

## AS ASSEMBLEIAS ESTUDANTIS E O EXERCÍCIO DA GESTÃO DEMOCRÁTICA

### ASAMBLEAS ESTUDIANTILES Y EL EJERCICIO DE GESTIÓN DEMOCRÁTICA

#### STUDENT ASSEMBLIES AND DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT EXERCISE

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**RESUMO:** As discussões sobre questões relacionadas à democracia, sobretudo a como exercê-la, são importantes na sociedade neoliberal na qual nos encontramos. Em razão da crise democrática atravessada pela valorização do mercado e minimização de direitos sociais, as assembleias estudantis surgem como campos de debates pertinentes à sociedade. A temática desenvolveu-se neste trabalho através de pesquisa qualitativa, de base dialética, associada a estudo de caso, que traz realidade específica com características de um todo social. Diálogos com Lima (2018), Marx (2003), Paro (2016), Souza (2017), entre outros, revelaram a importância das assembleias como instrumentos de construção das sociedades democráticas em tempos de opressão e determinismo social.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Assembleias estudantis. Gestão democrática. Participação. Democracia.

**RESUMEN:** Las discusiones sobre temas relacionados con la democracia, ante todo con cómo ejercerla, son importantes en la sociedad neoliberal en la cual nos encontramos. En virtud de la crisis democrática atravesada por cuenta de la valorización del mercado y la minimización de los derechos sociales, las asambleas estudiantiles surgen como campos de debate pertinentes para la sociedad. La temática ha sido desarrollada en este trabajo a través de la investigación cualitativa, de fundamentación dialéctica, vinculada a análisis de caso, que infiere realidad específica con características de un todo social. Diálogos con Lima (2018), Marx (2003), Paro (2016), Souza (2017), entre otros, revelaron la importancia de las asambleas como instrumentos de construcción de sociedades democráticas en tiempos de opresión y determinismo social.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Asambleas estudiantiles. Gestión democrática. Participación. Democracia

**ABSTRACT:** Discussions about democracy related issues, especially how to exercise it, are important in the neoliberal society in which we find ourselves. Because of the democratic crisis, crossed by market valuation and the minimization of social rights, students' assemblies appear as fields of debate relevant to society. The theme of this paper was developed through

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*qualitative research, with dialectical base, associated at case study, which brings specific reality with characteristics of a social whole. Dialogues with Lima (2018), Marx (2003), Paro (2016), Souza (2017), among others, revealed the importance of assemblies as instruments of building democratic societies in times of oppression and social determinism.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Student assemblies. Democratic management. Participation. Democracy.*

## **Introduction**

The demands of liberal and neoliberal society include "democracy", "democratic management" policy and the consumer market, with supposed processes of social participation. In these social models of democracy, student assemblies emerge as instruments for such participation. For this reason, it is assumed that the formation of a critical society requires the exercise of dialogue and participation. So, can these citizenship acquisition exercises be built at the school level?

With the redemocratization of Brazilian society in the mid-1980s, it became essential to discuss democracy, assemblies, student formation, participation and democratic management in education. And such debates remain relevant, since in Brazil the democratic crisis is characterized, above all, by constant attacks on the human and basic rights of the population, with instability of institutions, recurrent corruption and massive disbelief in electoral and political processes.

In this sense, the problem studied in this research is related to student participation in the school, its ways of action and constitution; conception of assemblies, their meanings and contributions; perception of democratic management and student actions in the public school by school subjects.

Through concerns and problems of the society in which the public school is intertwined, we sought to understand how student assemblies may or may not contribute to the exercise of democratic management. To this end, records of activities of student assemblies were made through notes in a field notebook. From there, the participation of the subjects in this space was analyzed, in addition to identifying conflicts and contradictions that emerge from the democracy model or from its search as a practice of citizenship.

The research universe was a public school in the center-south zone of Manaus, chosen for presenting a teaching proposal based on the construction of democratic management and the participation of its community. The highlight was the vacancies for 226 students in a full-time public institution, with the effective participation of 150 students in the assemblies that

took place during class intervals, on alternate days, organized according to the problems that arose at school and involved that social body.

The research took place with the participation of 08 teachers, 01 manager, 01 educator, 20 people from the technical and administrative staff of the school, with general services, food and security sector, totaling 162 people directly involved in the process. Conducted between August 2018 and April 2019, the study enabled us not only to monitor the institution's educational processes and needs, but also to participate in the activities carried out, especially in the assemblies, which provided us with ample knowledge about the perspectives of education in the critical formation of society.

The school is characterized as one of the first in the northern region to think and articulate democratic management actions, integrating the community through meetings and assemblies. Founded in 1987, the school is located in an area of streams and serves elementary school students in a region of extreme social vulnerability. It is about building citizenship with low-income children and welcoming Venezuelan and Haitian children through social inclusion and effective institutional enrollment.

Teachers have extensive service and degree in pedagogy. There is also an English and Physical Education teacher at the school, who work in the formation of the students and themselves. All assemblies were registered by the school, lasting 30 to 40 minutes, and the agendas were formed through the debate of ideas, by presenting problems. The participation of students is free, but they need to go to the microphone to speak in defense of a certain subject and, after an argument, assign the vote.

For the analysis of this work, we used qualitative research in line with dialectical historical materialism, since the method makes it possible to capture the real movement of the research object (MARX, 2003).

Studying this school movement, aimed at building citizenship, implies understanding that it is necessary to go beyond appearances, capturing the essence and totality of the object, starting from the real. In this sense, it is necessary to seek in history an understanding of reality in its relationship with the present, because, as Marx points out,

The tradition of all past generations is like a nightmare that compresses the brains of the living. And just when they seem to be committed to transforming themselves and things, to creating something never seen before, exactly in these times of revolutionary crisis, they fearfully conjure up the help of the spirits of the past, borrow their names, their slogans, their costumes, in order

to represent, with this vulnerable traditional dress and this borrowed language, the new scenes of world history (MARX, 2011, p. 159).<sup>3</sup>

In this sense, pseudo democracy and its guise can hide the real and present an ideal of bourgeois society, controlled by a dominant elite with tricks of false democratic processes. The activity of the student assembly may represent the breaking of these sordid resources for alienation of society and the public school, in this scenario, represents a possible path for such a process through the critical and committed formation of teachers, students and the community.

