COUNTRYSIDE EDUCATION AND THE PARADIGM OF DECOLONIAL EXTENSION IN THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

EDUCAÇÃO DO CAMPO E O PARADIGMA DA EXTENSÃO DESCOLONIAL NA UNIVERSIDADE PÚBLICA

LA EDUCACIÓN DE CAMPO Y EL PARADIGMA DE LA EXTENSIÓN DECOLONIAL EN LA UNIVERSIDAD PÚBLICA

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ABSTRACT: Brazilian public education faces impasses in the university's democratization policy with the dismantling of educational policy by the ultraconservative government. This policy has an impact on increasing the educational exclusion of the people of the countryside. In this context, Countryside Education has been producing a concept of popular extension that reaffirms the value of peasants' knowledge in the production of a liberating education. The popular extension articulates the dialogue between scientific and popular knowledge in the strengthening of the pedagogy of alternation and in the defense of the Countryside Education. Questioned by the problematic: how does popular extension, in the context of Countryside Education, contribute to the decolonization of university extension? The qualitative approach and the research-action participant base the methodological bases of the research, with relation to the analysis of the data we use the dialectic method. The popular extension, Freire (2015), in the popular university project mobilizes the subjects of the countryside in the fight for the right to education and democratization of the university, Santos (2008), in articulation between scientific and popular knowledge in the defense of Countryside Education. The qualitative approach, participatory action research, Borda (1981), and dialectical analysis qualify the university's decolonization methodology in the struggle for the right for an Countryside Education. The results point to the need to decolonize the concept of academic extension by popular extension that seeks to value the inter-knowledge between scientific and popular knowledge based on participatory methodologies. The concept of decolonial extension as a practice of active participation by extension subjects as a dimension of participatory pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: Popular university. Countryside education. Education policy. University. Decolonial extension.

RESUMO: A educação pública brasileira enfrenta impasses na política de democratização da universidade com o desmonte da política educacional pelo governo ultraconservador. Essa política impacta no aumento da exclusão educacional dos povos do campo. Diante desse contexto, a educação do campo vem produzindo uma concepção de extensão popular que reafirma a valorização dos saberes dos camponeses na produção de uma educação libertadora. A extensão popular articula o diálogo entre conhecimento científico e popular no fortalecimento da pedagogia da alternância e na defesa da Educação do Campo. Interpelados

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pela problemática: como a extensão popular, no contexto da educação do campo, contribui com a descolonização da extensão universitária? A abordagem qualitativa e a investigaçãoação participante fundamentam as bases metodológicas da pesquisa, com relação a análise dos dados utilizamos o método dialético. Os aportes teóricos que fundamentam a investigação: Freire (2006); Santos, (2010); Borda, (1981); Medeiros, (2010). Os resultados apontam para necessidade de descolonização da concepção de extensão acadêmica pelos princípios da extensão popular que se realiza pelo interconhecimento entre saberes científicos e saberes populares; articula novas bases teórico-metodológicas no trabalho educativo por meio de metodologias participativas. A extensão popular constitui os princípios para construção do conceito de extensão descolonial, que se efetiva pela intervenção ativa dos sujeitos do campo a partir de uma pedagogia participante que promove a descolonização do conhecimento e da universidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Universidade popular. Educação do campo. Política de educação. Universidade. Extensão descolonial.

