OCCUPY AND RESIST: POLITICAL PRAXIS, SELF-MANAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN THE SÃO PAULO HIGH SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN 2015

OCUPAR E RESISTIR: PRÁXIS POLÍTICA, AUTOGESTÃO E DEMOCRACIA NO MOVIMENTO SECUNDARISTA PAULISTA EM 2015

OCUPAR Y RESISTIR: PRAXIS POLÍTICA, AUTOGESTIÓN Y DEMOCRACIA EN EL MOVIMIENTO DE ESCUELAS SECUNDARIAS DE SÃO PAULO EN 2015

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to analyze the specificities and novelties present in the manifestations of occupations of secondary students in the state of São Paulo at the end of 2015 through some key categories, namely political praxis, self-management, and democratization of schools, based on the thinking by Rosa Luxemburgo and Maurício Tragtemberg. Initially, we present the origin of the movement, its antecedents, the means by which it spread among schools, and its repercussions. It was imperative, for the basis of the analysis, a brief study of the concepts addressed. We also analyzed the content of the published material, considering its intersection with the ideas of self-management, participatory democracy, and political praxis. Study data were collected and systematized by consulting different sources such as media, interviews, and publications on the subject. It was concluded that the occupations of state schools in São Paulo in 2015 were genuinely self-managed, which enabled the constitution of a political praxis.


RESUMO: Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar as especificidades e novidades presentes nas manifestações das ocupações dos estudantes secundaristas do estado São Paulo no final de 2015, por meio de algumas categorias-chave, a saber: praxis política, autogestão e democratização das escolas, fundamentadas no pensamento de Rosa Luxemburgo e Maurício Tragtemberg. Inicialmente, apresentamos a origem do movimento, seus antecedentes, os meios pelos quais se propagou entre as escolas e suas repercussões. Foi imperativo, para o embasamento da análise, um breve estudo dos conceitos abordados. Analisamos, ainda, o conteúdo do material veiculado, considerando-se sua intersecção com as concepções de autogestão, democracia participativa e praxis política. Os dados do estudo foram coletados e sistematizados consultando-se diferentes fontes como mídias, entrevistas, e publicações sobre o tema. Concluiu-se que as ocupações das escolas estaduais paulistas em 2015 foi uma genuinamente autogestionária que possibilitou a constituição de uma praxis política.


RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar las especificidades y novedades presentes en las manifestaciones de ocupaciones de estudiantes de secundaria en el estado de Sao Paulo a finales de 2015, a través de algunas categorías clave, a saber: praxis política, autogestión y democratización de las escuelas, basadas sobre el pensamiento de Rosa Luxemburgo y Mauricio Tragtemberg. Inicialmente presentamos el origen del movimiento, sus antecedentes, los medios por los que se extendió entre las escuelas y sus repercusiones. Fue imperativo, como base del análisis, un breve estudio de los conceptos abordados. También analizamos el contenido del material publicado, considerando su intersección con los conceptos de autogestión, democracia participativa y praxis política. Los datos del estudio fueron recolectados y sistematizados consultando diferentes fuentes como medios de comunicación, entrevistas y publicaciones sobre el tema. Se concluyó que las ocupaciones de escuelas públicas en Sao Paulo en 2015 fueron genuinamente autogestionadas, lo que permitió la constitución de una praxis política.

Introduction

The study of the occupations of high school students in the state of São Paulo and its developments allow us to understand the constitution of political praxis in the process of occupying public space, which allows democracy and self-management to manifest themselves as possibilities for managing school institutions. The movement was triggered by the policy of “reorganizing” secondary schools proposed by the then governor, Geraldo Alckmin (PSDB), at the end of 2015.

There was no discussion about the restructuring process, and its knowledge through the news was a reason for surprise and indignation on the part of the students. Campos, Ribeiro, and Medeiros (2016) report that many students found out about the reform when they did not find their names on the enrollment list of the school where they studied until then.

