




## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT AND POLITICAL-PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT IN BRAZILIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

Democratic management is one of the fundamental pillars of public education in Brazil, and the political-pedagogical project (PPP) is the document responsible for defining the school's identity. This study aims to demonstrate the relevance of democratic management for the elaboration and implementation of the PPP in Brazilian public schools, highlighting its influence on daily school practice. To this end, the work performs a bibliographic review on the relationship between democratic management and the construction and application of the PPP, emphasizing the importance of a space of school autonomy. The analyses show that democratic management and the PPP complement each other, contributing to the effectiveness of a more participatory and inclusive school management.

**Keywords:** Democratic Management. Public Education. School. Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP). Autonomy.

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## INTRODUCTION

Democratic management has been a central principle in the organization of Brazilian public schools, reflecting the search for a more participatory and inclusive education. In this context, the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) emerges as a strategic instrument, as it not only delimits the school's identity but also expresses the pedagogical guidelines and values that guide its educational practice. Thus, the present research proposes to analyze the relationship between democratic management and the construction of the PPP in Brazilian public schools, investigating how these two elements interact and contribute to quality education and to the effectiveness of participatory school management.

The problem that guides this work lies in the following question: how does democratic management influence the elaboration and implementation of the PPP in public schools, promoting an environment of collective participation and autonomy? We start from the hypothesis that, without the effective participation of all segments of the school community — including managers, teachers, students, parents and members of the external community — the PPP runs the risk of becoming a merely formal document, dissociated from the pedagogical practice and the reality of the school.

The general objective of this research is, therefore, to demonstrate the importance of democratic management for the elaboration and application of the PPP in Brazilian public schools. More specifically, we seek to explore how participatory management can strengthen the construction of the PPP and, at the same time, how this document can serve as a tool to promote autonomy and collaboration in the school. The methodological approach adopted is qualitative, based on a comprehensive literature review of the main theoretical discussions that deal with democratic management and PPP in the educational context.

The relevance of this research is justified by the need to deepen the understanding of the role of democratic management in the Brazilian school context. The social and educational changes of the last decades have imposed new demands on the school, which can no longer be seen only as a space for the transmission of content.

Today, the school must assume a broader role in the integral formation of students, responding to demands that go beyond the formal curriculum, such as economic, technological and identity issues. In this sense, democratic school management is necessary to ensure that the school is prepared to face these challenges and to promote the formation of conscious and active citizens.

In addition, Brazilian public schools often face difficulties in implementing truly participatory management. Although the school manager, traditionally seen as a centralizing

figure, has gradually been urged to adopt a more horizontal and dialogued posture, the practice of democratic management still encounters resistance and limitations in the daily reality of schools. The construction and application of the PPP, in turn, depend directly on the creation of spaces for dialogue and the active participation of all those involved in the educational process. A PPP that does not reflect the needs, values and expectations of the school community will hardly fulfill its transformative role.

Therefore, by investigating the relationship between democratic management and the PPP, this research aims to contribute to discussions on how public schools can organize themselves in a more inclusive and participatory way. Democratic management and the PPP, when articulated, can create a more autonomous school environment committed to citizenship education, favoring the development of quality education. The analysis of the relationships between these two elements will allow us to identify the main challenges and possibilities for the construction of a school management that not only respects, but also values the collective participation and autonomy of the subjects involved.

Thus, the main contribution of this research lies in the promotion of a critical reflection on the processes of construction and application of the PPP in Brazilian public schools, emphasizing the importance of democratic management for the realization of this document. By reinforcing the need for management practices that include all actors in the school community, we hope to foster debates that can support future public policies and more inclusive and participatory educational practices.

## **THE ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

We begin this first topic with the following question: what is democratic management? Democratic management in schools consists of creating a space in which all members of the school community – managers, teachers, students, parents and other actors – can participate actively and equally in decisions, favoring critical development and overcoming practices of exclusion, inequality and domination.

In this context, democratic management is seen as an essential condition for the construction of a Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) that reflects the real needs and expectations of the school community.

According to Paro (2002), there is still no true democratic management in Brazilian schools, which are often inserted in a state structure that, because it is based on a capitalist model, ends up reproducing a hierarchical and excluding system.

Unfortunately, this school reproduces dominant ideologies and denies dominated values and, in a certain sense, legitimizes social injustice, to the extent that it

replaces people in the places reserved by the relationships that take place within the economic structure. (Paro, 2012, p. 10).

