

Reflection Article

Youths, work and culture in neoliberal rationality times

Juventudes, trabalho e cultura em tempos de racionalidade neoliberal

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Abstract

This article focuses on the theme of youth as an important social category, in a context of social diversity especially interested in the groups that suffer most the effects of exclusion and inequality. The expanded logic of the current social mode of capitalist production and its responses to crises such as neoliberalism and the restructuring of labor relations has resulted in mutations about work and sociability in the contemporary world. It is understood, then, that neoliberal rationality directly interferes in the relation between youths, work and culture and the present essay presents a critical analysis on how this context interferes in the young cultural workers. In the cultural field, labor is a feasible possibility and also enhances the creative essence, new subjectivities and ways of being and being in the world, at the time it faces and reproduces the challenges of precarious work and flexibilization and unemployment or not working as part of this process. In occupational therapy, it is essential to investigate how inequality, exclusion and exploitation intrinsic to capitalism and neoliberal rationality interferes and alters occupations, human activities and daily life, especially of those who most experience its effects.

Keywords: Youth, Income, Culture, Economics, Occupational Therapy.

Resumo

O presente artigo se debruça sobre a temática das juventudes enquanto importante categoria social, inscrita em um contexto de diversidade social interessada, em especial, nos grupos que mais sofrem com os efeitos da exclusão e da desigualdade. Temos que a expansão da lógica do atual modo social de produção capitalista e suas respostas diante das crises, como o neoliberalismo e a reestruturação das relações de trabalho, por exemplo, resultaram em mutações acerca do trabalho e das sociabilidades no mundo contemporâneo. Compreende-se, então, que a racionalidade neoliberal interfere diretamente na relação entre juventudes, trabalho e cultura e o presente texto apresenta análise crítica sobre como esse contexto interfere nos/as jovens trabalhadores/as da cultura. O trabalho no campo cultural

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se apresenta como possibilidade factível e também como potencializador para a essência criativa, novas subjetividades e formas de ser e estar no mundo, ao mesmo tempo em que enfrenta e reproduz os desafios da precarização e flexibilização e o próprio desemprego ou não trabalho como parte deste processo. Na terapia ocupacional se faz essencial investigar como a desigualdade, a exclusão e a exploração, intrínsecos ao capitalismo e à racionalidade neoliberal, interferem e alteram as ocupações, as atividades humanas e os cotidianos, sobretudo daqueles que mais vivenciam seus efeitos.

Palavras-chave: Juventude, Renda, Cultura, Economia, Terapia Ocupacional.

1 Presentation

This article presents theoretical reflections derived from the master's thesis of one of the authors, about the theme of youth as an important social category, in a context of social diversity and in a situation of vulnerability and exclusion of world of work (Almeida Prado, 2019).

In particular, the manuscript focuses on the relationships established between young cultural workers considering the multiple youths. The groups of young cultural workers are part of a heterogeneous social reality, among which certain social groups are in situations of greater vulnerability and find greater difficulty in performing, producing, disseminating and having their work valued.

Finally, this manuscript points out that the creation of new intelligibility, subjectivities and restructuring of social relations arise as social changes that occur in the world of work and, thus, respond to the market and capital. This indicates that the integration between precariousness and marginalities present in the daily lives of young cultural workers are interrelated with the hegemonic domination processes in the face of neoliberal rationality and its intersectionalities.

2 Youths: Data on Vulnerability Processes

Brazilian youth, according to the *Estatuto da Juventude*¹, are included in the age group between 15 and 29 years old (Brasil, 2013). In the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, the number of young people is about 163 million people, representing a quarter of the population existing in this geographic region (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2016). On the other hand, the data referring to Brazil shows that in 2017 this population was 48.5 million people from 15 to 29 years old (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2018a).

These data point to the existence of an expressive category, not only numerical or still understood as a population group in transition, as it was recognized in previous decades (Eisenstadt, 1976), but as a social group that demands urgent and numerous actions if their realities and vulnerabilities are recognized.

¹ Law No. 12.852, 5 of August 2013.

Based on the perspective of citizenship and expansion of social and human rights for this social group, we follow the conception of Dayrell (2003, p. 42), which leads us to the understanding of youth:

[...] as part of a broader process of constitution of subjects, but which has specificities that mark the life of each one. Youth is a given moment, but it is not reduced to a passage; it is importance in itself. This whole process is influenced by the concrete social environment in which it develops and by the quality of the exchanges it provides.

Moreover, in order to highlight young people as plural subjects involved in multiple and distinct cultures, realities and needs, as well as subjects of rights, we will use the term in the plural: youths (Dayrell, 2003).

