



## POPULAR EDUCATION IN BRAZILIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE PROTAGONISM OF THE UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA FRONTEIRA SUL

### *A EDUCAÇÃO POPULAR NO ENSINO SUPERIOR BRASILEIRO: O PROTAGONISMO DA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA FRONTEIRA SUL*

### *LA EDUCACIÓN POPULAR EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR BRASILEÑA: EL PROTAGONISMO DE LA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DA FRONTEIRA SUL*

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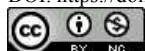
**ABSTRACT:** The university project in Brazil was structured in an excluding and highly elitist perspective. Popular education emerged in an attempt to collaborate to change the contexts of discrimination and social injustices practiced socially, seeking the coexistence of the plurality of ideas and cultures, in addition to equal opportunities in education. Popular education movements transcended adult literacy and ascended to higher education. This essay, based on documental analysis and a review of the Freirean literature, took place within the scope of the Observatory of the Popular University in Brazil of the PPGE of the Universidade Nove de Julho, focusing on the studies of the institutional matrices of the universities created in the beginning of the 21st century in the Brazil. The objective was to reflect on the project of the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul as a public, free and popular institution, considering its potential to materialize Paulo Freire's conceptions in the Brazilian higher education scenario.

**KEYWORDS:** University Education. Popular education. Paulo Freire. Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul.

**RESUMO:** *O projeto de universidade no Brasil estruturou-se numa perspectiva excludente e de bastante elitização. A educação popular surgiu na tentativa de colaborar para mudanças dos contextos de discriminação e injustiças sociais praticadas socialmente, buscando a coexistência da pluralidade de ideias e culturas, além da igualdade de oportunidades na educação. Os movimentos da educação popular transcenderam a alfabetização de adultos e ascenderam ao ensino superior. Este ensaio, fundado na análise documental e na revisão da literatura de cunho freiriano, se deu no âmbito do Observatório da Universidade Popular no Brasil do PPGE da Universidade Nove de Julho com foco nos estudos das matrizes institucionais das universidades criadas no início do século XXI no Brasil. O objetivo consistiu na reflexão do projeto da Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul enquanto instituição pública, gratuita e popular, considerando seu potencial de materialização das concepções de Paulo Freire no cenário do ensino superior brasileiro.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Ensino Superior. Educação popular. Paulo Freire. Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul.*

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**RESUMEN:** *El proyecto universitario en Brasil se estructuró en una perspectiva excluyente y de grande elitización. La educación popular surgió en un intento de colaborar para cambiar los contextos de discriminación e injusticia social practicados socialmente, buscando la convivencia de la pluralidad de ideas y culturas, además de la igualdad de oportunidades en la educación. Los movimientos de educación popular trascendieron la alfabetización de adultos y ascendieron a la educación superior. Este ensayo, basado en un análisis documental y una revisión de la literatura freireana, se realizó en el ámbito del Observatorio de la Universidad Popular en Brasil del PPGE de la Universidade Nove de Julho, centrándose en los estudios de las matrices institucionales de las universidades creadas a principios del siglo XXI en Brasil. El objetivo fue reflexionar sobre el proyecto de la Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul como institución pública, gratuita y popular, considerando su potencial para materializar las concepciones de Paulo Freire en el escenario de la educación superior brasileña.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Enseñanza Superior. Educación popular. Paulo Freire. Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul.*

## Introduction

This paper presents itself as an academic essay based on the literature review that encompasses the Freirean assumptions and in the documentary analysis on the creation and structure of the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul (UFFS). This institution of higher education (HEIs) became the reference of a counter-hegemonic university model by inserting in its Pedagogical Political Project the categories and dimensions of popular education that were initially developed in the interior of the country as an instrument to combat illiteracy, but, in its essence, also served to support the struggle for access and permanence in Brazilian higher education.