The analysis of this situation takes place in a particular context that is part of a social whole, therefore, the research is characterized as a case study that, in Social Sciences, is considered the most appropriate way to investigate a process contemporary within its real context (YIN, 2001). The instruments or techniques of data collection that made up the investigation trajectory were participatory research, participant observation, and bibliographic and documentary research, which helped in the analysis of the contradictions of the real and ideal space.

As for the structuring of the work, the body of the text is divided into 4 topics. In the first, we deal with the concept of democracy, pointing out, above all, that in Brazil there is an excess of representativeness to the detriment of popular participation, since even provisions provided for in the Federal Constitution (1988), such as plebiscites, referendums and popular initiatives for the realization of such participation, are almost not used.

In the second moment, we approach the issue of democratic management and participation, presenting the concept of both, going briefly through the history of this management model in Brazil, and arguing that participation refers to one of its main constitutive bases.

In the third topic, we talk about what assemblies are, in general, and what assemblies are at school, exposing some of their types, their primary and secondary functions, as well as their structure/functioning.

In the fourth and last point, we have the field report, in which we present the results of the empirical research carried out in the aforementioned school, arguing that the student assemblies are part of a greater process of democratization of the school institution, that is, they

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<sup>3</sup> A tradição de todas as gerações passadas é como um pesadelo que comprime cérebro dos vivos. E justamente quando parecem estar empenhados em transformar a si mesmos e as coisas, em criar algo nunca antes visto, exatamente nessas épocas de crise revolucionária, eles conjuram temerosamente a ajuda dos espíritos do passado, tomam emprestado os seus nomes, as suas palavras de ordem, o seu figurino, a fim de representar, com essa vulnerável roupagem tradicional e essa linguagem tomada de empréstimo, as novas cenas da história mundial (MARX, 2011, p. 159).

are one of several ways to put this management proposal into practice, as their main contribution is the possibility of dialogue and debate on issues and problems common to those involved, something indispensable not only in schools that claim to be democratic, but for societies.

### **Democracy in Brazil: between representation and popular participation**

It is widely known that there is not only a single concept or definition of democracy (SOUZA, 2007), but rather several, which can be quite similar or even contradictory. In this sense, it is not intended to affirm an indisputable concept, but to opt for one of the several existing definitions, which best serves the purposes of this study. Thus, democracy is considered as:

government regime in which the power to make important political decisions rests with the citizens, who are the components of society. It is up to the people or the community to discuss, reflect, think and find solutions and interventions for their own problems (DALBÉRIO, 2009, p. 71).<sup>4</sup>

This concept is assumed for opening up so that the two main - but not unique - types of democracy, the representative and the participatory, can coexist and complement each other. Here, therefore, representative democracy is considered to be valid, but quite limited, since, in order for the desires and needs of the popular strata of society to be met, greater participation by such classes is needed. Therefore, a more participatory, popular, direct democracy is needed, which reflects Gadotti's view (2013, p. 16), when saying that “the Brazilian State needs to be less representative and more participatory”.

Representative democracy is considered to be one that has limitations, as often the people's desires or needs are ignored or placed in the background by those who exercise representation: presidents, deputies, councilors, governors, mayors, etc. In addition to the fact that such people may represent their own interests or that of certain dominant groups in society, the Brazilian population is extremely diverse, something that makes a satisfactory and more egalitarian representation extremely complicated, as stated by Gadotti (2013, p. 17):

Brazil has an extremely diverse social composition and representative democracy does not account for all this diversity. More and more citizens do not feel represented in Parliament and end up losing interest in politics, absent

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<sup>4</sup> regime de governo no qual o poder de tomar importantes decisões políticas está com os cidadãos, que são os componentes da sociedade. Cabe ao povo ou à comunidade discutir, refletir, pensar e encontrar soluções e intervenções para os próprios problemas (DALBÉRIO, 2009, p. 71).

themselves not only in elections, but in civic life and spaces for political participation and formation.<sup>5</sup>

The Federal Constitution (BRASIL, 1988), in its art. 1, advocates that "all power emanates from the people, who exercise it through elected representatives or directly", that is, in a representative and participatory way. Although our legislation determines that both types of democracy can occur simultaneously, in practice, representative democracy is expressively dominant, as there are rare moments of effective participation of the people in decisions, such as the plebiscites, referendums and popular initiatives, respectively provided for in the items I, II and III of art. 14 of the Magna Carta, as forms of direct participation of the population. To say that these types of participation occur little is an understatement, as they are, in fact, very rare.

According to Law no. 9709/96, also known as the Direct Democracy Law, the realization of these three types of direct participation has been regulated:

Art. 2 Plebiscite and referendum are consultations made to the people to deliberate on matters of marked relevance, of a constitutional, legislative or administrative nature.

§ 1 The plebiscite is called prior to a legislative or administrative act, and it is up to the people, by vote, to approve or deny what has been submitted to them.

§ 2 The referendum is called after a legislative or administrative act, with the respective ratification or rejection being fulfilled to the people.

Art. 13. The popular initiative consists of the presentation of a bill to the Chamber of Deputies, subscribed by at least one percent of the national electorate, distributed by at least five states, with not less than three tenth percent of voters from each one of them.<sup>6</sup>

Plebiscites and referendums, to be held, depend on calling by decree of the Legislative Power, which requires the approval of at least one third of the members of the Chamber or the Senate (BRASIL, 1998). Popular initiatives, on the other hand, come from the people, but they are extremely difficult, as they require a considerable number of plaintiffs to be effective.

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<sup>5</sup> O Brasil tem uma composição social extremamente diversa e a democracia representativa não dá conta de toda essa diversidade. Cada vez mais cidadãos e cidadãs não se sentem representados no Parlamento e acabam por se desinteressar da política, ausentando-se não só nas eleições, mas da vida cívica e dos espaços de participação e formação política.

<sup>6</sup> Art. 2º Plebiscito e referendo são consultas formuladas ao povo para que delibere sobre matéria de acentuada relevância, de natureza constitucional, legislativa ou administrativa.

§ 1º O plebiscito é convocado com anterioridade a ato legislativo ou administrativo, cabendo ao povo, pelo voto, aprovar ou denegar o que lhe tenha sido submetido.

§ 2º O referendo é convocado com posterioridade a ato legislativo ou administrativo, cumprindo ao povo a respectiva ratificação ou rejeição.