It is important to resume that youth in Brazil only gained the political scene from the 1990s. It was in the 1980s and 1990s that a new notion of citizenship emerged, engendered by the struggles of social movements for democratic freedoms and guarantees of rights. In this sense, the 1990 Statute of the Child and Adolescent was an important milestone in relation to the rights and duties of this population, in which it established important protection mechanisms for children and young people up to the age of 18 (Brasil, 1990).

However, despite the advances, Brazilian youth, especially from working classes, were marked by problems and as threatening the social order. This discursive dispute was mainly present in public health and safety policies, based on risk and transgression behaviors related to sexuality, rates of violence, drug trafficking and crime (Pais, 1990; Silva, 2011; Peçanha, 2015).

Thus, youths were marked by semantic and social contradictions in which they were considered as a “social problem”, while representing a group that drives development, with the characteristics of the new demands of the market (Silva, 2011).

In the late 1990s, a series of federal and municipal government actions formalized the beginning of a public agenda that took young people as a political problem and specific object of state intervention (Freitas & Papa, 2003).

The following decade was marked by the creation of a series of federal organizations and policies that institutionalized and articulated different policies aimed at young people. The state has assumed the role of executor of some of them.

In 2005, the *Secretaria Nacional de Juventude* was created, responsible for articulating the different policies of the ministries and the *Conselho Nacional de Juventude*, an advisory body with members of the public authorities and civil society. In 2013, the *Estatuto da Juventude* was approved, a legal instrument that establishes the rights of young people, the principles and guidelines of public youth policies and the *Sistema Nacional de Juventude* - SINAJUVE (Brasil, 2013).

It is noteworthy that the focus of public policy analysis is the identification of the phenomena that it intends to encompass, the way in which this phenomenon is translated into the political system, society and implementing institutions. Its elaboration and implementation includes interest groups, social movements and institutions, thus following formal and informal rules that can act as facilitators or not of this process. However, what seemed to be at stake was the dispute of forces for power

and political, economic and ideological social interests, which may favor certain social groups over others (Souza, 2006).

Despite series of actions, projects and policies aimed at youth as subjects of rights, we have numerous gaps in the provision of opportunities for most Brazilian youth, related to education, professionalization, work, culture, among others. Thus, it is necessary to emphasize that these sectors directly influence the paths, including them in a continuum of inequality and precariousness.

In today's societies, inequalities and precariousness are directly related to work processes and income generation. The world of work is in a progressive and constant process of unemployment and precariousness, directly and markedly affecting youth (Corrochano et al., 2008).

The reality of Latin America and the Caribbean shows that about 64% of young people are in areas of social vulnerability, with possibilities of access only to low quality services and precarious jobs, a factor that minimizes the possibility of social ascension for this population (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2016).

According to Silva (2011), youth groups belonging to the most vulnerable classes have greater difficulty in entering the labor market, having access to low-quality, precarious, informal jobs with no social protection.

Youth unemployment rates are rising significantly. The International Labour Organization (ILO) predicted that in 2016 about half a million young people in the world's population will be unemployed, and in emerging countries in 2017, it was expected about 53.5 million young people in this situation (Organização Internacional do Trabalho, 2016).

It is noteworthy that the data on unemployed young people do not express the current reality of the labor market, since about 156 million young employees are in extreme poverty, both in developed and emerging countries (Organização Internacional do Trabalho, 2016).

After all, despite being employed, their income is below the minimum necessary to meet their basic needs. It is noteworthy that there is a greater number of poor workers among the young population, compared to the adult population, and in most cases, they have informal and instable jobs (Organização Internacional do Trabalho, 2016).

The group of people from 14 to 29 years old presents the greater inequality between the genders in the unemployment rate, with a difference of 6.6 percentage points between men and women in 2017.

Thus, youth with less economic support, the most vulnerable, have fewer opportunities of schooling, training, professional experiences and stability, thus generating a chain of insertion in low-paid jobs, less prestigious functions, informality, that is, a cycle of exclusion and/or precariousness in the labor market (Silva, 2011).

Data from the IBGE – *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (2017) reveal that the unemployment rate² among young people³ is more expressive when compared to other social categories. In 2015, 48.3 million young people aged 15 to 29 corresponded to 23.6% of the Brazilian population. That same year, of the 9.8 million unemployed in the country, almost 42% were young people aged 16 to 24 years old (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2018a).

Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the discrepancies in the regions of Brazil, since in 2016, Amapá, Bahia and Pernambuco (15%-14.8%) had the highest unemployment rates among young people, and Santa Catarina, Mato Grosso and Rio Grande do Sul (6.1%-7.7%), the lowest rates (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017).

Among young people in the world of work, 71.6% were in the position of employees. However, compared to other age groups, 22.1% of young people are unregistered employees, showing greater precariousness in relation to labor rights (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017).