Information about the reform was presented to the population as follows:

The Secretary of Education of the State of São Paulo announced this Monday (26) that the reorganization of school education will directly affect 94 schools, which will be 'made available', and will continue to be used in the field of education. Of this total, 66 already have their new use defined and may house technical education units or even become kindergartens and municipal schools, for example. The other 28 still have an uncertain fate. In all, the reorganization of teaching will make available 1.8% of the 5,147 schools in the state. A total of 1,464 units will be involved in the reconfiguration, changing the number of teaching cycles that will be offered. According to the secretariat, 311,000 students will have to change schools out of a total of 3.8 million enrolled students. The change also affects 74,000 teachers. The list of affected schools will be released by the end of the week. This Tuesday, the secretariat will meet with 91 teaching leaders to move forward with the changes. The reorganization will separate most schools into 1 elementary education units, for children from 1st to 5th grade; elementary school 2, from the 6th to the 9th grade; and high school. The number of single-cycle schools will rise from 1,443 units to 2,197, that is, an increase of 754 schools. With that, 43% of the schools in the state will have only one cycle. For the Department of Education, the improvement in student performance in single-cycle schools is 15%. The number of schools with two cycles drops 18%, going from 3,209 to 2,635. The number of schools with three cycles drops from 495 to 315 units – a drop of 36%. (Portal G1, reorganization reaches 311 thousand students and 'makes available' 94 schools in SP, 26/10/2015 )

Immediately, students began to discuss the meaning of the reform proposed by the state through social networks. A resistance movement then began, whose power led to the repeal of the decree announcing the reform of schools in São Paulo.

The occupation movement of state schools by high school students in São Paulo in 2015
The understanding that high school students had of their own movement is narrated in the book *Escolas de Luta* (2016), by Antônia Malta Campos, Jonas Medeiros and Márcio Moretto Ribeiro, which presents the perception of high school students in São Paulo of the movement to occupy state schools in the end of 2015 and which features interviews with high school students who participated in the occupations, from the collective *O Mal-Educado* and testimonials posted by high school students on social networks.

The fundamental aspect being studied here is the radically democratic character and the constitution of a self-managed organizational culture, at the center of which was the collective “*O Mal-Educado*”. Although they did not theorize about the self-managed character of the school occupation movement, its specific distinction, such as the perception of the school as an eminently public space, the emergence of a political praxis that is constituted in the movement itself, and its character of autonomy and self-government allows considering a self-management experience.

One of the main characteristics of high school students’ bold speech was the use of joking and mocking language. This characteristic of youth movements had already been identified in the *Movimento Passe Livre* (MPL) and in the protests against the World Cup in Brazil in 2016, for example, in the phrase present in many graffiti: *There will be no World Cup*.

The irreverent speech denotes a symbolic aspect of a movement organized by young people, who wish to leave, through the mark of joviality, the refusal of the bureaucratic and official speech, alien to the life and daily life of the schools.

Phrases like the ones below marked the high school discourse:

- “Today, you do not enter. They arrived late. The bell has already rung!” 3
- “The guy closes the school and opens a cell, I don't even understand, uncle!” 4

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4 Excerpt is taken from the book *Escolas de Luta*, which refers to the words of MC Foice e Martelo. For more information, access the YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvdrLD1RbTI. This song was composed to mobilize the secondary school student movement and was released by the collective “*O Mal-Educado*”. It is a politicized version of the song "Baile de Favela" by MC João. In addition to this "hit," inspired by the occupations, the MCs also released other songs: "Medley das ocupações" and, in their testimony given to the authors of the book “*Escolas de Luta*, which shares the name with the hit released by MC Foice e Martelo, they declared that they are participants in the occupations and residents of the South Zone of São Paulo, and that they had already composed other fungs with similar content in 2015, including “Faixa de Frente”, “Tapa no Patrão” and “Greve dos Professores”. With these funk hits, they intended to bring content to the "quebrada" (the neighborhood) that was often inaccessible. They understand that students are workers, as many are already in the
“The State came hot, we are already boiling”.