For the aforementioned author, only with the effective participation of all subjects involved in the educational process will it be possible to advance in the quality of public education, overcoming the economic, political and social deficiencies that affect schools. Thus, the union between the various segments of the school community is essential for the transformation of the educational reality.

In his most recent studies, Paro (2017) expands this analysis by stating that, in order to understand democratic management, it is first necessary to understand the social role of the school. The school is often seen as an institution with the potential to transform society, but without a critical evaluation of whether it really fulfills this function.

According to Paro, there is a substantial difference between developing a critical consciousness in students and only presenting ideologies that reinforce the subaltern condition of certain social groups. The school, therefore, often ends up legitimizing social injustices, by reproducing the power relations and inequalities present in the economic structure.

Paro's (2017) proposal to overcome these limitations involves the perception of the school as a transformative space, capable of promoting social changes. For this to happen, the school needs to gain autonomy, especially in relation to its management and the external factors that control it, such as the State.

One of the main obstacles to the realization of this autonomy, according to the author, is the figure of the school principal, who often exercises a centralizing authority and reinforces a hierarchical structure. In practice, this centralization prevents the school from exercising a truly democratic and participatory management, as it limits the involvement of the other actors in the school community.

This lack of autonomy on the part of the school principal reflects the lack of autonomy of the school as a whole. When the school does not have autonomy, it becomes powerless to implement transformative pedagogical practices, which ends up depriving workers and their families of an education capable of promoting critical awareness and social emancipation. Granting autonomy to the school means, therefore, conferring power and material conditions so that it can fulfill its educational function in a way that is aligned with the interests of the popular classes (Paro, 2002).

In this sense, Paro (2017) argues that overcoming the challenges faced by public schools will only be possible with the implementation of democratic management, in which the principal shares his or her responsibilities with other members of the school community,

including teachers, students, parents, and employees. Collective participation and the search for common goals – such as improving the quality of education and demanding better conditions from the State – are fundamental for the school to fulfill its transformative role.

Boschetti et al. (2016) also address democratic school management, emphasizing the importance of administrative and pedagogical decentralization. According to the authors, when democratic management is properly implemented, it promotes the autonomy of the school, transforming it into a space for active participation and collective construction. This is because participatory management involves all actors in the school community in the teaching-learning process, strengthening interpersonal relationships and promoting self-evaluation and institutional performance.

Decentralization, according to Boschetti et al. (2016), is essential to address the structural problems that affect public education in Brazil, such as school dropout, repetition and dropout. These problems are often related to the lack of autonomy of the school, which is trapped in a bureaucratic and inefficient structure. The solution, according to the authors, lies in the expansion of democratic management, which allows the school to take a more active role in solving these problems and in the search for improvements.

Another central aspect in the analysis of Boschetti et al. (2016) is the social function of the school. The authors argue that the school should be a space for social transformation, which will only be possible if there is a democratic management that is connected with the reality of the students and the community in which the school is inserted. This means that school management must be able to integrate the school with the community, promoting the active participation of all those involved in the educational process.

## **CHALLENGES AND ADVANCES OF DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT**

Vieira and Vidal (2015) point out that democratic management in Brazilian schools has been provided for since the Federal Constitution of 1988, which established this model as a guiding principle of public education. Subsequently, the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) reinforced the importance of democratic management, establishing the participation of education professionals in the preparation of the PPP and the inclusion of other segments of the school community.

However, the authors point out that, despite legislative advances, there are still many challenges for the implementation of truly democratic management. One of the main problems identified by Vieira and Vidal (2015) is the way school principals are selected,

which, in many cases, occurs by political appointment, which contradicts the principles of transparency and democratic participation.

Another important challenge is the tension between the administrative and pedagogical demands of school management. In many cases, administrative concerns end up overlapping with pedagogical ones, which compromises the quality of teaching. In order for school management to fulfill its pedagogical role and promote quality education, it is essential that democratic management is strengthened, with the active participation of the entire school community.

#### **4 THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE POLITICAL-PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT**

The Political-Pedagogical Project is a central instrument for democratic management, as it expresses the school's identity and guides its pedagogical practices. According to Veiga (1991), the PPP must be built collectively, with the participation of all segments of the school community, and must be based on principles such as autonomy, equality and the appreciation of education professionals.

The elaboration of the PPP is a dynamic process that involves the diagnosis of the school reality, the definition of objectives and goals and the implementation of practices that promote the improvement of the quality of teaching. For the PPP to be effective, it must be constantly reviewed and adapted to the needs of the school and the community.