The recognition of the impact factors related to the socioeconomic issue of this population during professional insertion is fundamental for a better understanding of this phenomenon. For example, in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, about 47% of young people from poor families are in the informal labor market, presenting great difficulties in entering the formal labor market (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2016).

In view of the existing socioeconomic inequalities, the gaps contained in education for work enhance the cycle of exclusion of socioeconomically disadvantaged young people. The relationships of training and work in which they are included means that they increasingly have to reconcile early insertion in the labor market, through underemployment, and the demand for higher levels of education and professional training imposed by the labor market (Retiz, 2017).

Formal education through schooling takes place with great limitations and, in general

[...] there are a considerable number of young people who quit education without having even completed elementary school⁴. This shows the magnitude of the existing problems, despite the increase in average school level of young Brazilians (Organização Internacional do Trabalho, 2010, p. 31).

² The term “unemployment” refers to “people without a job, who have taken some effective action to achieve it in the 30-day reference period (...) and that they were available to assume it in the reference week. They are also considered as unemployed people without a job in the reference week who did not take effective action to get a job in the period of 30 days because they had already obtained the job they would start after the reference week.” The date of the IBGE survey is taken as reference. The term “occupation” refers to “people who, in this period, worked at least one full hour in work paid cash or in products, goods or benefits (housing, food, clothing, training, etc.) or work without direct remuneration helping in the economic activity of a member of the household or even persons who had paid work but were temporarily off” during the period of the IBGE survey (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2018b).

³ In the reference document entitled “Synthesis of social indicators: an analysis of the living conditions of the Brazilian population” (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017), an analysis of young people between 16 and 29 years old was performed, justified by the fact that the population between 15 and 17 years old is legally prohibited from performing night work or with some degree of unhealthiness.

⁴ IBGE data show that the rate of young people who neither studied nor were employed, with incomplete or equivalent basic education level is 38.3% (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017).

According to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura, 2017), in 2015 there were about 141 million young people (between 15 and 17 years old) outside school, to the point that, among young people who were in school, only 45% completed the second level of secondary education. The data show that there are about 100 million illiterate young people (Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura, 2017).

Thus, a category that demands special attention relates to the phenomenon of young people known in Brazil as “*nem nem*” (neither nor), because they are outside the labor market and school. This situation is not recent although it has increased in recent years. In Brazil, in 2014, this percentage was 22.7%, and in 2016, 25.08% (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017; Vasconcelos et al., 2017). The largest increase in this rate occurred in the Northeast states, from 27.7% in 2012 to 32.2% in 2016; in the Southeast, the increase went from 20.8% to 24.0% (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017).

It is noteworthy that the number of young people in this condition increases concomitantly with the increase in age (Organização Internacional do Trabalho, 2016). Specifically for young people aged between 20 and 29 years old, the focus of the discussion has been on the lack of viable opportunities in the labor market, considering that a large portion of this population currently does not work or study.

In the age group aspect, the biggest problem is in the population from 18 to 24 years old, in which 26.3% of people do not study or work, followed by the age group from 25 to 29 years old, with 24.8% in this situation (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017).

The greatest concern with young adults relates to the fact that they are at an age when working should already be part of their daily lives for the majority of the population, since keep on studying is still a reality for a small percentage of the population. In Brazil, in 2017, about 25.1 million people from 15 to 29 years old, who did not reach complete higher education, were not studying or in qualifying courses (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2018a).

Gender inequalities also appear in this indicator. The rate of women who do not study or work is almost double when compared to men (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2016).

Regarding color discrepancies, the evidence shows that, while the rate for white youth is 16.6%, for young black people reaches 23.3%, expressing the historical problems of Brazilian society (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2016).

It is noteworthy that most young people “*nem nem*” are the group with low education, black or brown and women, being of extreme importance greater understanding and attention to the mechanisms of exclusion interrelated to social class, color and gender. After all, these indices express how the macrosocial and structural effects of society affect some groups even more (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2017).

The young population in Brazil is composed of 52% of blacks, who, in turn, are more concentrated in North, Northeast and Midwest regions. The white youth population is in greater numbers in the South and Southeast regions (Corrochano et al., 2008).

About gender, for example, men young people suffer more from the effects of economic crises, while data related to young women show more structural problems related to the female gender (Vasconcelos et al., 2017).

For example, in Brazil, in 2017, 20.7% of unemployed women, when asked about the reasons for not looking for an occupation, they answered it was because they had to do household chores, take care of children or another relative. The same reason represented only 1.1% of men's answers (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2018b).

These data brings an overview related to the precariousness experienced by a significant portion of the population – young people, especially the poorest, black or brown and female. For these young people, the relationship between formal study and work appears as a challenge yet to overcome, directly related to the living and income generation conditions they can achieve in their adult lives.

