Inspired by the philosophy of difference, we understand that protagonism could be a joint creation of meanings, where each person contributes with their singularity. In this way, the youth protagonism we aimed to foster was one that happens through encounters with others, through collaboration and mutual support. It was not about creating self-sufficient subjects but about fostering networks of care and solidarity, where one person's success is the success of all.

Thus, we argue that instead of a curriculum that imposes objectives and goals to be achieved, we need a curriculum that is built through encounters, dialogue, and listening. In this way, the Life Project should be a space where students can ask themselves what they desire and what their potentials are, without these questions being exclusively linked to profit and productivity, but rather to a logic of life, relationships, and community.

For this reason, in our interventions, the understanding emerged that student success, when built collectively, resonates more powerfully. The practice of holding students accountable for their failure, an individualizing and exclusionary practice, was contested through the construction of new pedagogical practices that, instead of isolating the subject, integrate them into networks of support and solidarity. Thus, the perspective of “doing-research-with” in our project became consolidated as an ethical and political gesture, a counterpoint to the neoliberal rationality that permeates the Life Project.

By valuing and amplifying the voices of teachers, students, and researchers in this intertwining of the relationship between schooluniversityschool, we were able to perceive that the Life Project, as implemented, carries both potentials and risks. It can be a device of control, normalization, and the production of exhausted subjectivities, but it can also be a space of resistance, creation, and the invention of other ways of existing. For these reasons, the results of our project did not conclude with definitive answers or with its completion, but with an invitation to continue questioning, to continue cartographing, to continue creating.

In cartography, the Life Project, we did not seek merely to identify its flaws or point out its mistakes. Our objective was instead to open space for the new, for the unexpected, for what does not fit into established norms. Education, as a cartographic practice, is an invitation to invention, to the creation of worlds where we can live with pride in who we are, in our differences, in our encounters. It

is above all an invitation to resist exhaustion, to find in collectivity the strength to continue creating, dreaming, and existing, even as we must still expose the neoconservatism embedded in the Life Project, which does not advance the production of life, as we will address next.

The constitution of rhizomatic connections on the Life Project

Using the concept of the rhizome as a metaphor for the multiplicity and interconnection of experiences and subjectivities involved in the Life Project helped us visualize the various forces that traverse the educational field, particularly within the New High School reform, creating points of tension, resistance, and creation around the Life Project. For this, we started from the understanding that the rhizome has no fixed center or hierarchy but grows in multiple directions, forming complex and unpredictable networks.

From the compositions generated in our conversations, we mapped six rhizomatic connections that emerged during the process: Subjectivity and the Burnout Society; Critiques of the Life Project as a Neoliberal Device; Student Experiences and Curricular Tension; Inventive Cartography and Resistance to Neoliberal Practices; Re-signifying the Life Project and the Ethics of Encounter; and Education as Collective Creation and Reinvention. These rhizomatic connections were traced throughout our interventions, revealing the complexity of the educational field and the possibilities for transformation, as we will describe next.

1. Subjectivity and the Burnout Society

By implementing the Life Project as a mandatory subject, the New High School reinforces the creation of a neoliberal subjectivity, centered on the idea that each student must be the protagonist of their trajectory, responsible for both success and failure. This imposition of individual responsibility disregards the structural conditions that limit young people's possibilities, turning them into entrepreneurs themselves within a logic that produces exhaustion, loneliness, and feelings of inadequacy. The Life Project, while promising autonomy and empowerment, places on young people's shoulders the weight of failure as an exclusively personal issue, ignoring the social and institutional networks that shape the educational reality.

The results highlight the existence of a field of productive tensions that emerges when teachers, researchers, and students confront this neoliberal logic. For the researchers involved, the Life Project appears as a machine that induces individualistic protagonism, contributing to the formation of subjectivities that must conform to the market and performance expectations. The neoliberal perspective, with its discourse of entrepreneurship and self-responsibility, is criticized for the way it shapes educational subjects, reducing human formation to a mechanism that privileges individual adaptation to market demands, disregarding social, collective, and solidarity-based education.

2. Critiques of the Life Project as a Neoliberal Device

Among Basic Education teachers, opinions are divided: some see the Life Project as an opportunity to encourage students to explore their ambitions, while others perceive it as a neoliberal control device, aligned with government strategies for regulating youth conduct. The inclusion of the Life Project in the curriculum is seen by the majority as an attempt to shape high school students to meet the demands of the labor market, promoting an education aligned with the neoliberal model. In

this scenario, concepts such as entrepreneurship and protagonism are used as categories that guide the curriculum, producing a subjectivity adjusted to the demands of contemporary society.

Teachers who criticize the subject pointed out that the practice of holding students accountable for their success or failure results in an exclusionary approach that ignores the collective and systemic realities of the difficulties they face. By making students internalize this logic of self-responsibility, the subject becomes a space of oppression, stripping the educational context of the collective dimension of learning and human formation. The subject, having been implemented without going through the scrutiny of specialists, researchers, and experts in Basic Education, reinforces the precariousness of its legitimacy and disregards the importance of a well-planned curriculum articulated with other subjects.

3. Student Experiences and Curricular Tension

High school students also expressed diverse perspectives regarding the Life Project. For some, the subject represented an opportunity to explore their trajectories and reflect on the future, but for others, the proposal seemed disconnected from their realities, an imposition with no practical meaning that did not consider their living conditions and the concrete challenges they face. The lack of a textbook legitimized by the PNL D – in the early stages of its implementation – and the rushed introduction of the subject contributed to making it a chaotic element within the curriculum, generating insecurities and feelings of inadequacy.