Vieira and Vidal (2015) discuss whether school management prioritizes administrative issues or pedagogical practices more, emphasizing the impact of the principal's involvement in student learning. The survey points out that school management tends to place administrative concerns above pedagogical ones.

School management should be a collective practice, which involves engagement and professional development, as stated by Sacristán (1999):

School Management constitutes a dimension of the institution whose practice highlights the engagement of regulatory intentions and the exercise of control by the educational administration, the needs felt by teachers to face their own professional development in the most immediate and immediate scope of their performance and the legitimate demands of the citizen to have their own interlocutor, that gives them reason and guarantee of quality in the collective provision of this educational service (Sacristán, 1999, p. 15)

He points out that management involves both control by the educational administration and the needs of teachers to develop professionally and society's demands for quality education.

Sena (2014) adds that quality management is not restricted to the figure of the director, but is built with a qualified and cohesive management team. This team should be made up of people with the same educational purpose, contributing their knowledge and skills to the success of the school.

The democratic management of public education involves the active participation of the school and local community in meetings and councils, promoting a space for mutual collaboration. Another important aspect is the participation of school professionals in the elaboration of the political-pedagogical project (PPP), as provided for in the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB). The education systems will ensure the public School Units of Basic Education that integrate them progressive degrees of pedagogical, administrative and financial management autonomy, observing the general norms of public financial law (BRASIL, 1996).

The LDB ensures pedagogical, administrative and financial autonomy for schools, which enables the construction of their identity and a PPP appropriate to their specific needs.

The PPP is a document that articulates the political and pedagogical action of the school, through the democratic participation of all those involved, as described by Veiga (1991). The principles that should guide the PPP include democratic management, quality, autonomy, equality and appreciation of teaching.

The partnership between family and school is fundamental and must be built in a planned way, promoting approximation between both instances. Marques and Nunes (2012) argue that this partnership contributes to the creation of a more reflective and collaborative educational environment.

The PPP's main objective is the democratization of education, promoting the participation of all in the planning process and seeking improvements in the quality of teaching and administrative-pedagogical practices. In addition, it values the realization of cultural activities and the citizenship education of students, reinforcing the principles of autonomy, freedom and democratic participation.

Lima (2010) observes that the PPP should integrate the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) with aspects of diversity, addressing topics such as culture, environment, health and technology, within the areas of knowledge. Interdisciplinarity and curricular flexibility are essential elements of the PPP, which must reflect local and regional realities.

Finally, the PPP should be seen as a tool for continuous improvement, helping to reduce the fragmentation of pedagogical activities and decentralize administrative management. Gadotti (1994) states that projecting the future of the school requires a conscious analysis of the present, integrating the diagnosis of the school reality with the projection of its values, goals and identity.



The construction and application of the PPP require a historical awareness of those involved, who must know the past of the school and its community, evaluate its current situation, and collectively plan the objectives and goals to be achieved. The PPP must be present in the daily school life, guiding the pedagogical practice and guiding the school towards the achievement of its objectives.

## CONCLUSION

Democratic management is fundamental for the construction and implementation of the Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) in school institutions. The PPP, as a document that defines the identity of the school, can only fully fulfill its function if there is the active and collaborative participation of all segments of the school community.

Democracy in school management is not just a formal principle, but a practice that must be present in all decision-making processes, from the conception to the implementation of the PPP. This participation is essential to ensure that the PPP is not just a static document, but a living tool that reflects the needs, aspirations, and realities of the school community.

The implementation of the PPP should be a collective effort, with managers, teachers, students and parents working together to transform the theoretical guidelines into practical actions that shape the school daily life. For the PPP to have a real impact on the education of students and on the quality of teaching, it must be understood and applied by all, in a continuous exercise of reflection and reevaluation. Democratic management allows everyone involved to feel an integral part of the process, contributing to a more inclusive, participatory and efficient school environment.

In addition, the PPP should serve as a strategic guide that guides pedagogical and administrative practice, strengthening the school's autonomy and enabling the construction of its particular identity. When used effectively, it not only organizes the school's actions, but also fosters a culture of participation and co-responsibility, preparing students to act as critical and active citizens in society.

Therefore, democratic management and the PPP are intrinsically linked. The first ensures that the voices of the school community are heard and respected, while the second consolidates this participation in a document that guides educational and administrative actions. Only through the synergy between democratic management and the elaboration and application of the PPP, it is possible to promote quality education, which is inclusive, emancipatory and attentive to the real needs of the school and the community where it is inserted.



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