The research developed by Vasconcelos et al. (2017, p. 247) in relation to “*nem nem*” young people points to the existence of positive results of the *Bolsa Família Program* “[...] on the probability that young people are studying and working, with higher effects for participation in the labor market [...]”, showing that certain social policies can contribute to minimize exclusions and inequalities.

ECLAC, of the United Nations (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, 2016), emphasizes the importance of social, economic and cultural policies that involve the needs and foster the skills and potentialities of this social category, aiming at the creation of more egalitarian forms of social development. In other words, it seems that social policies could contribute to the transform the realities present in the lives of the majority of Brazilian youth, so that they could face or minimize the effects of neoliberal capitalist politics, even though we can understand that in neoliberal capitalism the State acts as a regulator of social relations for maintaining capitalist relations as a whole (Harvey, 2005; Hofling, 2001).

Therefore, the processes related to work and the youth demands presented relate to capitalism and neoliberalism produced in recent decades, so this manuscript proposes to present some dynamics between Work and State in this context.

3 Work, Capitalist Production and Processes of Subjectivities in Neoliberalism

In order to present situated and contextualized reflections on the processes of inequalities and work exploitation of in the interrelationship between neoliberal capitalism, we will use Antunes (2005, 2009, 2013), who deals with the relations of precariousness and other implications related to the work exploitation from a Marxist perspective, and Dardot & Laval (2016), who contribute to the debate in relation to neoliberal rationality, based on a Foucault perspective.

Nowadays, the logic of capital focuses on increasing labor productivity, increasingly reducing living labor and expanding its techno scientific dimension, in order to intensify productivity and the ways of extracting “overworking”. The unlimited expansion of the logic of the current social mode of capitalist production and its responses to capital crises, such as neoliberalism and the restructuring of labor relations, for example, resulted in changes in the spheres of work and in sociability with the contemporary world (Antunes, 2005, 2009).

In the face of these contemporary phenomena, some social groups are more vulnerable, as young and elderly people, including significant processes of social exclusion related to the labor market (Antunes, 2005). In other words, there is a production of disposable subjects, causing a reduction in the human workforce, associated with increased informality, precariousness, outsourcing, unemployment, among other aspects, such as the exploitation and unlimited degradation of natural resources and people, unprecedented in history (Antunes, 2005, 2009).

We can also observe, in countries in the process of intermediate industrialization, the insertion of children and women in the labor market, with the objective of obtaining labor force for a lower value and maximizing profits, often surpassing the number of working men (Antunes, 2005).

However, in this case, it is not a question of gender equality, but rather of working women with unequal employment wages and conditions and lower than those of working men, thus evidencing the sexual division of labor among many aspects of gender that also influence work and youth (Antunes, 2005).

The more competition and intercapital competitiveness increase, the more harmful their consequences are, of which two are particularly serious: the unparalleled destruction and/or precariousness, throughout the modern era, of the human force that works and the increasing degradation of the environment, in the metabolic relationship between man, technology and nature, driven by societal logic subordinated to the parameters of capital and goods-producing system (Antunes, 2009, p. 28).

Antunes (2009) introduces the expression “class-that-lives-ofwork-trabalho”, with the aim of giving contemporary validity to this social segment and also to highlight the current changes in the world of work. This term evokes new meanings when directed at the social being that selling their workforce.

More broadly, this notion of working class embraces all subjects who exchange their workforce for a salary, from the industrial proletariat, rural workers, to the workers of the service sector. Thus, it encompasses from the proletariat and the sub proletariat inserted in the reality of precarious and informal work to the unemployed proletariat, excluded from the productive process and the labor market, thus contributing to the excessive growth of the reserve industrial army (Antunes & Alves, 2004; Antunes, 2009).

With the significant increase of the available world population insertion, proletariat and sub proletariat contribute to the reserve army who struggle to submit to precarious work, in precarious work situations or, even, to unemployment that alarmingly presents. The impacts of these conditions should be analyzed and understood not only by their economic dimension, but also by the psychological, cultural, symbolic and social dimensions. This is because the issues arising from work, in a society guided by capital, directly interfere in the relationships and roles established in the social environment (Antunes, 2005).

The unemployed condition and the permanent threat of job loss have been an efficient strategy of domination in the field of labor. Isolation and loss of rooting, insertion, bonds and perspectives of collective identity, resulting from

discardability, devaluation and exclusion, are conditions that decisively affect class solidarity. This is undermined by the brutal competition that is unleashed among the workers themselves and consciously stimulated by capital, through the management of fear and blackmail. A social vulnerability whose traumas are yet to be analyzed and understood in the current context, especially among the new generations, that cannot enter the labor market (Antunes, 2013, p. 64).