The insertion of the Life Project as a curricular component without prior dialogue or adequate support led many students to perceive the subject as a field of uncertainties, lacking the solidity necessary to provide genuine reflection on their lives and aspirations. This instability generated anxiety and, in many cases, distanced students from the possibility of an educational experience. At the same time, some students attempted to subvert the proposal, using the space of the subject to express desires and aspirations that did not align with the official discourse, thus revealing the presence of lines of flight and creative resistances that emerged amidst control (Deleuze; Guattari, 2011a, 2011b).

4. Inventive Cartography and Resistance to Neoliberal Practices

The inventive cartography used in the project was essential for dealing with the complexity of encounters and lived experiences. As a research-intervention method, cartography does not merely reproduce what is given but seeks the creation of new meanings and territories of expression. In cartography the Life Project, we aimed to destabilize neoliberal logic, creating spaces where other forms of subjectivation could emerge. It was not about categorizing opinions as favorable or opposed but about creating territories of expression where all voices could be heard and where divergences could be welcomed.

Through our conversations with and about teachers' practices, we observed that most sought alternatives to the individual protagonism advocated by the Life Project, proposing pedagogical practices that valued collectivity and interdependent relationships. The cartography we undertook was a research strategy aimed at "doing-research-with," creating networks of support and collectives of action. Thus, the youth protagonism we sought to foster was not one that weighs on the shoulders of the individual but one that is built through encounters, solidarity, and collective creation.

5. Re-signifying the Life Project and the Ethics of Encounter

The conversations held during our project revealed the urgent need to re-signify the Life Project as an educational device. Rather than being a mechanism for adjusting to market expectations, it should be a space for creation, experimentation, and questioning of one's desires and aspirations. The Life

Project cannot be reduced to a roadmap of goals and objectives to be achieved to meet the competencies and skills of the BNCC; instead, it must open pathways for the unexpected, for becoming, for the construction of a future that is not limited to the metrics of neoliberal success.

Inspired by the philosophy of difference, we understand that protagonism does not have to be solitary or competitive. On the contrary, it should be a practice of joint creation, in which each person can contribute with their singularity. From this perspective, student success is not merely the result of individual dedication but of a collective effort, in which teachers, school administrators, and peers work together to provide an education that respects differences and embraces vulnerabilities.

6. Education as Collective Creation and Reinvention

We understand that the conversations within the project do not translate into definitive answers or statistics but rather into a continuous practice of openness to the new, resistance to what is given, and the creation of meanings. Inventive cartography was, for us, not just a research methodology but an ethics, a way of positioning ourselves in the world and listening to the other, in contrast to a curricular policy that endorses and homogenizes subjectivities. Throughout the project, we sought not only to critique the Life Project as a control device but to open space for the invention of other possibilities, for the creation of a curriculum that serves as an invitation to encounters, to freedom, and to the pride of who we are.

Through cartography, we were able to imagine other worlds in which the curriculum is not merely a space of control but an opportunity to live with intensity and share experiences. In this process, education transforms into a space of invention, where each encounter is a possibility for transformation, and each difference is a potential to be cultivated. The creation of an open map, in which each line represents a new possibility of crossing, is, therefore, the greatest outcome of this project: an invitation to freedom, to encounters, and to the creation of ways of living and learning together that allow us to exist in all our complexity.

Final Considerations

In this article, we invite reflection on the paths taken and the challenges faced in the development of a project that set out to investigate and problematize the Life Project as a component of the New High School. Our initial objective was to promote the updating and strengthening of teacher education curricula through the inventive cartography of the Life Project, thereby contributing to the initial training of teachers and fostering a critical understanding of educational policies that have been imposed. In this process, we sought not only to understand how the Life Project has been implemented in schools but also to open space for a deeper critique of the subjectivation model it proposes.

By incorporating the Life Project as a fundamental axis, the New High School seems to operate a death of subjectivity by directing students toward a practice of self-entrepreneurship. By transforming the school curriculum into a tool for individual management, the High School Reform places youth protagonism as a burden that each student must carry alone, emphasizing success as a result of the ability to adapt and respond to market demands. This logic, aligned with neoliberal rationality, ignores the singularities of students and transforms the educational experience into a process of adaptation, erasing differences and nullifying the potential for a critical and collective formation.

Our critique of the New High School, therefore, is not limited to structural limitations or the lack of adequate support for implementing the Life Project but is directed at the very essence of what it represents: the assumption of neoliberalism in the formation of subjectivities. By inciting students to

become “entrepreneurs of themselves,” education begins to operate as a factory of productive subjectivities, molding young people to meet the demands of the labor market while devaluing and excluding knowledge considered “non-profitable.” In this way, the school ceases to be a space of resistance and transformation and instead reproduces the logics of control and the docilization of dissident bodies that sustain contemporary capitalism.

Despite the challenges and impasses faced, this project reaffirms our commitment to another possible High School, one in which education is not reduced to the development of skills useful to the market but rather to the cultivation of subjectivities that can dream, create, and resist. We will continue to seek, alongside teachers, students, and researchers, other ways of being and existing in education, building pedagogical practices that recognize differences and value solidarity, cooperation, and collectivity. We envision a High School that is a space of creation, where each student can feel a sense of belonging and develop their potential in a free and authentic way, where voices are amplified.

In this sense, our cartography did not seek a destination but rather the creation of an open map, in which each line represents not an endpoint but a possibility of crossing. Through this process, we were able to imagine other possible worlds, worlds in which the curriculum is not a tool of control but an invitation to freedom, to pride in one’s differences, to encounters with others, and to what is unpredictable and powerful in the educational experience.

How can we imagine and build an education that is not an instrument of adaptation to the market but a practice of freedom, creation, and resistance? If the Life Project currently presents itself as a control device, can we re-signify and transform it into a practice of emancipation, into a space where we can dream of other possible worlds? Is it possible to educate without submission? These are the cartographic bets for becoming.

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