RESUMEN: La educación pública brasileña enfrenta un impasse en la política de democratización de la universidad con el desmantelamiento de la política educativa por parte del gobierno ultraconservador. Esta política tiene un impacto en incrementar la exclusión educativa de la gente del campo. En este contexto, la educación rural viene produciendo un concepto de extensión popular que reafirma la valorización del conocimiento de los campesinos en la producción de una educación liberadora. La extensión popular articula el diálogo entre conocimiento científico y conocimiento popular en el fortalecimiento de la pedagogía de la alternancia y en la defensa de la Educación Rural. Desafiado por el problema: ¿cómo contribuye la extensión popular, en el contexto de la educación rural, a la descolonización de la extensión universitaria? El enfoque cualitativo y la investigación acción participativa son la base de las bases metodológicas de la investigación, con respecto al análisis de datos utilizamos el método dialéctico. La extensión popular, Freire (2015), en el proyecto de universidad popular moviliza a los sujetos del campo en la lucha por el derecho a la educación y la democratización de la universidad, Santos (2008), en articulación entre conocimiento científico y popular en la defensa de la Educación Rural. El enfoque cualitativo, la investigación-acción participativa, Borda (1981) y el análisis dialéctico, califican la metodología de descolonización de la universidad en la lucha por el derecho a la educación rural. Los resultados apuntan a la necesidad de descolonizar el concepto de extensión académica por extensión popular que busca valorar la interconocimiento entre el conocimiento científico y el conocimiento popular a partir de metodologías participativas. El concepto de extensión descolonial como práctica de participación activa de los sujetos de extensión como dimensión de la pedagogía participativa.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Universidad Popular. Educación rural. Política educativa. Universidad. Extensión decolonial.

The popular in the struggle for the right to Countryside Education at the university

Countryside Education has the original marks of an education project that breaks with the hegemonic science paradigm at the university. It is an epistemological turn led by social movements in the countryside through an educational policy of valuing the subjects, contexts and knowledge of peasants in the struggle for Agrarian Reform in Brazil. Social movements in the countryside recognize that in the fight against the latifundio, a counter-hegemonic education project to extractive capital is needed that hegemonizes the development model in the countryside.

Therefore, it is a popular epistemological rupture, because: "It becomes possible, thus, a double operation of 'rescue' of epistemology. On the one hand, it is no longer confined to reflection on scientific knowledge [...]. Epistemology starts to explicitly cover all knowledge" (NUNES, 2010, p. 263, our translation). This rupture in the education paradigm democratized the university in guaranteeing the right to higher education by subjects in the countryside. It is in this context that the courses of teaching degrees in Countryside Education at the university originate.

However, this constitutional right faces an impasse in the face of the main measures of the ultraconservative government in Brazil, which publicly opposes the affirmative policies of democratizing the university and valuing higher public education. And it is accelerating with the precariousness of education in its structural conditions and with budget cuts in investments, a context that prevents the advance in access to the university by the popular classes and, in an exclusive way, of the subjects of the countryside.

This reality challenges farmers to reinvent their educational practice in the process of mobilizing popular subjects in the countryside to defend the newly created rural education policy. Furthermore, it requires an epistemological turn in action strategies in the fight for the right to education based on mobilization processes that are articulated through the dialogue between community and university, between scientific and popular knowledge, valuing a perspective of participatory research-action that reinvents pedagogy of alternation and mobilizing dialogue between university time and community time as marks of Countryside Education.

Despite this potential, what impasses and challenges does Countryside Education face, in the context of the university, regarding UFPI's institutional conditions for carrying out its educational actions in the alternation methodology? What is the place of popular extension in the mobilization of rural subjects to defend rural education? In view of this issue, the Popular University Project reaffirms an extension practice that is carried out through teaching and research based on the articulation between academic knowledge and popular knowledge, based on human formation that articulates academic context, social movements and the subjects of the countryside. In this study, we discussed the strategic place of extension in Countryside Education as a possibility of mobilizing subjects of the countryside for the right to higher education, based on the actions of projects that emphasize the role of subjects of the countryside in the defense of educational policies of access and permanence at the university, which entails the right to land and water in the countryside.

Policy impasses in Countryside Education in the democratization of the university

The extension as a place of social mobilization and collective construction of knowledge to defend a contextualized education and rooted in the knowledge of the field as a possibility of building new ways of producing knowledge and decolonial science. The Popular University, in the context of Countryside Education, is a necessary bet in the process of social mobilization of subjects of the countryside, in strengthening the relationship between university and community in time of ultra-conservative measures and budget cuts to higher education institutions.