It is a question of marking the difference and specificity of the movement, by exposing a knowledge that is typical of youth culture, which was intended to occupy not only physically the schools, but also to occupy a space that had been denied them by the government discourse. The language used also denotes the refusal of the normalizing discourse that causes most students to be relegated to marginality.

In particular, the way in which the reforms of the government of the state of São Paulo were announced, through decrees, without any public discussion, based on aspects of an economic nature and aimed at optimizing the state machine, was considered authoritarian and casuistic, without any consideration for the educational aspects themselves, or the daily life of the school units. The mark of resistance and self-management, as a form of organization, expressed not only the criticism of the announced reform of the educational system, but also denounced how the power relations that prevailed in the sphere of educational policy operated. In return, the students forged, during the course of the movement, a new process of struggle, self-managed and participatory, which indicated the model they wanted to be adopted in the establishment of educational policies.

The process of organizing protests, but especially the occupations, generated a dynamic of collective organization that forged new social relationships, both among students and between students and teachers. High school students broke the individualistic isolation of everyday school life and created a new sociability in the struggle process: sociability based on co-responsibility, horizontal decision-making processes and care for public property (Ortellado, 2016, p. 13).

The students adopted an innovative strategy that relied on a wide variety of tactics, in addition to traditional forms of struggle such as petitions, school protests, neighborhood protests, and marches in the city center. The occupations of schools, essential for the movement, presented a character of collective and self-management organization, with the holding of public classes. In addition, the dissemination of news, reports, and testimonials through social networks, in particular Facebook and Whatsapp, allowed the capillarization of the movement, which reached the entire state territory, enhancing the adherence of more and more schools to
the movement, such as also the engagement of family members and neighborhoods (Ortellado, 2016).

Initially, communication between students through social networks made it possible for around 163 demonstrations to be organized at the end of September and beginning of November against the school reorganization, in the capital and interior of the state, with, in several cases, the participation of parents and teachers. Acts were also organized in front of school units, stopping classes, marches, blocking streets, avenues, and highways, and debate acts (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016). The secularists also requested that the Chamber of Deputies take a position contrary to the governor’s decree.

Considering that none of these forms of protest had the desired effect, the collective O Mal-Educado translated the document “Como Ocupar um Colégio?” prepared by the Argentine section of the “Frente de Estudantes Libertarios”, based on the experience of Chilean students at the time of “The Rebellion of the Penguins” (La rebellion pingüína, 2007).

It was a fortuitous deal. Kind of... one day there will be occupation of schools in Brazil and we need... if we translate this it will help us a lot. [...] It was an idea like this: “Let's leave it on the trigger”. One day the students will use this from there. [...] It was an unpretentious business: we translated, we left it there, when we saw that it could be used... (O Mal-Educado. Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016, p. 65).

Based on this material, the occupation of schools began. It was an uncoordinated process that led to the spread of occupation of schools. The effervescent informal exchanges on WhatsApp led to a wave of occupations.

But then, in those millions of groups that appeared on the reorganization WhatsApp, I saw a primer on “O Mal-Educado”... which, wow, was the apex of the business... I first saw “How to occupy a college”? Then I read that there and then: “Oops! Like this?! Hey? Then I started to read and saw: there are people from Chile who had done this in 2006... 2006 or 2011... twice. There was in Argentina too. Then I was reading and I was like, “Wow! It's crazy, but maybe it will work!” (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016, p. 54).

The students' self-organization initiatives and the impulse given to the movement, throughout the state of São Paulo, in search of spaces for dialogue with the state government, did not go unnoticed. Facebook pages, including the page of the collective “O Mal-Educado” had their reports and posts deleted and the dissemination of false news about actions in schools began to be published (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016). The first school occupied in São
Paulo – E. E. Diadema, was followed by the occupation of E.E Fernão Dias by high school students in the morning of the following day.