This review and its analysis took place within the scope of the OBEDUC-Uninove (research project entitled "Observatory of the Popular University in Brazil") approved by CAPES and developed in the Post-Graduate Program in Education of the Nove de Julho University (PPGE-Uninove), which had as object of study the institutional matrices and the organizational structure of recent universities created at the beginning of the 21st century in Brazil, proposing differentiation in relation to the traditional models of higher education that have historically influenced the organization of the sector in the country: Napoleonic, Humboldtian and American.

The academic literature on the historical trajectory of the construction of the Brazilian university seems unanimous in stating that, given the sociocultural heterogeneity of our country and the social imbalances presented, it was established in the perspective of an exclusionary





ideology, given its fundamental objective of forming our intellectual elites in areas of knowledge traditionally of economic and political prestige in the process of urbanization and industrialization, in thesis, the courses in Law, Medicine and Engineering.

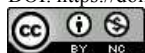
Since the installation of the first universities on Brazilian soil at the beginning of the 20th century, with remarkable delay in relation to the countries of Spanish colonization, the academic organization called the university has been more closely linked to the proposal to train professionals based on meritocracy, reproducing the hierarchy placed within society itself, and responding to the challenges of economic development. In the midst of the incipient structuring of basic education, the university has become a field of extreme exclusion and elitist predominance.

This scenario became latent and reaffirmed throughout the last century, especially since the 1990s, when we saw the State gradually decrease its participation in social welfare policies. This paved the way for neoliberalism through the privatization of services and public companies due to the interests of international markets demarcated by the process of contemporary globalization in the passage of the 20th century to the 21st century, directly reaching the Brazilian educational system with policies in favor of the proliferation of private higher education institutions (HEIs) and sensitive stagnation of public universities.

The political redemocratization begun in the 1980s, even extending the field of social rights and aiming at the protection of citizenship from the agency of the powerful, contributed to refer to hegemonic cultural and social values such as consumption behavior in the European and North American style, individualism, exacerbated competitiveness, among others, in order to collaborate for the disregard of national culture.

The dissemination of Paulo Freire's conception of popular education and its respective pedagogical practices, promoted in Brazil and disseminated internationally, played an important role in valuing cultural diversity, popular culture and the history of individuals. Based on the sense of justice, it came up with the political claim of universalization of schooling, proposing that the poorest layers, that is, the subaltern mass, had equal access and be heard equally.

This conception and practices broke boundaries and Paulo Freire's discourse of popular education, developed in the interior of Brazil to poor and illiterate adults, rose to other levels of education, basing the struggle and principles of higher education on a proposal for a new Brazilian university institutional model: the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul.





## Popular Education

The conduct of education in general and, especially in Brazil, has always been linked to the small dominant groups holding economic power, political force, control of knowledge and tools for access and dissemination of information, generating a sociocultural pattern defined as hegemonic culture and with western European historical reference. In the process of colonization, the way of thinking and the behavioral patterns of the Occidental-Centered people ignored, and even destroyed, anything outside the context of the white, European and Christian man, to which the ideological perspective of the United States was added, especially after World War II.

This process generated a dominant and elitist cultural profile, strongly disseminated from the eighteenth century with the Industrial Revolution, and school structures began to have the purpose and commitment to the development of the industrial economy, aiming at the formation of citizens according to the needs of production and consumption. This existing educational model became restricted to those belonging to the elite, even with the massification of the primary school propagated from the 19th century on.

Contrary to this logic, popular education began to advocate for not only the economically disadvantaged, but also of people with disabilities, women subjugated over time, blacks victimized by slavery and racial prejudice, indigenous people who lost their lands and cultural references, in short, the oppressed whose condition of material poverty and supposed cultural inferiority (in the hegemonic view) did not bring them the same social opportunities, economic and political issues.

In the small domain of theories and works that we think we invented between 60 and 64 and to which years later we named popular education, a relatively innovative type of pedagogical practice emerged and for some time flourished. She recreated for her identity and use a new meaning for an old name: popular culture. It involved people like Paulo Freire and his first northeastern work companions and spread among different categories of social subjects: the high school student and university student, Christian militant intellectuals, learned and popular artists, leaders of associations and political parties (BRANDÃO, 1986, p. 14, our translation).