We can start by stating that the Teaching Degree in Countryside Education at the public university is an extension to the contrary² (SANTOS, 2010), since it originates from the occupation of the university by the subjects of the countryside, since its proposal is born in social movements of the countryside, and the first experience at the university was Pronera. The marks of the relationship between community and university are inserted in the methodological matrix of Pedagogy of Alternation, which is articulated by the relationship between university time and community time, as stated by Medeiros (2010, p. 10, our translation):

The formative proposal takes as a reference the unity between theory and practice; ensuring the dialogue of knowledge, not only through interdisciplinarity, but also through the activation of non-disciplinary knowledge existing in the communities and processes of struggles of social movements, especially in the countryside.

This methodological perspective directly confronts the traditional university model, as it implies an institutional reorganization to meet the administrative demands for the development of Countryside Education. Unlike other courses, Countryside Education, in the context of the university, is organized by direct action with the current social issues of communities and with

² Extension on the contrary, from outside of the university to the university. It consists of promoting dialogues between scientific or humanistic knowledge, which the university produces, and lay, popular, traditional, urban, peasant knowledge, coming from non-Western cultures. (SANTOS, 2010, p. 176, our translation).

life in the countryside such as education, water resources, agrarian issues, among others. In other words, there is a time of experience and educational activities in the community.

Despite the liberating and transforming potential of Countryside Education as an educational policy, whose methodology values the relationship between university and community, its development in academic life has been an impasse in relation to the traditional logic of the university. This is because its academic organization is based on a political and pedagogical project that takes place through the alternation between university time and community time, and sometimes the form of institutional organization of the university precludes the structural conditions for the proper performance of the educational activities culminating in the alternation.

This impasse reveals, on the one hand, that educational policy at the university requires an institutional reorganization of its administrative routines, on the other hand, for subjects in the field it is a proposal for a break in the educational paradigm in higher education. Maintaining the relationship with the community and the university, the dialogue between scientific knowledge and popular knowledge is undoubtedly a task of alternation pedagogy that extends to the dimension of university extension.

That said, we can also affirm the strategic place of the Popular University, as an extension project that strengthens the fight for Countryside Education, the inter-knowledge between community and university. It develops formative processes aiming at the democratization of knowledge, science and educational and pedagogical practices within the university, based on the epistemological foundations of the participating and non-extractive methodologies and the paradigms of decolonial science.

The decolonial extension promotes inter-knowledge between scientific knowledge and popular knowledge in strengthening spaces for science and knowledge in society that are committed to guaranteeing the rights of social justice and cognitive justice. The popular university paradigm reaffirms the democratization of the public university, therefore: "The idea of 'critical university', 'multifunctional university' and 'differentiated university' [...]" (FERNANDES, 1989, p. 106, our translation), that is, an extension perspective that reaffirms the struggle for university and, at the same time, values a countryside education policy that respects the times of life in the countryside, in a relationship that affirms:

The strengthening of the university-society relationship that prioritizes overcoming conditions and inequalities and existing exclusion. Through social projects, the university socializes its knowledge and makes its services available, exercising its social responsibility, or even its mission: the commitment to improving the quality of life of citizens (NUNES; SILVA, 2011 p. 121, our translation).

In this sense, Mora-Osejo and Borda (2004, p. 720, our translation), affirm: "we need participatory universities, committed to the common good, especially with the urgencies of grassroots communities [...], to favor the replacement of "discriminatory definitions between the academic and popular". In this sense, university extension projects can be a strategic action to strengthen alternation pedagogy, as they seek to answer questions about the meaning of both production in the world of peasant work and the socialization of knowledge carried out at the university that results from the dialogue of the knowledge with the community.