The case of the organization process for occupation in the case of E.E. Diadema is exemplary. According to the report of a student at that school, on the eve of the occupation, informal conversations were held, often fortuitous, culminating in the elaboration of an informal list of students who would like to participate in a school occupation. Based on the manual “How to occupy a school?” adaptations were made to meet the specific conditions of the school (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016).

“The school is ours” became the motto of the occupations. Commissions responsible for different activities and needs were organized, such as: food, cleaning, security, press, information, as well as external relations, according to the instructions in the manual published by “O Mal-Educado”. One of the characteristics of the movement was creativity, from the moment of creating unforeseen commissions, such as recreation commissions, to implementing new activities or meeting contingencies, meeting the specific demands of each school.

High school students also benefited from donations of various natures made by supporters of the movement, which included food, classes, workshops, and activities offered mainly by cultural and theatrical collectives, professors, and university students.

The discovery, in several schools, of food, materials, and spaces to which they did not have access led to severe criticism of managers and school leaders, whether for their incompetence, slowness, or corruption. The indifference of those who, in theory, should care for the quality of services offered to the population, especially regarding the education and nutrition of children and young people in training, contrasted with a reform that ultimately aimed at efficiency and optimization of the educational offer. Subsequently, complaints about the poor quality of food offered in schools and about the existence of a mafia that diverted resources intended for meals from state schools led to the installation of a CPI, to investigate the occurrences. On social networks, students echoed the complaints using the hashtag: #QuemVaiPrenderOLadrãodeMerenda5.

The occupations helped students to visualize a different, more democratic school with more enjoyable classes. A wide variety of collectives (mainly cultural collectives, theater groups, etc.) and independent people (especially professors and university students) mobilized intensely to contribute to the vitalization of the daily life of occupations, and these activities had a great impact on students (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016, p. 149).

5 Who's going to arrest the thief?
A quick wave of occupations spread throughout the state of São Paulo - the interior and coast had schools occupied by high school students. It was not just a process that was concentrated in Greater São Paulo. According to Stabelini (2019), on November 22, 2015, 89 state schools had already been occupied.

A second large wave of occupations occurred on the occasion of the application of the SARESP test (São Paulo State School Performance Assessment System). The occurrence of the evaluation allowed the students to make public their criticisms of the education carried out in schools. Many students who previously had not joined the protests began to participate in demonstrations and occupations. Evaluation boycott tactics were organized. “Take care, Geraldinho, that your SARESP test is not going to turn around, no!” (MC Sickle and Hammer – Medley of occupations).

“O Mal-Educado” launched a new manual: “How to Boycott SARESP.” The suggested tactics consisted of picketing, confiscation of tests, holding assemblies at the same time as the application of the test and in case of failure of these attempts, erasure and photo of the templates, which were posted on social networks, with great repercussions.

There were several obstacles faced by students during the occupation of schools, which required the development of mediation and negotiation skills with relatives, the community surrounding the school, school management teams, teachers, employees, administrative technicians, and especially with the caretakers who, in some cases, they work and live in school buildings. Management teams, directors, and teachers were under pressure from higher authorities. The most direct form of repression was constituted by the use of police force, often requested by directors. The use of police garrisons represented an intensification from a psychological point of view, worrying parents and teachers who, in several cases, started to defend the political positions defended by the students. The occupations were recognizably organized and peaceful, often counting on the support and presence of relatives and the neighborhood of the schools. Rumors and defamatory news dealing with the supposed existence of violent actions in the occupations began to be published, which were, in several situations, denied by relatives and the school community.

190 the director even dialed.
At school, we are in charge.
I want to see homi catch.
Place where guys laugh.
And put the school to occupy.
(Mc Foice e Martelo, 2015).
In relation to several schools, the government of the state of São Paulo went to court with requests for repossession. Although some of these actions were granted, the majority were later overturned by judges who considered the occupations as a legitimate form of demonstration by students (Valle, Silveira, et al., 2017).