Art. 13. A iniciativa popular consiste na apresentação de projeto de lei à Câmara dos Deputados, subscrito por, no mínimo, um por cento do eleitorado nacional, distribuído pelo menos por cinco Estados, com não menos de três décimos por cento dos eleitores de cada um deles.

In Brazil, plebiscites, referendums and popular initiatives, as stated, occurred very rarely, and it is worth remembering these meager events, since “the present cannot be explained without the past” (SOUZA, 2017, p. 13).

According to Fornazieri (2013), in recent Brazilian history we had only three consultations of a national character, made through plebiscites or referendums. The first was in 1963, when the population was called to hold a plebiscite on the government system, the options being presidential and parliamentary. 30 years later, in 1993, another plebiscite was held, the people had to decide between monarchy or republic, parliamentarism or presidentialism (FORNAZIERI, 2013). In the first, won presidentialism; in the second, republic and presidentialism.

Also, according to Fornazieri (2013), in 2005, the only referendum in recent Brazilian history was held, to decide on one of the articles of the so-called Disarmament Statute, sanctioned in 2003 by President Lula, which needed the consent of the people to take effect, because of its importance. In this referendum, the following question was put to the vote: "Should the trade in firearms and ammunition be prohibited in Brazil?". The population opted expressively for "no", and the article, which determined the prohibition of the sale of firearms throughout the national territory, did not enter into force.

As for popular initiatives, as stated, they are quite difficult to both propose and approve. According to the Federal Senate website / portal (2017), throughout our history, only 04 bills of this nature have been approved at the federal level, all after the 1988 Constitution: Daniella Perez Law (Law 8,930/1996); Law to Combat the Purchase of Votes (Law 9,840/1999); National Housing Fund of Social Interest Law (Law 11,124/2005); and Clean Record Law (Complementary Law 135/2010), the latter being the most important and expressive of all, since it was responsible, since its promulgation, for barring thousands of candidates in municipal, state and national elections.

Obviously, these three types of direct participation by the population are not the only ones, as there are other means. However, as they have been included in our Magna Carta for a few decades, let us stick to them only, since they attest that even the forms of participation provided for by law are little used in practice.

Still on the question of democracy, other reflections are valid. Apple and Beane (2001) argue that it is not surprising that the word “democracy” is being heard a lot today, considering its importance. However, the authors caution against the ambiguous use of the term:

It can be understood that the allegations of democracy are used to support movements for civil rights, greater electoral privileges and protection of the right to free expression. But democracy is also used to favor the causes of free-market economies and guarantors for school options, and to defend the predominance of the two largest political parties. We hear the defense of democracy used countless times, every day, to justify just about everything that people want to do: “We live in a democracy, right?” (APPLE; BEANE, 2001, p. 15).<sup>7</sup>

As seen, the rhetoric of democracy is used, on the one hand, for just causes, but, on the other, to justify very questionable and even unacceptable attitudes, because democracy is not each one doing what he wants, in an unlimited way, but do what you want within what is agreed that can be done (CORTELLA, 2019). In a society that manages to be democratic, it is inconceivable, for example, that people can do justice with their own hands (ARAÚJO, 2015).

Although Apple and Beane (2001) deal more specifically with the United States, the country in which they reside, a scenario very similar to that described is identified in Brazil, as democracy has been one of the most discussed, contested and threatened agendas in the country, especially since the so-called Jornadas de Junho (June Journeys) - major demonstrations that occurred in 2013 - that culminated especially in some events: in 2016, the overthrow of President Dilma Rousseff through a controversial impeachment process, considered a coup by many; the attacks suffered by the poorest sections of society under Michel Temer, in addition to the troubled 2018 elections - especially the presidential one -, permeated by disbelief and distrust in democratic processes, which resulted, above all, in the rise to executive power of a politician with strong authoritarian traits: Jair Bolsonaro.

## **Democratic management and participation**

With the issue of democracy clarified, let us move on to the discussion on democratic management, from two central reasons: first, the democratization of the school only makes sense when articulated with the process of democratization of society as a whole (SOUZA, 2015); second, the way democracy is practiced in Brazilian society largely reflects the way it is exercised in the school space, since this is not an institution isolated from the rest of the country, but part of it (PARO, 2016) .

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<sup>7</sup> Pode-se entender que as alegações de democracia sejam usadas para embasar movimentos por direitos civis, por maiores privilégios eleitorais e proteção ao direito de livre expressão. Mas a democracia também é usada para favorecer as causas das economias de livre mercado e dos fiadores para opções escolares, e para defender o predomínio dos dois maiores partidos políticos. Ouvimos a defesa da democracia usada inúmeras vezes, todos os dias, para justificar praticamente tudo o que as pessoas querem fazer: “Vivemos numa democracia, certo?” (APPLE; BEANE, 2001, p. 15).

Democratic management, like democracy, also has not only a concept, but, for the purposes of this study, we consider its definition to be:

A process of learning and political struggle that is not limited to the limits of educational practice, but sees, in the specifics of social practice and its relative autonomy, the possibility of creating channels for effective participation and learning in the “democratic game” and consequently, of rethinking the structures of authoritarian power that permeate social relations and, within them, educational practices (DOURADO, 2013, p. 79).<sup>8</sup>

In this concept, one word deserves to be highlighted: process. Democratic management is a process, not something that can be done or achieved overnight, just by following a ready and infallible prescription. In this process, as noted, means must be created for true participation in the democratic game, and also for learning. Therefore, the authoritarian structures that have permeated our relations for a long time need to be questioned, since Brazil as we know it was born from a situation of authoritarianism, and, throughout history, it has gone through extremely authoritarian moments, such as the Vargas Era - especially the second half, called the *Estado Novo* -, in the 1930s and 1940s; and the civil-military dictatorship, between the 1960s and 1980s.

In Brazil, democratic management gained strength in the 1970s and 1980s, in the context of the country's redemocratization, that is, in the period of transition from the civil-military dictatorship to the democratic regime. Between 1987 and 1988 the National Constituent Assembly was held, in which several Brazilian social movements, mass political parties, unions and even progressive sectors of the Catholic Church, linked to the *Pastoral da Terra* (HASCHEL, 2007) participated. Such movements fought for human rights, land, amnesty, redemocratization of society, democratization of education, etc. (HASCHEL, 2007).