In this sense, the majority of Brazilian youth make up the reserve armies and at the same time they seem to look for other forms of (re)existence and, therefore, the “*nem nem*” group seems to avoid this relationship of subordination. At the same time, precarious, proletariat, sub proletariat and/or unemployed youth confirm the precariousness and vulnerabilities also when they do not study and work.

These youths most experience the perverse effects of the processes of exclusion and inequalities, or even of exploitation, precarious conditions, informality, underemployment, and work and/or income generation. It is also necessary to consider the intersectionalities that aggravate situations of exclusion, violation and inequalities.

Hill Collins states that “[...] intersectionality refers to particular forms of oppression that interconnect, for example, intersections of race and gender, or sexuality and nationality [...]” and, in this sense, “[...] oppression cannot be reduced to a fundamental type, [...] oppressions work together to produce injustice” (Hill-Collins, 1990, p. 18).

The fact is that we urgently have to break or at least minimize the effects of exclusion and inequality of hegemonic processes that reach alarming and indecent levels around the world, and quite particular and deleterious in Latin America. For Harvey (2005, p. 27), the redistributive effects that privilege elites and “[...] a growing social inequality have in fact been such persistent characteristics of neoliberalism that they can be considered as structural in relation to the project as a whole”.

In this sense, Dardot & Laval (2016) affirm neoliberalism not only as an economic or ideological policy that corroborates the precariousness of labor relations, but as an expanded concept, that founds disciplinary and control norms of an entire social structure. Its main characteristic is constituted through enhancing competition and competitiveness processes not only at the business and economic-financial level, but also in the subjectivation of the subjects.

Thus, the authors define neoliberalism “[...] as the set of discourses, practices and devices that determine a new mode of governing men according to the universal principle of competition” (Dardot & Laval, 2016, p. 17).

It is understood that neoliberal society is the result of a growing and gradual historical process, but it is important to point out that neoliberalism and its forms of expansion and appropriation of subjectivities have innovative way, to create new norms of conduct with the capacity to redefine not only a regime of capital accumulation, but a new society, more individualistic and fragmented (Dardot & Laval, 2016).

Competition and the business model are the general rule of organization and the core lies in competitiveness, commanding and redefining the market and other categories of life. The phenomenon occurs through the expansion of market rationality

in all existing relationships through the generalization of the “form-company” (Dardot & Laval, 2016).

Thus, the new neoliberal subject, with its modern, flexible, fluid characteristics, among many others, needs to be adapted to respond to this logic of the labor market, which, in turn, is also incorporated into its social relations. After all, the new neoliberal subject must be competitive, self-employed, meritocratic and must relate – as a result of the current economy and this process of subjectivation – with the mercantilization of human relations (Dardot & Laval, 2016).

Therefore, society is understood as a company, from the “competing” States, to the individual in relation to themselves and others, making them solely responsible for their success or failure. This process subjects individuals to extreme situations of flexibilization of being (body, mind and soul), covered by a discourse of false freedom and power of choice (Dardot & Laval, 2016).

The new neoliberal subject appears as an ideal type to be considered, but hardly achieved, especially for the youths who are subjected to the processes of exclusion and inequalities, even considering their intersectionalities. They will be constantly demanded to conquer the characteristics of the new neoliberal subject, even if their impacts, such as meritocracy, individualism, competition, fall on this same group as evidence of social failures.

The emergence of a new condition as an individual has been the focus of studies through several lines of thought, evidencing several impacts.

In occupational therapy, it is essential to understand how human occupations and activities understood and related to work are developed in daily lives, especially of the groups that are more vulnerable to the effects of inequality, exclusion and exploitation intrinsic to capitalism and neoliberal rationality.

In this direction, Ghirardi (2012, p. 19) considers occupational therapy as “[...] a field of interventions involved in the economic and social dimensions of daily life [...]”, which contributes to reflect in the face of situations of socioeconomic precariousness and proposes to mediate relations of goods and values production, apt and intimately involved with what refers to the world of work.

In addition, there are numerous works in which youth appears as the focus of occupational therapy work (Silva, 2011; Dorneles, 2017; Lopes & Silva, 2007; Takeiti & Vicentin, 2015; Silva, 2014; Barreiro, 2014; Palacios Tolvett, 2017). Thus, this essay aims to contribute to the reflections at the intersection between the fields of youth and work and culture.

4 Work Precariousness Processes for Young Cultural Workers

Given the panorama presented, we have the discursive dispute in relation to the field of culture as a path of youth empowerment, especially those who face the processes of exclusion and inequality (Silva et al., 2018).

The actions, projects and policies of/with/for youths that reach young people transversally, “[...] as with cultural policies, should be seen as interventions that can impact youth trajectories and influence the construction of life projects” (Peçanha, 2015, p. 10).

