



## **ORGANIZATION OF PEDAGOGIC WORK IN BRAZIL: PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The following article is about the organization of pedagogic work in primary schools in Brazil, with the goal of making an analysis on the topics that surround the structure of public primary schools in our country; considering from the beginning of the educational system, with the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil, to current days. This analysis, of how the primary school system came to be in Brazil, focuses on the perverse duality of public primary schools: the school as a vehicle that fulfills the basic needs of schooling and welcomes the excluded. The method utilized was investigative reading of multiple bibliographic materials, such as: books, articles and legal documents that guide primary schools. Upon studying the demands that surround the whole teaching process in our country, we validate that education, throughout the years, has favored people that are more well-off, socially and economically, because it seeks to increase the capacities and develop people in a situation that, by its own condition, already have access to science, technology and high-quality knowledge. While public schools limit themselves to offering socialization and meeting the needs of more emerging students, to the detriment of teaching technical knowledge. It is possible to conclude, from all the bibliographic material studied, that the organization of work in primary schools in Brazil has favored, year after year, a centralized school with regards to respecting differences, welcoming and meeting the needs of survival, but with no commitment to knowledge, technology or science. It is known that social inclusion, inside schools, detached from high-quality knowledge is mere welfarism, patching of inclusive schools, and patching the education for all.

**Keywords:** Public schools in Brazil. Perversive dualism. Social role of schools. Welfarist school.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This work reflects on the organization of pedagogical work in basic education in Brazil and briefly analyzes the beginning of education in our country, aiming to broaden the perspective on the direction of education in

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our country. The work is based on some of the main authors who discuss the topic, such as Libâneo, Oliveira, and Tochi (2012), Saviani (1997), Ribeiro (2007), etc. The bibliographic material discusses the organization of basic schools in Brazil, emphasizing the dualism of the Brazilian public school system: public education as social support for the poor class and education focused on knowledge and science for the wealthy class. It highlights all the issues surrounding this unjust and segregated duality. BRAZIL [Federal Constitution (1988)], Article 205 establishes that everyone should have access to quality education.

Education, a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, shall be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the individual, their preparation for citizenship, and their qualification for work.

It is the duty of the state and the family to ensure that everyone finds in education the opportunity to acquire skills and competencies that contribute to their development as social citizens and individuals.

Over the years, Brazilian education has undergone changes that have led public schools to assume the role of combating social injustice, expanding the idea of education for all, and reinforcing the social function of schools in a society lacking public policies that meet the needs of teaching and learning for teachers, students, and administrators.

Education, over the years, has been held captive by public policies that suppress the liberating thinking of students and also restrict educators to "banking" practices, which reinforce the notion that knowledge is simply meant to be "stored" rather than transformed.

According to FREIRE (2015, p. 93), "authentic liberation, which is the humanization in process, is not something that is deposited in people. It is not an empty, mystifying word. It is praxis, which implies the action and reflection of people on the world to transform it."



It is no more acceptable, in our days, to accept a disconnected education from knowledge, separated from the act of conscientization, liberation.

The perverse dualism of public education in Brazil makes the social inequalities even more notorious, the decline of teaching in public schools, and the failed mission of Brazilian education: to make differences equal. It is inherent in education to propose liberation, to provide quality education and meaningful knowledge to the socially excluded class in our country.

Freire (2015, p. 95) states that "the more the students are problematized as beings in the world and with the world, the more challenged they will feel."

Education has its primary goal to encourage students to be thinkers and not mere recipients of an assistentialist education devoid of commitment to transformation.

Public policies have supported the guidelines of Brazilian education over the years, aligning with international ideas and ideals that aim to define policies and strategies based on socioeconomic development. Poverty's reducing in the world is a requirement for ensuring that low-income populations have access to education and knowledge (Libâneo, 2012).

As they are documents elaborated by thinkers, mostly Europeans, they go against the expectations of socially and culturally disadvantaged individuals in Brazil. These documents, organized and subsidized by the World Bank, guide Brazilian education based on policies that confirm the insufficient quality of public education. According to Brazil (2013, p. 25), "Basic Education schools are collective spaces of coexistence, where exchanges, welcoming, and comfort are privileged to ensure the well-being of children..."

By assigning the school the sole function of welcoming, attending to, and socializing students, which is also important, the fallacy is reinforced that education for all is limited to meeting the basic needs of coexistence and



survival. It is the function of public schools to offer and create real opportunities for learning that truly grant students access to knowledge, science, and technology. It is understood that it is a crucial function of public policies to finance an education that, due to the social reality of students in our country, also meets their basic needs for survival and coexistence. However, this aspect of schooling should not become the entirety of education, the sole target to be achieved.

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), (BRAZIL, 2018, p. 15), states that:

Throughout its history, Brazil has naturalized educational inequalities in terms of access to school, student retention, and learning outcomes. The enormous disparities among student groups defined by race, gender, and socioeconomic status of their families are widely recognized.