Paulo Freire's conception of education, as well as popular educators from the 1950s onwards, strongly criticizes the teaching model implemented by the social and cultural structure generated in capitalism. The pedagogy practiced in school systems in this context led to the constitution of the traditional bourgeois school, in a hierarchical format of education in which





control and power are centered on the teacher and school authority structures, being the student mere spectator. In addition, the school system was excluding and inaccessible to the good portion of the population.

The word "popular" tends to be used to express what is related to those devoid of basic conditions (both material and intellectual) for a dignified life in favor of the exercise of their citizenship, but, at present, it has transcended other categories known as "minorities". Paulo Freire defined these segments as oppressed and postulated an education (and a school) for the people, the people and from it.

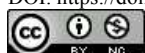
Popular education is a practical-theoretical conception and also a methodology of education aimed at articulating the different knowledge and practices, cultural dimensions and human rights, the commitment to dialogue and the protagonism of the popular classes in social transformations. Even before inserting itself in institutional spaces, it was consolidated as an instrument of popular struggles in Brazil, in the countryside and in the city.

The guide document prepared by the National Secretariat of Social Articulation (BRASIL, 2014) conceptualizes popular education as a set of theoretical formulations and pedagogical practices aimed at the critical and political perception of the social context where the individual and/or community are inserted, focusing on the transformation of this reality and the emancipation of the subjects who live it. The foundation of these practices is the search for social justice, the affirmation of human rights and the establishment of equality and inclusion.

Popular education comes in an attempt to change the historical framework of discrimination, social injustices and exclusions practiced socially and maintained by economic and cultural powers, in order to coexist the plurality of ideas and dialogue between cultures, in an environment in which people socialize horizontally (equality) and the teaching and learning process occurs critically, reflected and participatory, and not of the imposition.

What will determine the definition of popular education will not be the age of the student, but the political option and practice assumed in the educational praxis (FREIRE, 1983). In the conception of popular education, the center of this movement is the student, but it does not mean disregard for the teacher; on the contrary, it is an important part in the mediation of teaching-learning.

In the development of these practices, the subjects permeate the reality of the student, value the differences, cultures, gender and ethnic-racial relations, economic issues and political foundations involved in the pedagogical dynamics itself. The coherent educational process must equip the student in reading the world, even before reading the word (FREIRE, 1989),







understanding that education refers to an eminently political development (FREIRE, 1997).

The proposal of popular education is to generate dialogue and open itself to the demands of the community through dialogued and democratic debates. It turns its gaze to the intervention of the education system in the promotion of individual and collective critical thinking, seeking the basic rescue of the principle of the exercise of citizenship. This means that the effects of popular education are not restricted to the individual, but are presented in social structures, mainly because they will influence the management organs of education themselves.

Without losing its principles, popular education has been reinventing itself today, incorporating the achievements of new technologies, resuming old themes and incorporating others: the theme of migration, diversity, play, sustainability, interdisciplinarity, intertransculturality, the issue of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, local development, employment and income... always staying true to the reading of the world of new conjunctures. (GADOTTI, 2012, p. 22, our translation).

Given the difficult reality and Brazilian peculiarities, and why not say worldwide, it is not surprising the geographical expansion of the conception of popular education, influencing the curricula of basic education and higher education courses in order to make the student grow and develop critically, becoming a professional/worker aware of their values, rights and their social responsibilities.

Popular education, as an educational practice and as a pedagogical theory, can be found on all continents, manifested in very different and even antagonistic conceptions and practices. As a general conception of education, it went through several epistemological and organizational moments, from the search for awareness in the 1950s and 1960s, and the defense of a popular and community public school, in the 1970s and 1980s, to the citizen school in recent years, in a mosaic of interpretations, convergences and divergences (GADOTTI; STANGHERLIM, 2013, p. 20, our translation).