This power of extension, in Countryside Education, reaffirms the popular of the public university for its institutional organization for the realization of community time, as it requires a different structure from that necessary for university time. In this way, extension is a dimension of the university that strengthens the processes of mobilization of rural subjects in the struggle for education, based on social demands in the countryside, which requires a concrete extension action. Thus, from the perspective of the popular university, a concrete testimony is necessary that is carried out by the university's action in relation to the peasant communities, as it is not an abstract attitude that transforms the social conditions of exclusion of subjects from the countryside. Paulo Freire rightly tells us that:

knowing is not the act through which a subject transformed into an object, receives docile and passively the contents that another person gives or imposes on him. On the contrary, knowledge requires a curious presence of the subject in the face of the world. It requires its transforming action on reality. It demands a constant search. It implies invention and reinvention (FREIRE, 1996, p. 7, our translation).

Extension, as a process of mobilization of subjects from the countryside and from the university, is a potential, as it maintains a current reading of the social issues experienced by subjects in the field. The extension is a bet on the democratization of the public university for an action of social transformation of its responsibility with the fair development of the populations that, historically, were excluded from the right to education. Thus, the countryside education in its dimensions of teaching, research and extension has been an educational instrument of the subjects of the countryside, society and the State for the implementation of an educational policy that takes into account the contexts, subjects and knowledge of countryside populations. And, in the same sense, in countryside education, it is necessary that its educational practice be updated in the defense of the rights of rural peoples, based on a

liberating education, as a strategy of not adapting to the traditional university and scientific system.

Challenges of the popular university in the production of academic extension

The Popular University is an experience based on the principles of Popular Education, which considers as formative dimensions: the social reality of popular subjects, participatory pedagogy, the collective construction of knowledge, the transformation of the social and the affirmation of a project of a society of justice Social. It is, at the same time, a utopian project to transform the crisis of the public university that has historically been marked by production for capitalist logic. Castro and Pereira (2008, p. 1646, our translation) affirm, "It is essential to reiterate [...] a quality higher education centered on university institutions that link teaching, research and extension, promoting social inclusion that maintains education as an inalienable public good". It is for this logic that the Popular University through academic extension is organized to reaffirm the public character of the university.

This attitude is opposed to the hegemonic science that ignores the scientific criteria of the production of knowledge that is organized under the logic of popular knowledge. The Popular University seeks inter-knowledge with popular knowledge, giving visibility to new ways of producing knowledge. Emphasizes the alternative social technologies produced by social movements, such as the construction of cisterns that collect rainwater in the winter to supply thousands of families during the long periods of drought in the northeast, developed by *Cáritas Brasileira* in partnership with *Articulação do Semiárido* (ASA); or, yet, the countryside pedagogy courses, developed by the Landless Workers Movement (MST) as an educational practice of integral formation of the countryside population in their settlements and camps, with a strong incidence, nowadays, in the academic space with the implementation of the courses of degrees in Countryside Education.

These alternatives arise due to the crisis of the university as having the monopoly of knowledge production. That is why, when we propose to discuss the crises of the university to re-signify the very meaning of the popular of the public university, we start from some central considerations: first, while the Eurocentric and American worlds discuss the crises of the university, the colonial world fought for project of political independence from imperial domains; secondly, considering the speed with which the matrix "equality, fraternity and freedom" translates into social emancipation in the European world, requiring the construction of a university centered on the production of high culture, on the other side of the line, in the

South of the World, the promises of modernity were reduced in the Christian version of literacy and a dominant education; third aspect, while in European and American capitalism university ideas are based on the formation of the scholar and the intellectual with scientific knowledge, the idea of university in the colonial world was translated into the formation of the "specialist" and the "professional", preparing a technically qualified worker and a labor force for capitalist production.

While in the North of the World the Liberal State guaranteed the consolidation of a hightech university with significant advances in the development of these continents and their peers, in reverse, in the South of the World, the force of neoliberalism and ultraconservative governments deprived the power of the State in the construction of any democratic university matrix, marked by a soon process of scrapping and privatization of public education, marking the crisis of the Brazilian university:

The university is in crisis around the world. In Brazil, we face the crisis on its most superficial side, that of the lack of material and human resources. In Europe, the United States, and countries in transition to socialism, the crisis takes on other polarities. In the face of these paradigms and trends, our crisis is a disease of child growth and a moral impasse (FERNANDES, 1989, p. 82-84, our translation).