In the midst of the discussions on democracy, there was the question of the democratic management of schools, which ended up appearing in the 1988 Constitution, in item VII of art. 206, which determines the “democratic management of public education, in the form of law” (BRASIL, 1988). As seen, the drafting of the law was done in a very simple and direct way, configuring a partial achievement (ADRIÃO; CAMARGO, 2007) and needed to be complemented later, something that occurred only through Law no. 9,394, of 1996, which

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<sup>8</sup> Um processo de aprendizado e de luta política que não se circunscreve aos limites da prática educativa, mas vislumbra, nas especificidades da prática social e de sua relativa autonomia, a possibilidade de criação de canais de efetiva participação e de aprendizado no “jogo democrático” e, conseqüentemente, do repensar nas estruturas de poder autoritário que permeiam as relações sociais e, no seio delas, as práticas educativas (DOURADO, 2013, p. 79).

establishes the Guidelines and Bases for National Education (LDB, Portuguese initials) (BRASIL, 1996).

Item VIII of art. 3 of the LDB only ratifies what the Constitution already advocated in its art. 206, determining the “democratic management of public education in the form of law and legislation in education systems”. Art. 14 goes further and says:

The education systems will define the norms for the democratic management of public education in basic education, according to their peculiarities and according to the following principles:

I - Participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's pedagogical project;

II - Participation of the school and local communities in school councils or equivalent (BRASIL, 1996).<sup>9</sup>

Also, according to LDB, art. 12, item VI, schools have the responsibility of articulating with families and the community, promoting processes of integration of society with institutions. In addition, art. 13, item VI, determines that teachers are responsible for these articulation activities.

“Although its limits and constraints weigh, the LDB is the expression of the struggles carried out between social forces, and it presents itself as a marker for educational policies” (DOURADO, 2013, p. 96). The same can be said about the 1988 Constitution, commonly called the Citizen Constitution.

However, the mere provision of democratic management in legislation does not guarantee its achievement in practice. In fact, this type of assumption has a traditional, positivist approach, which subordinates school organizational action to the mere reproduction of legal rules and others of a prescriptive type, frequent in studies of legalistic and normativist content (LIMA, 2018).

Unfortunately, the democratic management of Brazilian schools faces several problems in achieving them, and has been limited to a:

decentralization movement of decision making in public policies by the management bodies and decentralization of execution by schools of predetermined tasks; the election of the principal, who, as a result of several factors, runs the school in a way that is often centralized and centralizing; the formation of school councils that meet occasionally only to endorse the decisions previously made by the principal or because bureaucratic formality requires it; the existence of an organization in the form of associations of

<sup>9</sup> Os sistemas de ensino definirão as normas da gestão democrática do ensino público na educação básica, de acordo com as suas peculiaridades e conforme os seguintes princípios:

I - Participação dos profissionais da educação na elaboração do projeto pedagógico da escola;

II - Participação das comunidades escolar e local em conselhos escolares ou equivalentes (BRASIL, 1996).

parents, teachers and employees or equivalent institutions, but with a different name in each education system, which, in general, has assumed an auxiliary function in the physical and financial maintenance of the school (SOUZA, 2015, p 45).<sup>10</sup>

When it comes to democratic management, one of the main bases to be presented - perhaps even the main one - is participation, which, in turn, should include everyone involved in the educational process: students, teachers, school staff, parents, society, in short, the entire school community.

According to Habermas (1975, p. 159 *apud* FERREIRA, 2013, p. 78), “participating means that everyone can contribute, with equal opportunities, to the processes of discursive formation of the will”. That is, “it consists in helping to build consensus on a collective action plan” (CATANI; GUTIERREZ, 2013, p. 78). These two definitions of participation are used, as they complement each other.

However, this participation faces, mainly, the absence of a democratic culture not only at the school level, but of Brazilian society as a whole (QUINTERO *et al.*, 2007). It can also be said that:

the verb to participate, just as in society, does not seem to be being effectively conjugated in school, as participating in this context seems to be the opposite of “staying still”. Participation is limited to “moving” with good manners - lifting your finger to ask, to go to the bathroom, go to the board, help the teacher, obey the rules, etc. In this sense, the school opens its potential to reproduce the dominant ideology when it prints in the school culture the law of “whoever can, obey whoever has judgment” (QUINTERO *et al.*, 2007, p. 35).<sup>11</sup>

The discussion about participation, especially at school, is fundamental in the current chaotic Brazilian context, which permeates violence, social exclusion and misery, and in which the population has no guarantee even of basic rights, such as education and health (HASCKEL, 2007).

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<sup>10</sup> movimento de descentralização da tomada de decisão nas políticas públicas pelos órgãos gestores e da descentralização da execução pelas escolas de tarefas predeterminadas; à eleição do diretor, que, em decorrência de diversos fatores, dirige a escola de forma muitas vezes centralizada e centralizadora; à formação de conselhos escolares que se reúnem ocasionalmente apenas para referendar as decisões previamente tomadas pelo diretor ou porque a formalidade burocrática assim o exige; à existência de organização na forma de associações de pais, professores e funcionários ou instituições equivalentes, mas com denominação diversa em cada sistema de ensino, que, em geral, tem assumido função auxiliar na manutenção físico-financeira da escola (SOUZA, 2015, p. 45).

<sup>11</sup> o verbo participar, tal qual na sociedade, parece não estar sendo conjugado de modo efetivo na escola, pois participar neste contexto parece ser o oposto de “ficar parado”. Participar limita-se a “mexer-se” com bons modos - levantar o dedo para perguntar, para ir ao banheiro, ir ao quadro, ajudar a professora, obedecer às regras, etc. Nesse sentido, a escola escancara seu potencial de reprodutora da ideologia dominante quando imprime na cultura da escola a lei do “manda quem pode, obedece quem tem juízo” (QUINTERO *et al.*, 2007, p. 35).

Paro (2016) argues that the participation of the entire school community in decision-making processes does not remove power from the principal's hands - because he never actually had it - but, rather, it provides better conditions to pressure higher levels, since, alone, a principal does not have as much strength in the system.

Participation in decision-making processes implies more than just deliberating on a subject, it means participating in the construction, execution and monitoring of a pedagogical proposal (SOUZA, 2015). It is exactly this participation that we refer to when we speak of “exercise”, that is, “exercise of democratic management”, in this case, through student assemblies.