This theoretical and practical model of education, that is, this educational praxis of concepts and proposals in the struggles and concrete social life of communities, offers alternatives for formal education at its various levels and modalities of teaching. Popular Education has as its starting point the social reality, both of local communities and of world society. The objective is to build a social project to be developed in the locality, transforming people's lives through the contribution of the community that will seek the realization of their critical political-social conceptions, in connection with the cultural achievements and the scientific and intellectual development generated worldwide. The culture of the individual, and also of the space in which he lives, can be considered the essence of the nation and the beginning





of the structuring of education for the development of society and its citizens.

The principles of popular education have crossed the boundaries of adult literacy and basic education and reached higher education, a scenario historically aimed at reproducing the *status quo* of economic and intellectual power, depriving the mass of achieving higher knowledge and training. This was because traditional teaching models have come to exhaustion, lacking the gaze in favor of development and sociocultural diversity.

Preserving economic influences that tend to see knowledge as a commodity of personal enjoyment and competition among corporations, the Freirean foundations underlie the reconstruction movements of higher education.

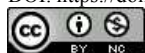
### **Brazilian Higher Education and its neoliberal connection**

The contexts of industrial-urban development in the passage from the 19th to the 20th century strongly marked the constitution and debate on the creation (or not) of university institutions in the country. The university model became part of the institutional scenario of Brazilian education, in a composition process that initially addressed the profile of universities of European standard (the classic Humboldtian and Napoleonic models), to which the American was added from the 1960s with the university reform of the military.

Thus, the institutional building of higher education was built in the country that, in the view of Del Vechio and Santos (2016), produced a configuration of academic organizations in such a way that public universities began to have the exclusivity of excellence in teaching and innovation in research and private initiative (various types) turned to teaching, with its various courses, in order to serve the market and the masses.

This situation involving private initiative in higher education resulted from a broad expansion process related to the global wave begun in the 1960s, a process that was accompanied by institutional diversification and privatization, with a gradually greater presence until they became a majority in the system. The result was the contemporary chain of mercantilization and financialization. This is because HEIs have been organized as market companies and in an increasingly strong impact of international regulation.

Alongside the economic and cultural homogenization that was established by the force of these global processes, Brazilian society took new political and social directions towards the conquest and guarantee of rights, which included the debate on access, universality and gratuity of public education and, specifically, higher education.





This level of education, more sensitive to the influences of globalization, began to be organized along the lines of business management and its managers to act according to standards of efficiency and effectiveness, little related to the heterogeneity of the contexts of pedagogical action and management of national educational policies. This model tends to disregard the Brazilian structural and geographical differences, the cultural diversity of our population and the social and economic inequalities present in our country. Even less observe the specificities of our education systems, both basic and higher.

Faced with the dream of young Brazilians attending a university that has increased demand, added to new designs of government policies and the strong influence of multilateral financial institutions (WTO, World Bank and OECD especially), it has made the university a fertile market space. Governments have retreated in their direct promotion policies allowing the conjuncture we currently have: insufficient public universities, which are aimed at the middle and upper classes from good private primary schools; and private higher education institutions aimed at the less favored classes, condemned to them for having the potential for decreased "intellectual competition" because they attended public schools, whose teaching processes are questioned by large-scale assessment instruments such as PISA and Prova Brasil.

In the midst of conflicts of interest in the markets that support the needs of the less favored, we observed a process of growth of social movements and higher education researchers, opposing this hegemonic management model of higher education and the persistent situation of exclusion of expressive contingents of the Brazilian population.

In an attempt to change, under the new Brazilian Constitution of 1988 (BRASIL, 1988), social movements began the constant demand for more decisive actions of the State in favor of the inclusion of segments of the population (graduates of the public elementary school, indigenous minorities, Afrodescendants, rural settlers, family farmers, affected by dams, etc.) and territories of the country hitherto disadvantaged in relation to the public higher level (interior of the states, impoverished and poorly served regions of public equipment). Added to this was the struggle for the creation of public universities in places that, until now, were dependent on private initiative and institutions that made it difficult for the poorest to enter.

