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BRAZILIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: SPACES OF TENSION AND STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

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BRAZILIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: SPACES OF TENSION AND STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENCES AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

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1 – Opening our dialogue: situating problematizations regarding the Brazilian educational system

By proposing to discuss the Brazilian educational system and multiculturalism, we aim to present reflections regarding the Education in Brazil under the organization of the educational system and its legal bases, without losing sight of the changes that are mobilized by different points of power that make the world dynamic and subject to everyday transformations.

Some problematizations served as background to achieve this production. About them we highlight: *how is the Brazilian educational system organized on the legal basis?* What are the responsibilities of federal entities in providing education? What is the understanding about multiculturalism and how can this field of discussion mobilize the current Brazilian educational system? What response does the current organization of the educational system in Brazil offer for the recognition of social groups considered to be minorities? Are there formative experiences in Brazil arising from tensions and negotiations in cultural frontier spaces?

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To respond to these problematizations, it was necessary to contextualize the legal bases with a critical look at the norms that give centrality to cultural diversity, since these issues are present in the educational institutions of a plural and diverse country. Thus, it is a communication that stimulates reflections about the current Brazilian educational system, with a view to the singularities that essentialize social groups in different geographic spaces of this nation.

We also had to reflect on the understanding of education, especially because of the conceptual multiplicity that the word reveals, as well as its ambiguity when considering its etymological origin³. This reflection makes us think about the human beings, because they are the foundation of the educational process. By seeking this understanding, we have chosen to transcend the limits of the modern vision we inherited throughout our life history. We are guided by the evidence that the complexity of today's world shakes the idea of stability, of certainties, but also the belief in the utopias proclaimed by modernity.

In this context, we support the conception defended by Freire (1983) on education, since it breaks the technical-scientific rationality that characterized modernity. Hence, we assume the humanistic conception that breaks the Banking Education⁴ practice characterized by the domination of knowledge, oppression, alienation and dehumanization of the human beings participating in the educational process to guide us in the Liberating Education that emphasizes autonomy, dialogic and relational processes for humanization of learners.

We state that dialecticity is the key element in the Freirean conception of education, especially when we consider that humans educate themselves in communion, mediated

3 Education may have derived either from the Latin verb "*educare*" or from another verb, from the same language, "*educere*" – both with different meanings. Considering the original meaning of the word, "*Educare*" means to create, nourish, guide, teach, train, lead the individual from a point where he finds himself to another that he wants to reach. On the other hand, "*Educere*" etymologically means to extract, to be born, to take from, to bring about the actualization of something latent, to promote the emergence – from the inside out – of the potentialities that the individual possesses. (ECCO, NAGARO, 2015, p.3525)

4 Term used by Paulo Freire to describe and critique the traditional education system, which refers to the metaphor of students as containers into which educators must put knowledge. He argued that this model reinforces a lack of critical thinking and knowledge ownership in students.

by a certain object of knowledge in their different social realities, as in his own words [...] “Nobody educates anybody, just as no one educates themselves alone: men educate themselves in communion, mediated by the world. “ (FREIRE, 1983a, 79)

Under the legal bases of Brazil, the article 205 of the Federal Constitution declares education as the right of everyone and the duty of the State and the family to be developed and encouraged with the collaboration of society. In the article 2 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), education aims at “the full development of the person, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship and qualification for work.” Cordão (2009) contributes to the discussions about education, presented in the legal bases, and analyzes that it is not synonymous with schooling or simply teaching. “The educational process does not end with the end of the schooling of the individuals, but it is essentially a process of permanent learning that occurs before, during and after school education” (p.21).

Hence, we defend education as a dynamic process that empowers the human being to reflect and intervene in their environment, evolving towards a new social formation and that does not occur only in school. We consider that education assumes other dimensions of formation mediated by human actions in this diverse and plural world.

Based on this understanding, the article aims to present school education as one of the dimensions of education, through the dialogue about the legal bases that support the organization of the Brazilian educational system with issues related to multiculturalism.