### **Assemblies: what are they and how do they work?**

In our society, assemblies do not only take place in school spaces. It is valid, then, to present a more general view of them. Bobbio (1998, p. 60) is categorical when stating that the term “assembly” is usually used to indicate “any type of meeting of several people to discuss or deliberate on common issues”.

According to the author, this term was used several times by France throughout the 18th century, to indicate the nation's representative body, something that was also done by England in its colonial history, to indicate the representative bodies of the American colonies. Still according to the same scholar:

In the political vocabulary, the term technically occurs with three meanings: Constituent Assembly, to distinguish it from the Legislative Assembly or Parliament; Assembly regime, to distinguish it from the parliamentary regime in the strict sense; and Assembly, to oppose it to representation (BOBBIO, 1998, p. 60).<sup>12</sup>

School assemblies are closer to the third type described by Bobbio's notes, and go further, according to Puig *et al.* (2000, p. 86), these are the “institutional moment of the word. The moment when the collective gathers to reflect, to become aware of itself and to transform what its members consider opportune, in order to improve the work and the coexistence”.

The holding of school assemblies is not recent and has existed for a long time in “schools that set out to create democratic spaces for the participation of all individuals in the education process” (TOGNETTA; VINHA, 2007, p. 60). In addition to not being recent, which goes

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<sup>12</sup> No vocabulário político, o termo ocorre tecnicamente com três significados: Assembleia constituinte, para distingui-la da Assembleia legislativa ou Parlamento; regime de Assembleia, para distingui-lo do regime parlamentar em sentido estrito; e Assembleia, para contrapor-la à representação (BOBBIO, 1998, p. 60).

against the belief that they are just passing fads (TOGNETTA; VINHA, 2007), they have not only one function, but several. Puig *et al.* (2000, p. 87, 88) point out the 6 main functions of the assemblies:

the assembly, in addition to being a meeting for dialogue, [...] has a clear informative role. Both adults in a vertical way, as well as students in a horizontal way can use the space to present everything they consider relevant. The assembly is also a meeting to analyze what happened. Thirdly, what to do is decided and organized in the assembly. [...] often, assemblies serve a certain cathartic character. [...] finally, the assembly is simply an open possibility that everyone has to present what they want for their life [...].<sup>13</sup>

In addition to these functions, the authors still have other secondary ones, so to speak, that do not cancel or harm the main ones. Secondary functions are the work of some capacities: putting oneself in the other's place; express their opinions with respect, comparing them with those of other colleagues; understand which situations are problematic, committing to their improvement; present logical arguments, defending a personal position (PUIG *et al.*, 2000).

However, in order to fulfill their diverse functions, the assemblies need to be based, according to this author, on some main bases: the allocation of a small part of the weekly time for its realization; provision of a space that favors dialogue; interruption of usual school work; use of time to speak collectively about the dynamics of the group; dialogue with a willingness to understand, organize work and resolve conflicts; and dialogue with a willingness to change whatever is necessary.

When it comes to school assemblies, the name of Ulysses Araújo often appears as one of the fundamental references, at least in Brazil. The author states that there are 04 types of assemblies: class, school, teachers and forums (ARAÚJO, 2015). Tognetta and Vinha (2007), in turn, also consider the same number of assemblies, but they differ from Araújo's view, stating that the types are: class, level or segment, school and teachers.

We will deal here with school assemblies as a whole, going through the types mentioned so that we have a more general view of the theme, since together they complement each other through a kind of continuous feedback process (ARAÚJO, 2008). However, what really interests us are its structures and general functioning.

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<sup>13</sup> a assembleia, além de ser uma reunião para dialogar, [...] cumpre um claro papel informativo. Tanto as pessoas adultas de maneira vertical, como os alunos e as alunas de maneira horizontal podem utilizar o espaço para apresentar tudo o que consideram relevante. A assembleia também é uma reunião de análise do que passou. Em terceiro lugar, na assembleia se decide e se organiza o que fazer. [...] frequentemente, as assembleias servem de encontro com um certo caráter catártico. [...] finalmente, a assembleia é, simplesmente, uma possibilidade aberta que todos têm para apresentar o que desejam para a sua vida [...].

According to Araújo (2015), class assemblies deal with themes related to each classroom. In this sense, the students of the class and at least one teacher participate in them. This type of assembly can be held weekly, in hour-long meetings, and serve as a space for dialogue in the resolution of daily conflicts within each class.

The teaching assemblies, on the other hand, count on the participation of the entire body of teachers, of the school management and, whenever possible, of a representative of the Secretariat of Education or of the maintainer (ARAÚJO, 2008). This type of assembly aims to “regulate thematic issues related to the interaction between teachers and between them and the management, with the political-pedagogical project of the institution and with contents that involve the functional and administrative life of the school” (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 36).

As for level or segment assemblies, they encompass all classes of a certain level or segment, such as, for example, all 5th year classes in the same school. This type of assembly, which must be held monthly, aims to regulate “coexistence, interpersonal relationships, conflicts, the use of spaces and common projects” (TOGNETTA; VINHA, 2007, p. 63).

The forums, in turn, have a very open composition, and have the presence of teachers, students, servers, families and the local community, that is, the entire school community, which can be held every six months (ARAÚJO, 2015). They have as their main objective “to articulate the different segments of the school community that are willing to act in the development of mobilizing actions around themes of citizenship in the coexistence of the educational institution” (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 36).

Finally, and most important for our discussion, the school assemblies, which aim to “regulate interpersonal relationships and coexistence within the scope of collective spaces” (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 35). This assembly model has the participation of all segments of the school community, with the aim of discussing issues related to schedules, physical space, food and interpersonal relationships, that is, issues that go beyond the scope of the classrooms (ARAÚJO, 2015).

School assemblies have a fundamental difference in relation to the others, with regard to participation, which occurs through representation, and that:

the representatives of the different segments are chosen according to a rotation system, so that, over time, all members will be able to participate in collective decisions. Its frequency should be monthly, coordinated by a member of the school's management (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 36).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> os representantes dos diversos segmentos são escolhidos obedecendo a uma sistemática de rodízio, de modo que, no transcorrer do tempo, todos os membros poderão participar das decisões coletivas. Sua periodicidade deve ser mensal, coordenada por um membro da direção da escola (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 36).

This difference is due to the fact that it is not positive to hold assemblies with a high number of participants, as the professionals who work at the school have commitments and schedules to comply with, according to Araújo (2015). The same author presents basic procedures for holding school assemblies: the mobilization of the group, the systematization of the periodicity, the contents to be treated, the preparation and composition of the agenda, the registration through minutes and the coordination and representation.