The persistence of high school students and the large number of schools that joined the movement took on great proportions, with national repercussions.

A movement to occupy public spaces, as is the case of the E.Es, is an action that, in general, creates a climate of intense pressure on rulers and leaders. This occurs because it is an action that concentrates attacks on structures that are dear to the maintenance of state power: the regular functioning of the institution is paralyzed, free access to the bureaucratic apparatus is made possible, including episodes of discovery of school and leisure materials that were hidden from the public. students (Stabelini, 2019, p.101).

Stabelini (2019) observes that high school students established a process that constituted a natural and expressive class of a practical nature in relation to the type of management of schools and educational policies. Self-management, through assemblies, fostered a horizontal perspective of power relations and decision-making instances. The experience of a political praxis of a collective, reflective, critical, and autonomous character constituted one of the greatest contributions that high school students made to Brazilian educational policy.

If this occupation is self-managed in a horizontal manner – as was the case for high school students -, this tends to make every activity or decision, no matter how small, become an experience of exercising democracy and horizontality. Even the most prosaic issues are submitted to a decision-making, collective reflexive process – the assembly (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016 p. 128).

The great tenacity of the students in maintaining their occupations and the psychological pressure to which they were subjected, had irreverence as one of the points of support, which allowed them to gain the sympathy of the population.

The non-acceptance of a proposal to suspend the school reorganization process led to a lessening of pressure from the state government of São Paulo to vacate the schools. Reports of harassment, which included threats and assaults, became the practice adopted by state administrative agents.
[...] it is possible to state that the State, through the military police, or people linked to the bureaucracy base of the Secretary of Education, put into practice - in addition to disinformation and defamation campaigns - a campaign of harassment and violence directly in above the students, mostly minors, who occupied the schools (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016, p. 206).

One event was particularly striking: the audio leak, carried out by a journalist who infiltrated a meeting, held on November 29, 2015, in the office of the Secretary of Education, with SEE’s chief of staff Fernando Padula and which was attended by the participation of more than 40 regional leaders from the state of São Paulo. In the audio, the strategy of intensifying the deformation process of the secondary movement becomes evident, and the support of the Military Police (PM) is also counted on.

After the leak of the audio and the escalation in the violence of the government's strategies, the perspective for the movement did not seem the best, on the other hand, the courage and disposition of the students in struggle only tended to increase, and the dimension that the occupations had taken across the state gave them more confidence (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016, p. 228).

In response, high school students adopted new tactics. The blockade of the Tietê waterfront, carried out by students from E. E. Fernão Dias, which gained wide repercussions in the media, led the collective “O Mal-Educado” to produce a new manual: “Today the class is on the street: the first lesson is how to stop an avenue” (O MAL EDUCADO, 2015).

At that time, state schools throughout São Paulo promoted acts, often simultaneous, of blocking streets and avenues or protests in the vicinity of the schools. With this tactical change, the movement of high school students gained even more visibility, consequently, the declarations of support expanded: artists, public figures, educational institutions and universities promoted even more acts and declarations of support for the movement. An example was the turn of the occupations in which several artists performed concerts in occupied schools, in addition to promoting various cultural activities (Stabelini, 2019, p.106).

On December 3, 2015, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the São Paulo State Defender's Office determined the suspension of the reorganization of schools proposed by the state government.

Finally, on December 4, 2015, Governor Geraldo Alckmin announced the revocation of the decree that regulated the reorganization of education in the State of São Paulo indefinitely.
The announcement was made publicly, as a result of a request from high school students who stated that they would not negotiate behind closed doors.

The concepts of self-management, political praxis, and democracy

The exposition of the events that characterized the occupation movement of the state schools of São Paulo, allows us to understand it as a process of political formation of a self-managed praxis. In order to deepen the analysis of this process, we present below a brief reflection on the concept of self-management and its emergence as an educational praxis.