Finally, we contextualize multiculturalism from two perspectives defended by Silva (2013, p.85): the first as a “[...] legitimate movement to claim cultural groups dominated within those countries to have their cultural forms recognized and represented in the national culture”; the second perspective is ruled as [...] “a solution to the ‘problems’ that the presence of racial and ethnic groups places, within those countries, for a dominant national culture.” The questions presented mainly promote reflection and studies on diversity, but we do not aim at a polarized response, because this study requires a willingness to operate in a space of tension, negotiation and agreements

between people placed in different contexts and driven by different demands, given its complexity.

To advance in the debate, we present the experience of the multicultural curriculum organized from the reality of the Brazilian educational system, developed in a space of Brazil – Japan cultural frontier.

The Licenciante Degree Course in Pedagogy – Agreement Brazil-Japan – offered in partnership between the Tokai Universities and the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), was a formative experience at the higher education level of recognition of differences and of multiple identities, which were evidenced through the negotiations established in a network of actions that responded to the many challenges of a multicultural process – especially considering the dialogue provided with the Other – situations which allowed: different spatial-temporal (12-hour variation in the time zone); different cultures (East-West), bilingualism (structure and different linguistic codes), among other issues. The Other was considered, therefore, as an interlocutor negotiating, or not, meanings produced within their culture (TORRES, 2017).

In this production, the educational system will be presented from the 70s and 80s, mainly due to the intense performance of different social groups fighting for the realization of their interests, aiming to realize the rights of the exploited and dominated classes, since teaching in the Brazil was historically marked by social inequalities, in which the white and male bourgeoisie had greater access and permanence in the educational system.

Regarding the advances in the policies and management of national education, it should be remembered that Brazil has, in its history and at the present time, unresolved regional asymmetries regarding the access and permanence of students to education, requiring more organicity of educational policies. Only from the Constitution of 1988, there is formulation and implementation of redistributive social policies. We cite, for example, in Brazil: i) affirmative actions of quotas, student assistance, among others; ii) restructuring of private higher education funding policies with the approval and

implementation of the *Universidade para Todos* (University for All) Program (ProUni) and the improvement of the Higher Education Student Fund (FIES⁵). Hence, we present the legal bases of the Brazilian educational system and its main characteristics.

1.1 – General Characteristics of the Brazilian Educational System: spaces of tensions and struggle for meaning

When we approached the organization and management of the Education System in Brazil, we also had to briefly reflect on the concept of the system, since the term is broad, and we make use of it in its application in the organization in the Brazilian education. When we looked up for meanings in dictionaries⁶, we could define it as a set of parts which coordinated and integrated with each other, allowing us to establish a logical interconnection between the educational levels of our country, forming an autonomous and independent whole to achieve a common goal. Because in Brazil the three entities – federal, state and municipal – are constitutionally responsible for the provision of public basic education, the legislation states that this offer must be made through the Collaboration Regime. It is, therefore, a strategy to avoid overlapping and dispersion of actions.

For Bordignon (2009), the term educational system appears in Brazil for the first time in the Constitution of 1934. The author refers to the historical route of the legal operating frameworks of each system. According to him, the educational system is mobilized for social political issues inherent to Brazil.

[...] it is up to the Federal Government – in relation to the territories (article 150) – the States and the Federal District scopes (Article 151) to organize and maintain educational systems. But, the centralism of the Estado Novo [authoritarian state period from 1937 to 1945] hindered this decentralization advocated by the Constitution. The LDB nº 4024/61, conceived by the 1946

5 FIES finances, by means of interest subsidized by the Federal Government, students from private higher education institution (IES). All of these incentives serve diversity and support driven programs.

6 Online Portuguese dictionary, available at <https://www.dicio.com.br/sistema/> Access on 30 March 2018. Michaelis Moderno Dictionary of the Portuguese Language, online version, available at <http://michaelis.uol.com.br/moderno-portugues/busca/portugues-brasileiro/sistema/> Access on 30 March 2018.

Constitution registered for 15 years in the context of the redemocratization process, created the Federal and State Education Systems, **incoherence with federative regime and the autonomy of the federated units with the policy to overcome centralism.** (emphasis added by us; BORDIGNON, 2009, p.26).