Over the years, the notion of education for all has undergone processes that do little to promote the role of schools in providing quality education for disadvantaged social classes. The official documents on education in the country are far from reaching a consensus on the function and objectives of public education in the current reality of Brazilian society. The analyses conducted on the direction of public education are always focused on a political and sociological context, which aims to reduce social inequalities through welfare-oriented education. (LIBÂNEO, 2012).

The relevance of this work is also associated with the need to understand the school as a political and social practice that is not disconnected from the role that educators play based on their experiences. Expanding this perspective on the role of public schools is being aware of the reality of the facts regarding the objectives and function of Brazilian education, based on documents and laws that guide education in Brazil.

Libâneo, Oliveira, and Toch (2012, p. 166) state that "understanding public education in Brazil involves knowing how the clashes between advocates of public schools and privatizing forces have historically unfolded



throughout Brazilian history." The history of public education in Brazil is a historical process filled with significant meanings, which in recent years of education in Brazil has revealed this perverse and controversial dualism present in the management of public policies. Analyzing and reflecting on this issue helps us understand the deep-rooted issues and progress of public schools in Brazil.

### **THE BEGINNING OF THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: RATIO STUDIORUM**

The educational process in Brazil began with the arrival of the Portuguese to Brazilian territory and the establishment of the Society of Jesus, whose goal was to acculturate and catechize the natives. This period of education in Brazil was dominated by Jesuit pedagogy: the Ratio Studiorum was the pedagogical method of the Jesuits, based on the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and led by Father Manoel da Nóbrega. Saviani (2007, p. 50) states that "the Society of Jesus has initiated the development of a curriculum to be implemented in all schools of the order worldwide, known as the Ratio Studiorum."

Libânio, Oliveira, and Tochi (2012, p. 166) state that "The genesis of Brazilian education occurred with the arrival of the Jesuits, who began to establish in the educational ideology the principles of the Catholic religious doctrine, education differentiated by gender, and the family's responsibility for education."

During this period, education served the interests of Portugal. The educational method known as Ratio Studiorum was characterized as an exclusive model of education, as the Jesuits did not value indigenous culture and excluded it from the educational process. The indigenous people were assigned only labor and taught basic literacy skills, with the objective of enabling them, to read the Holy Scriptures (ROCHA, 2010).



According to Ribeiro (2007, p. 22), "initially, there was not an explicit intention for vocational education to cater exclusively to the indigenous population and the other to the 'white' population."

It is known that the Jesuit education model was supported by the King of Portugal and aligned with the capitalist interests of the crown. By using education as a means to manipulate and catechize the indigenous population, the Jesuits forged an authoritarian, orderly, and traditional education model, which has been copied until the present day. According to Paiva (2012, p. 137), "In the 16th century, thinking was fundamentally religious." The hegemony of dominating power has been a real fact from the beginnings of education to the present day. It is a method as old as it is new. Linking education to religion was an education model imposed by the Jesuits with the purpose of controlling knowledge and subjecting teaching to hierarchy, traditions, a specific time, and space. Ribeiro (2007, p. 18) describes this Portuguese education policy as "... the organization of schools in Brazil-Colony is, as it could not be otherwise, closely linked to the colonial policy of the Portuguese." Political and economic power was centered in the monarchy, and the colonizers' objective was profit, with education being a mechanism of manipulation. (RIBEIRO, 2007). Hierarchy and education go hand in hand in the country: either veiled or blatant, with social, political, or pedagogical purposes. Education and politics have always walked the same path, albeit from opposite perspectives.

### **EDUCATION HISTORY IN BRAZIL, IN RECENT YEARS: PERVERSE DUALISM**

Socioeconomic inequalities, so pronounced in our country, are present in school spaces at all levels, stages, and modalities. The organization and structure of pedagogical work in schools are ensured through documents such as the Guidelines and Bases Law (LDB, 1996), National Constitution, National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC, 2017), and Brazilian Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines (2013). All these documents organize and systematize



Brazilian education, providing legal support to all dimensions involved in education.

The Federal Constitution (2011) guarantees that education is a right for all, and both the state and the family must provide and promote opportunities that contribute to the full development of students, as well as prepare them for work. (BRAZIL, 1998).

Although education is supported by the documents mentioned throughout this article, which guide its purpose as the starting point for the comprehensive development of individuals, it is questionable why education causes such separation among social classes and cruelly exposes the segregation that occurs in practice, on a daily basis, within public schools. Libânio, Oliveira, and Tochi (2012) state regarding the different conceptions of the school that:

Being a social institution, it is necessary to always consider that the conceptions of the school are linked to the needs and demands of the economic, political, social, and cultural context of a society and the interests of social groups. (LIBÂNIO; OLIVEIRA; TOCHI, 2012, p. 239).

To acknowledge that public education is also a political tool is not to diminish its value in the lives of students, but to accept that, due to its fundamental role in the social and cultural development of human beings, education can be both exclusive and inclusive.