As not everyone can afford and many cannot access other levels of training, which put them on the margins of the productive chain, driving them away from the possibility of employment and contributing to the inertia of poverty, so knowledge, common heritage of humanity and emancipation factor, returns to become an element of exclusion and competition, imprisoned to a "scientific" view of modernity (SANTOS; TAVARES, 2016).







In the midst of this reality, it is almost impossible for culture, values, history and socioeconomic peculiarities not to be shaken, that is, the disprestige of identity and the omission of tools to the valorization of the population's capacity for reflection and critical positioning is surrounded by the interests of intense consumption imposed by international logic.

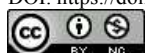
Seeking to overcome the context of hegemony of the conventional models of the Brazilian higher education system, between 2002-2014, Brazil promoted significant changes in this field, founding institutions with new configurations and philosophy, focusing on the diversification of existing traditional models: Napoleonic, Humboldtian and American (SANTOS; TAVARES, 2016; SEABRA SANTOS; ALMEIDA FILHO, 2012; ROMÃO; LOSS, 2013; BENINCA; SANTOS, 2013), proposing institutional innovations that sought to update the higher education system under the understanding that:

In countries where discrimination in access to the university is based, in large part, on blockages at the level of primary and secondary education, the progressive reform of the university, as opposed to the proposal proposed by the World Bank, should give incentives to the university to promote active partnerships, in the pedagogical and scientific field, with public schools (SANTOS; ALMEIDA FILHO, 2008, p. 49, our translation).

It is noteworthy that with the policy of university expansion in the twentieth century, in addition to the expansion of enrollment numbers and institutions, already in the 21st century other issues were considered, such as the internalization of higher education in places historically not contemplated by such public establishments and dominated by the private initiative. There was also a change in the profile of admission, that is, young people from the poorest classes and students of public basic education had the opportunity to enter the public university, using a series of expedients of affirmative policies such as quotas, thus diversifying their audience that was traditionally constituted of the middle and upper classes.

Another point is the ongoing appreciation of university multiculturalism. These new universities indicate characteristics of strong commitment to the inclusion of previously excluded social segments: graduates of public schools, quilombola and indigenous population and groups of urban and rural social movements. Also noteworthy is the new epistemological perspective that incorporates new knowledge beyond the strictly scientific ones (SANTOS; TAVARES, 2016).

## **The influence of popular education on Higher Education**





The mercantile treatment given to the production of knowledge and higher education allowed both to be more accessible to the children of wealth and inaccessible to the children of poverty. The excluded mentioned here are considered individuals devoid of the ability to think and act freely, to make coherent choices appropriate to their needs and demands. The state imposition coordinated through the market game of large corporations, with precedence of industrial capitalism, began to dictate the rules by market bias and social standards considered civilized. Throughout history, there has been a growing tendency to transform the student into a preferred customer and a potential disciplined and faithful consumer (TAVARES, 2013).

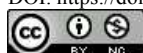
Popular education emphasizes the need for educational processes that have conditions and resources that allow citizens in training to think and critically analyze the scenario of their surroundings. Therefore, the teaching structure must contemplate aspects leading to the emancipation of the individual, and this requires liberating educational movements.

When we revisit the history of the university, since its origin in the West in Bologna/1088, the most prominent fact is its elitist character, because, despite the great contribution to humanity, the corporate spirit prevailed and its structure/functioning began to meet its own purposes, developing many vices (elitism, credentials, fragmentation of knowledge, scientificism and myopia in relation to knowledge outside its walls), not to mention that it became a prerogative of the elites and a minority of avant-garde (ROMÃO; LOSS, 2013).

Regardless of the model, these centers of formation and production of science are marked by a philosophy of contempt for the working majorities and minority groups at a social disadvantage, given the valorization of white Western culture, the subordination to the interests of economic power and its influence on public policies that generated, with honorable exceptions, a centralized university organization, hierarchical and meritocratic.