After all, culture and its symbolic, citizen and economic dimensions are considered as an intrinsic part for the development of any society (Brasil, 2008) and, given the situation of vulnerability of youth, working in/of culture is a fundamental and enhancing element for the creative essence, new subjectivities, points of tension and ways of being and being in the world, in order to expand the possibilities existing for this social category and also for the whole society.

Professionalization in the field of culture has played an important role in debates and demands for expanding expand the possibilities, besides providing ways of coping with this often alienating market logic to allow the subject to become “[...] agent of their own unique skills, acquired from their own experiences and relationship with the world” (Almeida & Pais, 2012, p. 24)

In this sense, working in/of culture is a possibility for this social group, allied to several actions and social instances. From the point of view of politics, given the history of cultural policies, the Creative Economy emphasized the economic importance of all stages related to cultural production.

The recognition of the existence of cultural workers and the importance of actions in the area permeates, first, the creation of specific policies. However, the constitution of cultural policies in Brazil have walked through advances and ruptures, having as initial milestones the presence of Mario de Andrade (1935-1938) in the Department of Culture of the city of São Paulo and the institution of the Ministry of Education and Health (1930) during the government of Getúlio Vargas (Rubim, 2007).

However, only during the government of José Sarney, through actions of Celso Furtado, Minister of Culture at the time (1986), with the creation of the “Sarney Law” (Law No. 7,505), there is an important framework on culture funding in Brazil. It is noteworthy that this type of funding was carried out through tax incentive, clearly characterizing the neoliberal tendencies that would be accentuated during the coming years (Paiva Neto, 2017).

This incentive went through revisions and updates, reaching the institution of the Rouanet Law (Law No. 8,313), which created the *Programa Nacional de Apoio à Cultura* (Pronac) and had its regulation in 1992. It is noteworthy that, in 2010, a proposal for the reform of the Rouanet Law was sent, the *Programa Nacional de Fomento e Incentivo à Cultura* (Procultura) (Paiva Neto, 2017).

Currently, new changes to this Law are under way, including the change of name that reflect the changes of government that extinguished the Ministry of Culture, incorporating some projects, secretariat and council with the Ministry of Citizenship.

It should be highlighted that, since the beginning of this policy of promotion, cultural workers are subject to a relationship of instability and market demands established by the private sector. This is because this promotion included (in its initial phase) institutions and, currently, projects with certain periods of execution, which are selected by the participating companies, depending on the return they can offer for their companies.

During the government of *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, there were important advances in the Ministry of Culture, highlighting the creation of the *Sistema de Apoio às Leis de Incentivo à Cultura* (Salic); the creation of the *Diretoria Fomento e Incentivo à Cultura* (2003), converted in 2004 into secretariat (Sefic), undergoing a new reform in 2009; new public selection processes for the Ministry; creation of the *Programa Cultura Viva*,

creation of the *Fundo Setorial do Audiovisual*; and the institution of the *Programa Vale-Cultura* (Paiva Neto, 2017, p. 31).

Despite advances, neoliberal rationality imposes as a consequence new tensions between the creative making of material and/or immaterial goods, exacerbating the logic of investment and production of goods generating profit and mass reproduction, also considering the expansion of the mass cultural industry, with no significant transformations about the labor relations of this population that remain subject to the logic of informality and instability (Segnini, 2014).

It is understood, then, that neoliberal rationality, in a historical way, has been affecting young people, especially cultural workers, and is intensely accentuated today. As an example, we can cite an analysis of data from the *Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra por Domicílios* (2013), which points to the fact that, of the 46% of workers with formal registration throughout the country, only 8% were involved in the category of arts and shows workers of the Brazilian population (Segnini, 2014).

The economic, cultural and social diversity of Brazil, historically linked to the processes of inequality and social exclusion of certain populations, leads us to the point that cultural workers or cultural entrepreneurs are formed in heterogeneous and singular way, because they have different trajectories, capitals (cultural and economic), objectives and possibilities (Michetti & Burgos, 2016).

We used the definition of this social category pointed out by Michetti & Burgos (2016). It is noteworthy that the cultural entrepreneur corresponds directly to the imperative professional of neoliberal rationality, in which is constituted as his or her own entrepreneur, flexible and governed by the logic of the contract society:

It is important to emphasize that we understand as cultural entrepreneur the individuals and/or groups registered or not as legal entities, who can also act as cultural workers, and who seek to mobilize economic, symbolic, social and political capital, dependent on their social conditions and their positions in the cultural and/or business field, to create and maintain enterprises in the area of culture (Michetti & Burgos, 2016, p. 585).

In order to organize this reflexive exercise, we present the types of cultural workers proposed by Michetti & Burgos (2016), considering the interrelationship between them present in the dynamics of the labor market and the accumulation of capital, according to the Bourdieusian⁵ perspective.