According to the Policy Dictionary organized by Bobbio, Matteucci and Pasquino (1986), the entry self-management reads:

Self-management, in its broadest sense, should be understood as a system of organization of social activities, developed through the cooperation of several people (productive activities, services, administrative activities), where decisions relating to management are directly taken by those who participate, based on the power in attributing decision-making power to the collectivities defined by each of the specific activity structures (company, school, neighborhood, etc.). (Follis, 1986, 74).

According to the entry – Autogestión, from the Diccionario de las Ciencias de la Educación (1995), self-management would be the self-government of a community (Lopez et al., 1995, p.158). According to the Dictionary,

there is no definitive model of self-management, but different ideological positions and different praxis. Among the experiences of self-management initiatives from the 19th century onwards are: the Paris Commune (1871); the Russian soviets (1917); the trials of collectivism in Spain (1936-1937), the Israeli kibbutz (1947), the model of society in Yugoslavia (1948-1975); May 1968 in France and the Prague Spring of 1968). (Lopez et al., 1995, p.158).

In the educational field, self-management would be:

A style of community education characterized by the participation of students in the organization of school life in all its areas: design of programs, choice of techniques and work methods, selection of activities and regulation of group norms. (Lopez et al., 1995, p.158).

In the entry, it is considered as self-managed project in the field of education,
A series of experiences of school communities in Germany, between 1919 and 1933. In France, Freinet's pedagogical renewal. In Spain, the Modena School of Francisco Ferer y Guardia is part of the self-managed line. More recently, several experimental Liceos operated in Sweden under self-government and direct democracy (Lopez et al., 1995, p.158).

Self-management thus refers, on the one hand, to the absence of separation between those who deliberate and those who execute, and, on the other hand, to the constitution of an autonomous collectivity that governs itself. It is, therefore, an eminently political concept, which directly refers to political action and power relations.

Follis (1986) considers that elements of self-management can already be identified in Proudhon's anarchist thought. Currently, anarchist and libertarian thinkers such as Francisco Ferrer y Guardia and Celestin Frenet, autonomists such as Cornelius Castoriadis, Claude Lefort, management Marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg, Michael Lowy and Mauricio Tragtenberg, different theoretical fields in contemporary times present self-management conceptions. For the purposes of this study, Luxemburg's and Tragtenberg's conceptions will be considered.

Rosa Luxemburgo presents, in her work, a conception of self-management that allows its articulation with democratic practices of autonomy and participatory management at school. Although the author makes no reference to school management, her conception of self-management by factory councils, by characterizing political praxis as an educational process, allows one to understand the actions undertaken in our object of study, that is, the movement to occupy schools in São Paulo in 2015 and 2016, through this category.

Through this approach, one can advance in the definition of democratic management of the public school, understanding it as the constitution of a participatory and democratic public space, whose management could be conceived in a self-managed way.

Luxemburg criticizes both the centralized structure of the left political parties, in particular the German Socialist Party and the Leninism of the Russian Communist Party, and the tendency towards centralization of the modern state. In one of the articles in the collection, called “Centralism and Self-Government”, from 1906, Rosa Luxemburgo states that the bourgeois economy requires homogeneity and, effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of state functions and the development of a state bureaucracy would be related to the centralism of Modern States. On the other hand, she considers that the centralized organization of the vanguards of the left parties would not promote the autonomy of the working class. For Luxemburgo (2011), the political education of workers is carried out through political praxis, when they take action:
Fortunately, the time when it was a question of teaching socialism to the proletariat is gone. For Marxists of the Kautsky school, this time seems to have never ended. Educating the proletarian masses in a socialist way means: lecturing them, distributing pamphlets and brochures. No, the socialist school of the proletariat needs none of that. They are polite when they take action (“Well done!”). In the beginning it was action, here is the motto, and the action consists in the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils feeling called the only power in the whole Reich and learning to be it (Luxemburg, 2011, p. 369).