The mobilization of the group is a first step. Without it, the implementation of the assemblies becomes extremely complicated, as the group needs to understand the “importance and meanings of establishing spaces for dialogue and participation” (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 45). Conflicts and differences are part of life and cannot be eliminated, as many wish, but they must be used as raw material for both personal and collective development, and for this reason, right at the moment of mobilization it must be clarified that, with the assemblies, conflicts will not be eliminated, only maintained at democratically accepted levels (ARAÚJO, 2015). If this clarification does not occur, the entire process of holding the meetings may fall into disbelief.

As for the systematization of periodicity, Araújo (2015) states that one of the characteristics that sustain democracy is the importance of regularity in the rules that govern public spaces, this being one of the stony rules of a constitution. Our Federal Constitution (1988) does not differ from what the author says, as it has certain stone clauses, which are, in a manner of speech, "sacred". Such unmodifiable clauses are contained in art. 60 of the Brazilian Magna Carta (BRASIL, 1988):

Paragraph 4. It will not be deliberated on proposals of amendment to abolish:  
I - the federative form of State;  
II - direct, secret, universal and periodic voting;  
III - the separation of Powers;  
IV - individual rights and guarantees.<sup>15</sup>

In this sense, it is essential, according to Araújo (2015), to guarantee regularity, that is, the frequency of meetings. The author considers this one of the “sacred” themes in the organization of work, as its non-compliance has serious consequences, and suggests that, at the beginning of the year, a calendar should be set with the dates of each meeting, which must be strictly respected.

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<sup>15</sup> § 4º Não será objeto de deliberação a proposta de emenda tendente a abolir:

I - a forma federativa de Estado;  
II - o voto direto, secreto, universal e periódico;  
III - a separação dos Poderes;  
IV - os direitos e garantias individuais.

The contents to be dealt with in the assemblies are divided, roughly, into two major axes: themes related to "school life" - issues that affect the collective; and "interpersonal relationships" - themes that affect people in a more specific way (ARAÚJO, 2015). However, although such axes need the main focus, it is necessary to:

bring pleasant moments to the daily meetings, talk about positive things, congratulate personal and collective achievements and discuss future projects. These aspects should not be lost sight of during the assemblies, under pain of dealing with public problems, abnegating on the importance of the private dimension of life and of our most sublime feelings for the ethical construction in relationships (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 54).<sup>16</sup>

The preparation of assemblies is usually carried out on the days preceding them, that is, the week before. In this space of time, the agenda to be addressed is constructed, which can be divided into two large blocks: criticism and congratulations (ARAÚJO, 2015), which encompass the aforementioned content axes: interpersonal relationships and school life. The coordination of the assemblies is done on a rotating basis, as well as their representation. I mean:

Existing positions in school assemblies and spaces that require representation are not fixed, but rotating, so that the coordination and representation of the collective can be experienced by as many people as possible (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 64).<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the basic procedures for holding meetings, the author also presents how they work. Thus, the assemblies can be divided into some central moments, the first three being discussed on the agenda.

The first moment is a dialogue on the topic, in which one can speak and also listen to the other about the subjects on the agenda:

It is when differences appear, values are manifested, that each one built for themselves in their life story. Mainly, it is when there is a confrontation of positions and ideas. Such a confrontation, in this collectively organized and systematized space, can be worked on in a democratic way, avoiding the violent way as it is usually carried out in the day-to-day activities of schools (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 69).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> trazer para o cotidiano das assembleias os momentos prazerosos, falar de coisas positivas, felicitar as conquistas pessoais e coletivas e discutir os projetos futuros. Não se devem perder de vista esses aspectos durante as assembleias, sob pena de tratar de problemas públicos, renegando a importância da dimensão privada da vida e de nossos sentimentos mais sublimes para a construção ética nas relações (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 54).

<sup>17</sup> Os cargos existentes nas assembleias escolares e nos espaços que exigem representação não são fixos, mas rotativos, de modo que a coordenação e a representação do coletivo podem ser experienciadas pelo maior número de pessoas possível (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 64).

<sup>18</sup> É quando aparecem as diferenças, manifestam-se os valores, que cada um construiu para si em sua história de vida. Principalmente, é quando existe o confronto de posições e ideias. Tal confronto, nesse espaço organizado e

In the second moment, the rules of coexistence are built, but in the opposite way as is generally done in most schools: collectively, as Araújo points out (2015, p. 70):

After the discussion of each agenda is closed, the group must collectively build the rule that will regulate the conflicts inherent to the theme. Thus, the assembly coordinator opens the space for participants to suggest rules for the collective involved, and it is up to them to ensure that the rule has an appropriate wording.<sup>19</sup>

It is worth mentioning the important warning that Paro (2016) makes about this “opening of space”, which Araújo (2015) input responsibility to the assembly coordinator to carry out. A participation practice cannot be considered democratic if this participation depends on someone who opens it up for it to happen, since democracy cannot be granted, but realized, and there cannot be a democratic dictator (PARO, 2016).

The third moment, in turn, is conflict resolution and suggestions for the fulfillment of these collectively built and agreed rules. After requested by the coordinator, the people themselves present proposals so that the problem does not recur or help the group and colleagues to become aware of the consequences of conflicts and to comply with rules that were collectively agreed (ARAÚJO, 2015).

In the final part of the assemblies, the author suggests doing two things: reflection on the congratulations pointed out, so that the assembly is concluded in a more positive way; and the organization of the actions to be taken for the execution of the given referrals.

### **Student assemblies: contributions to the exercise of democratic management in a public school in Manaus**

Before any discussions about the assemblies held at the Municipal School Liberty and Action (*Escola Municipal Liberdade e Ação*)<sup>20</sup>, a description and contextualization of the institution is necessary, even if in a general way. Located in the São Geraldo neighborhood, in the south-central area of the city of Manaus-AM, the school has its front part for one of the many streams of the city - currently in a work that, for the residents, seems endless - and, therefore, the access is possible only through two streets that cross exactly in front of the institution.

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sistematizado coletivamente, pode ser trabalhado de maneira democrática, evitando a forma violenta como geralmente é encaminhado no dia a dia das escolas (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 69).