The crisis of the university in the world takes on worrying dimensions in Brazil, as it has historically had a strong impact on the processes of exclusion and the deepening of educational inequalities in access to higher education, by the popular classes. The Brazilian university has been hegemonically reproducing the ideas of a North American and Eurocentric university, as analyzed by Márquez (2014, p. 13, our translation): "The interpretation of our reality with alien schemes only contributes to make us more and more unknown, each time less free, more and more lonely. Perhaps venerable Europe would be more understanding if it was about seeing us in its own past. For this reason, the perspective of the Popular University extension project considers human formation and popular knowledge in the production of scientific knowledge as opposed to the exclusive project of scientific production for capitalism.

The principles of Participatory Research-Action aim at overcoming the subject-object relationship, opposing the position of scientific neutrality and questioning the rationality that separates scientific and popular knowledge, as emphasized by Borda (1981, p. 253-254, our translation):

Our special working tools have been and are mostly the frames of reference and techniques with which successive generations of scientists have tried to interpret reality. But we well know that these work tools do not have a life of their own, but take whatever meaning we give them; with their respective effects in various fields of life and knowledge.

In this sense, the inter-knowledge between subjects from the academic environment and subjects from social movements has contributed to an educational practice of social justice that points to the construction of a transgressive epistemology as a matrix for a popular science led by popular classes based on their knowledge and post-colonial territories. The option for participatory action-research calls into question the hierarchy relationship proclaimed by the hegemonic subject-object science, restoring the meanings of inter-knowledge from the subject-subject dimension of knowledge.

The systematization of the experience by the students is fundamental to resume this shared dimension of knowledge production, as follows: "Academics, through active methodologies, expressed their ability to apprehend the contents, had their differences respected and the teachers observed their effectiveness" (DAMÁZIO; SOUZA, 2020, p. 1493, our translation). In this perspective, teachers encourage students to think about their communities and the relationship with popular knowledge in the process of systematizing field data, deepening the inter-knowledge between university and community.

The Popular University Project articulates participatory methodological processes: the *extension* takes place through the **Meeting of Experiences (Exchange)** involving educators from social movements, teachers from public universities and partner entities to learn about social technologies and educational practices committed to social justice, having as an essential point, the realization of **Pedagogical Expeditions** - spaces of experiences, knowing and analyzing the experiences in popular education and the new ways of producing decolonial science in social movements, in NGOs, in the third sector, among others.

Research, through the Academic Experience Internship, guaranteeing spaces for the exchange of experiences between instances and organizational experiences at universities, knowing the research centers, research projects and forms of interaction between university and society; and teaching, through studies organized in the **Popular Culture Circle**, a moment of theoretical deepening with classes, seminars, a directed study group, debating the correct themes of transgressive pedagogies and decolonial science. These dimensions resume: "The challenge of educating for resistance seems to be precisely the challenge of knowing how to awaken the mass for the formation process as emancipation, gaining autonomy and adopting critical thinking [...]" (AGOSTINI; SILVA, 2019, p. 1989, our translation). This implies, educating for their contexts, their realities, their affectivity, that is, educating for humanization.

Decolonial extension as a methodology of the popular university in countryside education

The first phase of the activities of the Popular University was the Regional Meeting of Experiences in Research and Extension in Social Movements at the University that took place from 2 to 12 of May of 2018, in the city of Recife - PE. 40 (forty) people participated, including students, educators, and professors from the University (UFPI, UFPE, UFRPE, UESPI and UFPB), Social Movements of the Countryside and the City. The event was organized by the Popular University Project with the Federal University of Piauí - Teaching Degree Course in Countryside Education (CPCE), in partnership with the *Quilombo dos Palmares* Formation School (EQUIP) and the *Pastoral da Terra* Commission (CPT). Inter-knowledge activities were organized from the perspective of Participatory Action-Research.