The centrality of Rosa Luxemburgo's analysis of workers' and soldiers' councils lies in the fact that these organizations emerged spontaneously, as a result of their contradictions, in the development of the political movement itself. Only political praxis and collective participation would allow the formation of revolutionary consciousness through political praxis. Since political education would take place as a practice in workers' councils, the role of the party's intellectual vanguard is emptied.

For Luxemburgo, the councils would constitute a public space for the exercise of human freedom, conceived autonomously. This process imposes the need for autonomy through political practice itself, an element of deep learning, the result of a direct experience of the self-management process. For Rosa Luxemburgo, a democracy would be impossible without autonomy, freedom of thought, and shared management.

Political action provides the experience of new forms of organization, which, according to Rosa Luxemburgo, raises the quality of political thought that can only be exercised autonomously in affirming the public character of political action. And it would be precisely the spontaneous organization that would guarantee freedom from the shackles of authoritarian institutions, since it would not be through the organization of the masses, via a political party, or through its institution by the State, that truly democratic councils could be formed constitute.

In this sense, it is not enough, therefore, to mention the need for democratic management in public schools, in the Federal Constitution and the Law of Guidelines and Bases, or the mandatory implementation of school councils, so that democracy can be established in Schools. This is because only radical freedom and autonomy, in the organization of the school unit and self-management by its members, could a full democracy be achieved.

As Antônio Cândido (1958) observes, the school is instituted and regulated by the State, but, however, it is not restricted only to its institutional aspects. Although the democratic management of public schools was guaranteed by the 1988 Federal Constitution as part of Brazil's re-democratization project, it is important to understand that it was the result of the
political and social struggles fought during the 1980s, self-management movements claimed the self-management of school equipment. However, these movements were not able to incorporate the school communities and had little influence on educational policies beyond the letter of the Constitution and the LDB.

Maurício Tragtenberg (1985) notes that school organization must be understood through the power relations that are at the heart of school organization. In dialogue with Michel Foucault, Tragtenberg considers that in the real school, that is, in the school routine, disciplinary power prevails over bodies, responsible for determining the optimization of the use of time, space, movement, gestures, and attitudes. Disciplinary power produces knowledge, a knowledge-power that is perpetuated in school practices. As for Tragtenberg, thought is directly linked to action; disciplinary power produces knowledge. In this perspective, only the separation between knowledge and power can enable the democratization of the school space.

The possibility of separating knowledge from power, at the school level, lies in the creation of horizontal organizational structures where teachers, students and staff form a real community. It is a result that can only come from many fights, sectoral victories and defeats as well. But without a doubt, school self-management by education workers – including students – is the condition for school democratization (Tragtenberg, 1985, p. 5).

According to Tragtenberg (1985), the fact that those who are involved in the teaching-learning process, that is, teachers and students, do not participate in school management limits the possibility of building knowledge in the traditional sphere, which is why it proposes a new educational praxis based on self-management.

School self-management implies a process of reducing bureaucracy in school activities, based on methods and techniques. By placing students at the center of all relationships and deprogramming the teaching machinery, self-management would provide a more meaningful learning process. (Tragtenberg, 2004, p. 75).

**Final considerations**

As formulated by different approaches, the concept of self-management necessarily implies self-government, autonomy, and democracy. However, for it to materialize, the mobilization of social agents is required, through a political organization disconnected from political parties and government interference. Such conditions have materialized only in moments of radicalization of social movements due to the struggles for the political recognition...
of the demands of specific groups. The absence of a more generalized understanding of what the public character of political action is has undermined attempts to create a minimally democratic environment in the school sphere. The occupations of São Paulo state schools in 2015-2016 were a unique moment, just as genuinely political experiences are unique. However, there remains a great lesson about the possibility of understanding political praxis as a factor for rediscussing power relations and reducing political inequalities in the educational sphere.

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