From the 1970s, education as a whole, but the superior in particular, became an ambitious market project of neoliberalism and the university did little to combat or present other options that kept education shielded from this ideological option (ROMÃO; LOSS, 2013). This situation led to the mobilization of various groups contrary to hegemonic logic, which led the country to live with a movement of valorization of cultures, customs and histories of communities, societies and peoples seconded and left aside for centuries as if they did not exist and had nothing contributed to humanity.

It is increasingly evident that the fact that the model based on the Western capitalist pattern does not fully meet the demands of social interaction, since this dynamic is vilified by a unique mode of thought, eliminating other philosophical and cultural possibilities, other





knowledge and rationalities (TAVARES, 2013). This structure produces the impediment to the presence of communities and civil society as participants in the regulation of systems of knowledge production and promotion of information, elements necessary for contemporary social and cultural life.

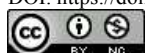
In a society of valorization of information and knowledge, drawing limits preventing the democratic dissemination and production of knowledge means the continuity of the dialectic epistemological model that instituted and favored discipline, departmentalization, competition between and within the fields of knowledge and, in terms of Tavares (2013), a non-dialectical circular logic.

The Brazilian university built a negative history of its values, became heir to the European corporate university, exacerbating the vices that endorsed the logic of elitization, and became a vassal of the American technical university, because it sported "competitiveness" and naturalized the hierarchy in its processes and the commodification of its objectives (ROMÃO; LOSS, 2013).

It is necessary to reflect on the role of an institution that postulates the incorporation of other models of rationality and epistemologies, aiming at the result of bringing the existing cultural diversity in the world to the academic field, it is worth saying, to the epistemological field, as it seeks the insertion of new population layers until then deprived of access to higher education, as well as new territories still without the presence of public institutions of higher education (SANTOS; TAVARES, 2016); therefore, the popular university places itself as the protagonist.

The popular university needs to be understood as an alternative to the neoliberal university, seeking to maintain coherence and balance in its conceptions of popular education within the pedagogical perspectives of libertarian matrix, fighting every form of mercantilist, privatization, alienation and dehumanization, because "a public university, free and popular does not constitute a movement "for", but "with" the popular classes" (GADOTTI; STANGHERLIM, 2013, p. 33, our translation).

In Brazil, popular education started from the presuppositions and pedagogical experiments of Paulo Freire in the 1960s and, more concurrently, influenced the idea of Popular University fostered in the first decade of the 21st century, in an attempt to respond to criticisms of both traditional higher education (classical universities of Napoleonic and Humboldtian model) and the neoliberal model (American *universities and world class universities*), constituting an attempt to overcome corporatism and mercantilism (ROMÃO; LOSS, 2013).





The popular university in Brazil assumes a fundamental role in the academic environment of restoring the values and foundations of citizenship that have been vilified for decades under the justification of progress and economic growth. Society has simply turned a blind eye to oppressed and disadvantaged groups and differences, through the bombardment of European and American culture spread with fury in the media and by the academic institutions themselves.

"It is not possible for the so-called 'civilized' world to continue to exclude the cultural diversity that exists in the world and to be governed by a monocultural, Occidental-centric and ethnocentric model of development" (TAVARES, 2013, p. 56, our translation). The popular university, based on democratic values and the search for social de-alienation, emerges as a fundamental dialectical space in the Brazilian educational structure.

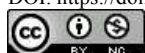
### **The Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul**

UFFS was the product of the power of mobilization and public convincing of social movements and political and community leaders in southern Brazil. Its story began to be forged in the struggles of popular social movements in the region which is the birthplace of some of the most important popular country movements in the country. In these groups, through the union of forces, we highlight the participation of Via Campesina and the Federation of Family Agriculture Workers of the Southern Region (Fetraf-Sul), which took the leadership of the Pro-University Movement (UFFS, 2010).

Founded by Federal Law No. 12,029, of September 15, 2009, (BRASIL, 2009) bears attributes in its Political Pedagogical Project regarding a public institution, free and popular. Currently, UFFS has already formed its first classes and has consistently applied the selection criteria for admission, considering the National High School Exam (ENEM), prioritizing students from public schools and the needs of the regions in which *their campuses* are installed.