<sup>19</sup> Encerrada a discussão de cada pauta, o grupo deve construir coletivamente a regra que regulará os conflitos inerentes ao tema. Assim, o coordenador da assembleia abre o espaço para que os participantes sugiram regras para o coletivo envolvido, competindo a ele cuidar para que a regra tenha uma redação adequada.

<sup>20</sup> Fictitious name, in order to protect data from the school and the academic community.

When walking through the said streets towards the school, it is possible to easily perceive a mixture of luxury houses with popular houses, which are side by side, making clear the social dysfunction and the class society existing in the locality. However, it can be said that such an abyss is not surprising, as Souza (2017) has long denounced the abysmal Brazilian social inequality, the result, above all, of slavery, which was never broken, but, rather, continued in other ways, something proven by the existence of a social class of modern slaves, provocatively called "Brazilian rabble" by the author.

The school has had pedagogical activities for over 30 years, has capacity for 226 students, a characteristic of schools that provide full-time education and that need space for diversified activities for the integral development of the subjects that compose it. During the period of structural reform, presented in the central-south zone, there was an emptying in the school due to the works of the aforementioned stream. For some years this fact has been harming the local community, forcing its residents to live in other areas of the city, which also directs them to effectuate their children's enrollment in other institutions, although, in several cases, the school has sought to the students to stay, including looking for dialogues with government sectors and companies that carry out the works.

It is a school for early years that serves, in full-time, students who come from different social classes, entering at 7 am and leaving at 4 pm. In addition to being full-time, which already differentiates it from most public schools in the capital of Amazonas, it also has a proposal for comprehensive education and a democratic perspective of school management.

In view of the aspects mentioned, it is clear the condition of the school to walk in a way contrary to the tax that is reaffirmed at the economic-social, ideological, ethical-political and educational levels. In this sense, it is about allowing the construction of the subjects' identities through the understanding of reality, reflection and action based on the study of the conditions of social reality, involving their social actors through the assemblies (FRIGOTTO, 2103).

Before the specific debate about student assemblies, it is worth mentioning that they do not occur in an isolated and/or sudden manner. There are processes before and after its realization. That is to say, assemblies are previously held in each of the classes, which rely only on the teacher and the students in the class. Subsequently, the aim is to put into practice what was decided and the way in which it happens depends a lot on the content of the decision.

Student assemblies are coordinated by the school manager. In their absence, they were coordinated by the pedagogue, which greatly changed the dynamics not only of the assemblies, but of the school as a whole (we will deal with this later). There is also the participation of a large part of the teaching staff and of all students of the school, from the youngest to the oldest.

The meetings are held on a weekly basis, on Thursdays, at around 3:30 pm, extending until 4:00 pm, students' departure time. In 2019, the assemblies started to be held on Mondays, between 1 pm and 1:30 pm. It can be said that, despite the efforts, in most cases, the duration of the meetings was insufficient, since 30 minutes is a very short interval.

In addition, sometimes the assemblies were moved to another day and time, or, even worse, canceled (sometimes due to a lack of electricity in the building, a reason beyond the school's resolution), occurring only in the following week, which hindered the progress of the work, because democratic spaces need to be respected, that is, people need to know that the space and the moment of dialogue are guaranteed (ARAÚJO, 2015).

The school assemblies were held - with rare exceptions, on the court - in a space called “straw hat”, which bears this name precisely because of its structure resembling such adornment. The space has a small stage, where those who coordinate the meetings or who ask to speak can be seen more clearly by the others, who are at the bottom, usually sitting on the concrete floor or in chairs.

Although it seems quite small at first, the place holds all the participants of the assemblies, even if they need to keep their backs to each other. Araújo (2015) argues that the participants of the assemblies must be able to face each other, however, no major losses were noticed for the progress of the assemblies due to this fact.

Having presented this overview of the school assemblies, we will deal more specifically with two of them, in order to demonstrate a perceived change in their dynamics. This change occurred in the passage of the year from 2018 to 2019, and was caused, above all, by the absence of the school manager, which left, among other things, the coordination of the assemblies in charge of the pedagogue: in 2018, all assemblies witnessed were coordinated by the school manager; in 2019, they were coordinated by the pedagogue. Accordingly, we will present an assembly that took place in August 2018 and another in April 2019.

We understand that holding the assembly requires the commitment of all subjects, regardless of absences of the basic figures that represent power. Understanding and commitment to democracy is necessary, and making democracy means experiencing debates and actions based on the freedom and fulfillment of the right of all.

The first assembly was held on the court - a much larger space than the “straw hat”, but quite stuffy - under the coordination of the principal and with the participation of the faculty and students. Issues related to a festival open to the community, which would take place at the school in a few weeks, were discussed. Participants collectively discussed how such an event would occur.

At the festival in question, the idea was that each class at the school would be responsible for a stall selling various foods. In this sense, in the assembly it was discussed mainly if there would be some sort of classification and award for the classes that would do better, that is, that would raise more money.

It is clear, in this episode, that the bias of competitiveness and fundraising for schools makes up the nature of a society formed on the principles of equality, freedom and property, typical of a liberal and neoliberal society in which Brazilian society is reflected. This process refutes the discussion of human capital, which translates the school into an extension of the economy of education (FRIGOTTO, 2013).

Modernization carries in its democratic speeches and democratic management the theories of a society in wide competition in order to extend the domains of “a free and democratic society” under the guidance of capital (FRIGOTTO, 2013).

Returning to the point, several ideas - all different and even totally opposite - were presented, especially by the students, who, as said, are the main characters of the school assemblies. Some teachers and the principal also showed their voices. This multiplicity of ideas is extremely important:

It is only exposure to opposite arguments that can allow the subject to construct his own opinion. When exposing himself to conflicting reasons, the subject is instigated to perceive his own inclination and which arguments seem more just and truer (SOUZA, 2017, p. 124).<sup>21</sup>

In spaces that propose to be democratic, the opposition of ideas is considered normal. It means saying that “the right and respect for diversity, for different thinking cannot be lost sight of. This principle is one of the bases that support the assemblies” (ARAÚJO, 2015, p. 17).

In the final stretch of the assembly, after the discussions, some agreements were signed, with the best ideas chosen through the direct vote of the participants, carried out in a simple way: just raising your hand to agree or keeping it down if you disagreed. However, due to the short time and the problems with the acoustics of the court, some points were left for the next assembly.