- 1- *Necessity*: it refers to individuals and groups in situations of social vulnerability, giving cultural activities a secondary role in their socioeconomic activities, and they are always related to other works not coming from the cultural area (Michetti & Burgos, 2016);

⁵ Bourdieu presents three types of cultural capitals: incorporated cultural capital: it refers to a long-term process that assumes the incorporation of the individual, not instantly transmitted. It relates in an almost primitive and unconscious way in the constitution of the being, linked to the idea of *habitus*, for example, the way of communicating and behaving socially. Objectified cultural capital: linked to properties, thus assuming economic cultural capital, such as paintings, books, among others, with possible instantly transmission. However, its symbolic appropriation and enjoyment depend on the built-in cultural capital. Institutionalized cultural capital: guarantees and validates, socially and legally, the cultural competence of individuals, as in the case of diplomas (Bourdieu, 1999).

- 2- *Disposition*: subjects or groups belonging to the middle class who live through the accumulation of cultural, economic, educational and social capital. Most of them are young people with university education and rely on family help. The work in the area of culture assumes a complementary position, part or full-time. All these factors give them the possibility of putting themselves in the position of “taking more risks”, because they have greater opportunities due to the accumulation of cultural capital (Michetti & Burgos, 2016, p. 591);
- 3- *Choice*: they visualize in the cultural area a form of investment and have as their central objective the profit. It consists of individuals or business groups that carry out activities in the area of the production of goods, services and cultural events, such as record companies and audiovisual producers, for example. Due to the concentration of symbolic, economic, social and political capital, they find it easier and more possibilities for raising public and private funds (Michetti & Burgos, 2016);
- 4- *Vocation*: individuals who already have a consolidated career in the cultural area and opt for enterprises related to their areas of vocation, such as musicians who also work as music producers (Michetti & Burgos, 2016).

The profiles presented demonstrate heterogeneous forms that young people in culture can assume, as well as the intersection between them. However, the challenges facing market logics and neoliberal rationality and the precariousness of social policies in the face of this reality for urban popular young people working in culture are highlighted.

Only a small portion of artistic and cultural productions can support themselves, and a much smaller portion reaches the point of generating profits, making cultural production inserted in a reality with many financial risks and unattractive to investors, thus showing that cultural production is restricted to market interests, related to mass cultures that generate profit. Most of the artistic works end before they even reach their maturity, because there are great difficulties and limitations to earn a living. This issue results in the end and reduction of an expressive number of cultural activities and creations in the culture sector (Olivieri, 2004).

Alves (2014), when researching the neoliberal changes in public funding of culture at *Theatro Municipal de São Paulo*, states that:

[...] practices have been adopted that modify the basic or traditional composition of the professions that are part of the production process of the shows and, with this, those of a more specifically technical and manual character become smaller and smaller in relation to those related to fundraising and marketing. Thus, the incorporation of other professional segments in this area leads to a decrease in direct investment in infrastructure and professions of direct support to the arts (Alves, 2014, p. 276).

In this direction, a significant part of cultural workers youth does not present feasible possibilities for the improvement of their work and consequently need to get other jobs to guarantee their living (Almeida Prado, 2019). There are, then, greater possibilities for

cultural workers who have greater cultural capital, that is, the possibilities are unequal for certain social segments/types of cultural workers (Olivieri, 2004).

Admittedly, we have the consequences of the tensions inherent to the relationship between culture, work and youth, which, according to Peçanha, generate:

[...] difficulties in accessing the qualification of talents and vocations in different social layers; problems related to the insertion and permanence in the cultural labor market; and the dynamics of this market increasingly organized by tax incentive laws and public notices and not by a structure of labor relations formalization (Peçanha, 2015, p. 21).

In view of all these transformations that occurred not only in the world of work, but in the creation of new forms of neoliberal rationality, we emphasize that:

1) Most youth suffer the direct effects of the hegemonic processes of domination that produce inequalities and exclusions, considering the interdependence of their intersectionalities, so in this social group there is not a single reality, but several realities depending on social class, gender, color/ethnicity, urban/rural, among others.

In relation to this social group of youth, it is necessary to “[...] consider how patriarchal society and structural racism also interfere in working relationships in the field of culture, feeding and reproducing cycles of exclusion and historical inequalities” (Almeida Prado, 2019, p. 115).

2) The changes occurred in the world of work affect the whole of society, in the various spheres of human relations, creating new forms of understandings and subjectivities, resulting in a restructuring of society in general, that is, in individuals, relationships and ways of being and being in the world, with the youth suffering the most from exclusions and inequalities.

The contexts of precariousness and flexibilization of work, neoliberal rationality, conditions of urban popular youths and the culture market – flexibilization, informality, lack of recognition of artistic and cultural production as work and consequently the difficulties of economic emancipation through cultural work are the consequences.