UFFS, since its first selection process, favored the entry of students from the public school. Through the public-school factor, an index of 10%, 20% or 30% applied to the national high school exam (ENEM) grade, contemplated each year of high school in this school system (UFFS, 2015, p. 02, our translation).

With the new legislation, UFFS adopts the reservation of vacancies to students from public schools, observing the percentage of enrollment sprees in the South Region, which contributed to the increase in the number of black, brown and indigenous students, as well as foreigners, as is the case of Haitians.





The curricular matrix is organized in three axes, in order to train the professional without leaving democratic values and citizenship aside: I. Common Domain, focusing on training for Multicultural Active Citizenship; II. Related Domain, a set of disciplines that proposes interfaces between several courses of the same large area of knowledge and; III. Specific Domain, which refers to the determining contents of each profession (UFFS, 2012).

The management of UFFS aims to consistently meet the integration of its main responsibilities (teaching, research, extension). Its management process brings together several bodies with the participation of the entire academic community and the external community. The UFFS Statute was approved by Resolution No. 31/2015 providing in article 2 the didactic-scientific, administrative, financial management and equity autonomy, and this should happen even on its campuses, since the strong characteristic of UFFS is exactly to be a multicampus institution.

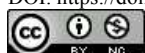
§1 - UFFS adopts a decentralized and democratic administration regime on its university campuses, ensuring isonomy regarding representativeness, planning, budgeting, financing and administration.

§2 - The decentralized and democratic administration is done through a delegation of competence conferred by the rector (UFFS, 2015, art. 22, our translation).

Finally, UFFS proposes the evaluation system away from traditional models, as these hinder the progress of its students in the training process: first, because they will have difficulties to follow the university dynamics given the limitations presented in the previous training; second, because these models do not guarantee learning. It is known that the evaluations measure certain information at a given time and the best training comes from a problematized context from varied cultural stimuli. Therefore, the Internal Rules of the university presents the evaluation of the teaching and learning process as diagnostic, continuous, systematic and formative. The income is verified by the use of curricular components and also by attendance.

The presentation of these characteristics places the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul as the initial milestone of the Freirean categories in the construction of differentiated higher education and closer to the Brazilian social reality from democratic management, dialogued pedagogical practices and humanized treatment in favor of the critical formation of the autonomous subject, the valorization of freedom and advocating for social responsibility.

## Final considerations







The university that proposes to be popular assumes the commitment, not to effect and root its ideas as another form of cultural or national fundamentalism, but to be a space of constant revisit of its precepts and reorganization of its structures in order to meet society in its cultural diversity and richness, favoring the political and social changes that bring together everyone. This is the dynamic path of valuing cultural diversity and understanding the continuous transformation of the various cultures over time.

We understand that it is an ambitious project of counter hegemony that seeks to indicate to society the existence of other paths in terms of public policies for the area of higher education. When a popular university is proposed, a pact is established with the valorization of the oppressed, with the one that, throughout history, has not been heard or included. It is about having the ability to see culture violently hidden by colonizing signs and possess the complex mission of challenging our minds, values and beliefs by exposing themselves to the benefit of the other, when everyone is focused on themselves.

We affirm that UFFS is a pioneer in incorporating the Freirean values of popular education transferred from the dirt floor of the northeastern interior in favor of the illiterate in the direction of the elitist scenario of higher education, transforming it into a space of dialogue, participation, autonomy, access and struggle.

It's a popular university in construction. This is the challenge of transcending the perspective of specificity due to humanistic formation, valorization of citizenship, human rights and the capacity for critical analysis of Brazilian socioeconomic and cultural heterogeneity. What is affirmed is the confrontation with the traditional and conservative model by which the other institutions were formed.

The example of the Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul (UFFS), in valuing minorities in access and permanence in higher education, fits into the philosophy postulated by Paulo Freire. It is necessary to continuously monitor and constant research on its results in order to improve its structures and, who knows, expand this model to other spaces of Brazilian education.

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