This consensus production process serves as a basis for the school community to perceive its plunge into neoliberal disorder, with subliminal forms of violence imposed by the

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<sup>21</sup> É apenas a exposição a argumentos opostos que pode permitir ao sujeito construir sua própria opinião. Ao se expor às razões conflitantes, o sujeito é instigado a perceber sua própria inclinação e quais argumentos lhe parecem mais justos e verdadeiros (SOUZA, 2017, p. 124).

market, which makes the education of majorities a shallow and disconnected process of reflection (GENTILI, 2013).

Despite the problems, it can be said that the assembly in question has made progress, albeit a small one, while the second has not made much progress. This assembly took place on the court, as said, without planning and expected communication to the subjects, that is, its realization was decided in order to guarantee the process, causing surprise to the school community, and, for this reason, it was delayed by 20 minutes.

This concept of assembly, just to guarantee the process of democratic participation and without prior planning, also reveals that, in the social space, not everyone is willing to guarantee the social voices present in the public school, we must remember that it is a diverse field and, therefore, also concentrates people in defense of conservatism, that is, adherents of unilateral decision. It is necessary to live with this “different” and at the same time guarantee social participation.

After organizing the classes on the court and greeting those present, the pedagogue asked who would like to talk about the classroom assemblies, but got no answer. At this moment, one student asked to read a poem by Luiz Bacellar, while another student explained it to those present. After the act, the pedagogue again asked the question about the class assemblies, already showing a certain suspicion that they had not been held. The suspicion of non-completion was soon confirmed by the students, as very few classes had held the classroom assemblies, which seriously hampered the progress of the student assembly.

In this regard, the reductionism of the proposal for democracy and assemblies is revealed, as not valuing this moment with the proper characteristics points to a path of depoliticization that becomes fierce in neoliberal society. In this sense, by not giving value to the process, the conservative rhetoric of certain rights is reaffirmed, such as the right to property and freedom of expression (GENTILI, 2013).

Returning to the description of the assembly, the pedagogical coordination understood that most of the classes had not held them in the classroom, so the pedagogue asked that only the classes that did so manifest themselves. Some students asked to speak, however, it was not possible to understand their voices, because the acoustics of the court proved to be inefficient for the organization of more than 150 people who needed to talk.

The pedagogue's action, being close to the children at the time they spoke, was to try to “translate” what they emphasized in their speeches. One of the students suggested, as a means to reduce the problems of recess, that it be divided into two: at first, only for students of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year; and, in the second, for older students, from the 4th and 5th grades. When put

to the vote, the proposal was approved, however, its discussion was defined in more depth at the next meeting.

This issue resolved, the mother of one of the students requested to speak. She introduced herself as a nutritionist, so she wanted to talk about healthy eating, considering that on the 31st of the previous month, health and nutrition day was celebrated. In the final stretch of the assembly, the school librarian, also present, asked to talk a little about the Amazonian authors with whom she has been working in the library, and then put on the song “Floresta”, by Ana Peixoto. After this act, the assembly was closed and everyone returned to their normal activities.

Regardless of the criticism and the result of the assemblies, it is important to highlight that the observed school represents, for us, a differential and that the contradictions pointed out can serve to improve the democratic process and allow the student assemblies to become critical processes of social and historical participation of its educational community.

The analysis that we were able to make of this moment was of an educational practice based on spontaneity. In it, “the intellectual does not intervene, does not direct, crosses his arms. The action gives itself almost to itself, it is more uproar, noise” (FREIRE, 2006, p. 46).

This reveals that the figure of the school manager, who was on vacation, still works, despite discussions about democratic management as a surveillance action. Unfortunately, the change in mentality is slow and requires a reflective and committed willingness of all.

These behavioral spaces between what is thought, what is said and what is done expresses the rhetoric of a colonized society, there are idiosyncratic nuances that are endorsed by liberalism and neoliberalism, and that forge a kind of respect for individual needs, individual rights and competitiveness.

It is essential in student assemblies that the school goes beyond discussing its functions and processes of internal relations. It is necessary to see society as a whole, and the school and its school community inserted in the process of being part of the history of the world. It is not possible to think of student assemblies without understanding the mechanism that organizes society (BORDIEU, 2014).

In relation to this process, it was latent that the school resizes itself with the absence of the manager. During the vacation period, and during the participant observation, it was possible to realize that the manager is the main responsible for the change that occurred in the school in recent years, and, in her absence, certain processes, such as the assemblies themselves, lost their rhythm and/or ceased to be carried out, which demonstrates the need to spread democratic culture in the school.

It is essential, therefore, the knowledge of student assemblies as instruments of freedom, and realizing them as a banner derived from a democratic society does not make it as such. For that, it is necessary to disfigure this mistaken process of democracy, participation and collectivity. It is essential to fight against the instrumentalization of human life, forged on the basis of market preferences that produce models of a non-existent democracy.

It is noteworthy that student assemblies are of paramount importance for the democratization of relations at school, as their main contribution is the possibility of dialogue and debate on issues and problems common to the subjects of the school institution. Starting this process and presenting contradictions is not a problem, but a possibility for change. That is why we congratulate these paths and democratic attempts to participate in society.

### **Final considerations**

Student assemblies are experiences in transforming society, and as such, they are necessary for the construction of a participatory and critical democracy, fundamental for public schools in the country. The study of this reality does not apply to the others, but it allows us to perceive, in view of the historical totality of the world and the domains exercised in Brazil, the implications for education and the struggles necessary for citizen education.

In this sense, the school assemblies, object of this research, are part of a process of democratizing the institution and valuing the voices of children in a country where, despite the express legislation, their presence and place in the process of building their individual and collective autonomy is not respected.

In this way, the democratic perspective of school management in the institution is congratulated, as it represents one of the few to carry out these processes, considering that in Brazil the nominations for positions of trust are still numerous in the representation of power and make up a large percentage of liberal and neoliberal relations in society.

The assemblies of the researched school presented a series of problems, ranging from its structure to the periodicity. Despite this, their activities demonstrated contributions to the democratization process, the main one, as we pointed out throughout the study, was the possibility of dialogue and debate on issues and problems common to its participants, something indispensable not only in schools that intend to be democratic, but for societies.

These student assemblies give voice, even if in a tutored way, to the main subjects of the school, their students who, often, little or nothing are heard by the other school individuals, something that needs to be constantly and strongly fought, transformed.

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