3) These problems also corroborate the objective and subjective precariousness in which the young urban popular workers of culture are inserted, that is, in their processes of subjectivation, emphasizing impotence, as individual responsibilities, corroborating the dissolution of the power to act, to be and to be in the world. This process results from the neoliberal logic that operates in a way that subjects individuals to correspond to inhuman, unsustainable and unattainable ideals (Castro et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, faced with numerous challenges and problems, we have a context of cultural effervescence in the peripheries that presents the powers of youths in the public scene, with authentic cultural creations and productions that move international scenarios of cultural production. Actions, discourses, productions and artistic and cultural products that also challenge society from a strong political bias and seek to express their daily lives, expressing the exclusions and social inequalities they suffer.

[...] reports of artists and activists show that, by speaking with their own voice in the cultural scenario, peripheral producers become subjects of positive discourses about the periphery and start to agency new places for them, considering that this territorial and identity affirmation impacts the way they think on themselves, their relations with their neighborhoods of origin and the political-cultural context in which they project themselves (Peçanha, 2015, p. 20)

According to Dayrell (2003, p. 51), the world of culture is democratic, enabling spaces, times and experiences that allow young people to build themselves as subjects, but that “[...] cultural modernization that influences the lives of these young people is not accompanied by social modernization”. Thus, if culture is a more open space it is because the other social spaces are closed to them.

Therefore, we cannot fall into a naïve posture of overvaluing the world of culture as an *apanagio* to all the problems and challenges faced by poor young people. In the context in which they live, any institution, by itself – school, work or those related to culture – can do little if it is not accompanied by a wider support network, with public policies that guarantee spaces and times for young people to actually place themselves as subjects and citizens, with the right to live youth in a fully way (Dayrell, 2003, p. 51).

It is not, therefore, a simplistic statement about the field of deluded culture about its possibilities in a reductionist or naïve way. Any field or sector is subject to hegemonic domination processes, which are also about reaffirming, sustaining and retrofeeding them. The culture instituted by political, legal and legislative powers is perhaps, among social policies, the segment most linked to neoliberal rationality, especially in relation to privatization and the commercialization of the symbols and expressions of culture.

Thus, the broader support network must be anchored from a conscious and critical perspective in which knowledge, doing and theoretical life itself can offer new forms of coping, rupture and care in the face of precariousness and vulnerabilities present in the daily lives of young workers of culture interrelated to neoliberal rationality and its intersectionalities.

5 Final Considerations

Despite the potential of the interrelationship between work, youths and culture, the workers of culture in the contemporary world are “on the margins of the margin” with regard to work relations in general, with a greater process of precariousness, flexibilization, informality, instability and difficulty in performing their work.

Since youth is inserted in a reality of greater vulnerability and exclusion from the world of work, neoliberal rationality accentuates and aggravates the freedoms and possibilities of creation and execution of work in the area of culture. The creation of intelligibility based on the logic of individualism, meritocracy, competitiveness, expansion of the business relationship for all spheres of human relations and profit/added value maximum exploitation, hinders the creation of strengthening networks that contribute to equate limitations and deficiencies imposed today for youth,

especially youth who suffer the direct effects of the hegemonic processes of domination that produce inequalities and exclusions, considering the interdependencies of their intersectionalities.

It is also possible to affirm that there is a social abyss about society's view of cultural workers, who need other sources for income generation, due to the devaluation and the difficulty of recognizing work in/of culture as work in the face of neoliberal rationality.

The history of precariousness in which young workers of culture are inserted is evident, since the majority of this population is involved in informal works that permeate instability, absence of social and labor rights and income generation below average. The social framework in which they are inserted leads us to a reality in which it is urgent to create strategies for the guarantee of living, including fundamental rights, such as food, housing, health and education.

It is a critical reflection that also considers culture in all its dimensions and work in/of culture as a possibility of expression of life events, their realities and daily lives, capable of reactivating their empowerment and forms of power to exist in the world and not the other way around; to highlight the processes of awareness and empowerment that contribute to the continuous construction of tools and possibilities to transform oneself and their context.

To conclude, under the inspiration of Gabriel García Márquez who, being the first Latin American writer to receive a Nobel Prize in literature, states in his speech that, “[...] even in the face of oppression, plundering and abandonment, our answer is life” (Márquez, 1982).

This manuscript reflects how the processes experienced by young cultural workers are reflections of the processes of violations, exclusions and inequalities – devastating effects for a large part of the population, given the hegemonic powers instituted and fed by neoliberal rationality. Nevertheless, culture can also be considered as a counter-hegemonic possibility to neoliberal rationality, to the extent that the logic of production in culture is also capable of being produced outside the mechanisms already institutionalized assumed by of global capitalism, as well as being able to denounce and unveil part of this system and, above all, to produce new languages, symbols and meanings that promote more life.

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