Pedagogical expeditions are spaces for valuing popular knowledge committed to the pedagogy of training for social transformation. The pedagogical expedition at SERTA³ and SABIÁ Center express how organized society contributes to a perspective of sustainable development through Agroecologies and Agroforestry Systems, as we can see in the record of expeditions:

Figure 1 – Visit to Pedra Branca Community - Sabiá Project



Source: Extension Project Cenas Camponesas (2018)

Action-transformation pedagogy is the reality and social practice of the subjects as the locus of knowledge that moves in the various areas of knowledge and in the actions of popular subjects. The field activity at Centro Sabiá and Serta made it possible to learn about the processes of community self-organization and self-management, which mobilize the community to engage in community projects through the local Association, the community

³ Alternative Technology Service (SERTA, Portuguese initials)

being a reference in the production of biodigester, Telhadão/Seriadão Tanker, Seeds House and organic plantations, aiming at food, energy and family security.

These experiences underlie the second phase of the Popular University project, which focuses on water sustainability in the Gurgueia Valley, a cerrado region in the state of Piauí, with a focus on marsh springs and the sustainable use of water for the production of family farming.

Figure 2 – Researchers on the expedition in the tabocas settlement, visit to the fields

Source: Popular University Extension Project (2019)

This decolonial pedagogical expedition discusses water sustainability in southern Piauí and the environmental crisis due to the advance of agribusiness. It reveals the impasses in the struggle of the peasants for the territory and the challenges of implementing public policies to protect the springs of the marshes, based on the experience of protecting the National Park of the Rio Parnaíba Springs. The project mobilizes students of countryside education for technicalscientific visits to map the springs and fields, plantations and ebb banks on the marshes and the Gurgueia river. These two experiences in the Popular University Project reaffirm the contexts of the field as a space of knowledge beyond academic contexts.

In this sense, the peasants, from their relationship with the environment and nature, have a lot to teach the university, including the resignification of its public character with the need to affirm the popular dimension, while fighting for the right of access to university and the right to education.

Conclusion

Countryside education, in spite of the impasses and challenges for its development in the university educational context, has been leading the formation of peasants, the visibility of

their contexts and knowledge. The Popular University, when articulating the inter-knowledge between academic and popular knowledge, postulates the concept of transgressive epistemology that marks a socio-historical process of political rupture with the project of colonial and capitalist education, but, definitely, with the project of inhuman society and unequal from the social practice and knowledge of the popular classes and the oppressed who fight for the right of access to education and higher education.

Decolonial extension, in the context of countryside education, reaffirms the central role of peasants as political subjects, in the process of democratizing the university in the exercise of producing decolonial knowledge as a possibility to redo the dominant social, political and epistemological structure, since structure of official knowledge is also the structure of social authority. In this way, the Popular University in the context of Countryside Education aims to break the invisibility of popular knowledge, subjects and their contexts in order to articulate new logics of scientific rationality and causality based on the principles of actiontransformation pedagogy as a theoretical- practical in the construction of a transgressive epistemology and decolonial science in the reinvention of the public university.

The Popular University postulates a transgressive epistemology rooted in participatory methodologies, production techniques and data collection that constitute the subject-subject relationship of knowledge, in theories of knowledge that have been substantiated in the social practices of the subjects themselves. The ideas of decolonial science, based on the relationship between the knowledge produced by social movements in the countryside and its relationship with the production of academic knowledge, are the marks of defense of the public sense of education.

The decolonial extension reaffirms the struggle and organization of popular subjects in the field in the struggle for the right to quality public education, in order to overcome the challenges of access to higher education and to the knowledge processes that involve scientific knowledge and popular knowledge. The educational conception of the Popular University reaffirms a popular peasant perspective as a strategic itinerary for the democratization of the public sense of the university and of science towards other sciences in the world.

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