According to Sociology of Education (2008, p. 102), "Education is also responding to the needs of an increasingly globalized and exclusionary market economy." The idea of schooling for all has left deep scars in the social class with fewer financial resources, as the state's aspiration to provide education that meets the immediate work and survival needs of the poorest has reinforced the school's role in accommodating the excluded, even if it does not truly include them, but merely attends to their immediate needs.

By depriving students in schools of access to scientific knowledge, technology, and diverse cultures, this perverse duality is reaffirmed: low-





quality education for all who rely on public education. Libâneo (2004) associates public schools as spaces for encounters and interactions that foster sharing among individuals. They are places for exchange and support, rather than solely for cognitive development. It is a fact that the social reality in which most of our students are immersed does not allow the state, teachers, and administrators to view them as learners detached from their basic needs, unmet by the state and their families. However, viewing them solely as consumers of assistance is to subject both the school and the students to a poor imitation of education.

According to Silva and Carbalán (2009, p.16), "In a society divided into classes, with the dominance of certain social groups over others or over a collective of society, it is to be expected that this will occur, as the struggle between antagonistic interests is the dominant mode of politics."

However, where this model of education and this form of politics prevail, the school presents itself as a battleground, which over the years the dominant class has used as a resource to maintain control over the dominated class. (SILVA, CARBALÁN, 2009).

By controlling knowledge, under the justification of meeting the most urgent needs of students, public policies deprive them of acquiring tools that truly ensure their basic and common education, preparation for citizenship, and qualification. Knowledge is liberating, irreplaceable, and transcendent. Subjugating education to the role of meeting social demands is to cooperate with the perverse dualism of the Brazilian public school system.

**DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE THE RELATIVE CONDITIONS TO DESIGN A CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION THAT FULFILLS THE BASIC FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL: PROVIDING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING?**

The school indeed has a relative condition to organize pedagogical work. This condition is relative because the school is not an institution with total autonomy. The pedagogical and administrative organization of a public-school





institution is subject to guidelines, norms, and pre-established laws by legal entities in the country.

However, the government has provided tools to schools that empower teachers, administrators, and the community to build education with more meaning and decision-making power, of course, within a feasible and acceptable sphere determined by the government.

Brazil (2013) makes the following statement:

The autonomy of the school in a democratic society is, above all, the possibility of having a particular understanding of the goals of the task of educating and caring. It involves relationships of independence and the possibility of making choices aimed at an ethically responsible educational work, which should be put into practice in educational institutions, in compliance with Article 3 of the Brazilian Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), where several principles derive from the Federal Constitution. This autonomy is supported by the Federal Constitution and what is stated in Article 15 of the LDB: educational systems shall ensure progressive levels of pedagogical, administrative, and financial management autonomy to the public Basic Education units they comprise, while observing the general rules of public financial law. (BRAZIL, 2013, p. 47).

The school, together with the community, has autonomy to build its identity, and these unique characteristics of each school should be evident in the Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) and in its own school regulations. It is the responsibility of the school to consider its identity and local needs and to develop plans that enable quality teaching and learning for all. In the construction of the PPP, the idea of curriculum and school knowledge should consider the relevant themes of the reality in which the school unit is inserted. (BRAZIL, 2013).

It is the role of the school to strengthen the bonds between the school, the community, and the students. It is the school that knows the needs and aspirations of the clientele it serves. Despite the limitations of the school within a broader context, it is still allowed to mediate, adapt, and make knowledge functional, despite the welfare-oriented function that the state has been subjecting education to, increasingly with each passing year.



The school is a place of democracy. Promoting knowledge remains, and should be, a primary obligation. The school is, to a certain extent, constrained by laws, decrees, and documents, but it still has the duty to break barriers and foster education.

According to Silva and Carbolán (2009, p. 14), "it is not a matter of associating or not associating school education with politics: it is already implicit in the school's action, which, far from being universal, in a class society, serves the interests of dominant groups."

There is a need for the school to dismantle the interests of the ruling class in order to promote a school that values knowledge, culture, and the inclusion of the excluded in the world of technology and science.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This work conducted a reflective analysis of the trajectory of the organization of basic education in Brazil, aiming to understand the path that Brazilian education has taken from the arrival of the Jesuits in Brazil to the present day.

Through the analysis of articles and books that discuss the topic, it becomes apparent that the organization of basic education in Brazil, from its inception with the arrival of the Society of Jesus to the present moment, has been concerned with serving the interests of the ruling class. This means providing quality education for the wealthy while offering assistance-based education for the poor. It is understood that education in our country, in any period, has always played the role of valorizing the ruling class by offering them an education based on science, technology, and knowledge. In contrast, the excluded and dominated class, who are marginalized in society, receive an education focused on meeting their basic needs for survival and social interaction. This denies its primary function, which is to provide a quality education.



This inequality in serving students in public schools, compared to private education, is due to the long-standing mass practice that education follows a hierarchy, with priorities separated from the school's function of providing quality education for all.

By exploring the extensive bibliographic material on the subject in question, it is evident how relevant it is to acquire knowledge about the organization of pedagogical work in Brazil's basic education and to understand the political and socioeconomic issues that permeate public education in our country.

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