Obviously, the LDB of 1961, the one of 1971 – ten years after, and later, the LDB of 2006 only took on administrative sense, since they were not articulated. They worked, therefore, in a restricted way to legal milestones without any organizational function, recognized as incoherent and inconsistent. This mobilized educators who defended the public school.

After the promulgation of Constitutional Amendment (EC) No. 59, of 12th November 2009, among other changes introduced in the constitutional text, article 214 recognizes the National Education System. In accordance with the provisions of EC No. 59, the National Education System must have as its articulating element the National Education Plan (PNE) and the regime of collaboration among federal entities, defining guidelines, goals and implementation strategies to ensure the maintenance and development of education at its various levels, stages and modalities through integrated actions of public authorities (SOUSA, 2017).

The competences of each system are prescribed by what is provided by article 211 of the Federal Constitution. [...] “The Federal Government, the States, the Federal District and the municipalities will collaborate to organize their education systems”. The constitutional provision goes beyond. In the *caput* of article 8 of Law 9.994/96 the article 211 of the Constitution is repeated and, in the paragraphs, establishes that the “Federal Government will organize the federal education system and the Territories.”. It is worth mentioning changes promoted by Constitutional Amendments No.14/1996 and No.53/2006, whose phrasing of the paragraphs of article 211 of the Federal Constitution introduces the following information:

§1 The Union will organize the Federal education system and the Territories, will finance federal public education institutions and perform – in educational matters – a redistributive and supplementary function, in order to guarantee equalization of educational opportunities and the minimum quality standard

of education by the means of technical and financial assistance to the States, the Federal District and the municipalities (wording given by Constitutional Amendment No. 14 of 1996);

§2 The municipalities will act primarily in Elementary and Pre-school education (wording given by Constitutional Amendment No. 14 of 1996);

§3 The States and the Federal District will act primarily in Elementary and High School (included by Constitutional Amendment No. 14, 1996);

§4 In the organization of their education systems, States and municipalities will define ways of collaboration in order to ensure the universalization of compulsory education (included in Constitutional Amendment No. 14 of 1996);

§5 Public primary education will focus on regular education (included in Constitutional Amendment No. 53 of 2006).

It can be observed that the legal system, article 211 of the Federal Constitution, provides, as a form of relationship between the systems of the Federal Government, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities, the “collaboration regime”. To represent the responsibilities for the provision of basic education, we present Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Responsibilities for the offer of Basic Education

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	STATES AND THE FEDERAL DISTRICT	MUNICIPALITIES
Federal educational institutions	Elementary education	Elementary education
Supplementary and redistributive function	High School	Child education

Source: Law No. 9,394/96

Table 1 shows a synthesis of the legal devices previously transcribed. In this course, it is important to highlight the planning of education that interrelates federated entities in educational policies, programs, especially when we consider the role of education plans (national, state, district and municipal) after its approval.

It is up to the municipality to offer early childhood education and, above all, primary education – its primary responsibility. The states are primarily responsible for offering secondary education and for guaranteeing elementary education in conjunction with municipalities.

As for the Federal District – given its specificity – it has the same powers of states and municipalities. On the other hand, the Federal Government assumes a redistributive and supplementary function, providing financial and technical assistance to the States, the Federal District and Municipalities for the attendance of their education systems, as a priority to compulsory schooling⁷.

With regard to higher education, it can be offered both by the public and private sector, and involves the burden of the federated entities, especially the Federal Government. Private institutions⁸ of higher education, as well as the Federal Higher Education Institutions, are part of the federal education system and must be aligned with the regulation and evaluation policies defined by this system. The municipal, state, and district higher education institutions are linked to state/district education systems, and should also consider national legislation, including regulatory and evaluation policies.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the scope of jurisdiction of each federated entity for a better understanding of the Brazilian Educational System, shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Jurisdiction of education systems

FEDERAL	STATES AND FEDERAL DISTRICT	MUNICIPALITIES
Federal education institutions	State education institutions	Municipal institutions
Private institutions of higher education	Municipal institutions of higher education	Private institutions of child education
Federal bodies of education	Private institutions of elementary and high school	Municipal bodies of education
State bodies of education		

Source: Law No. 9.394/96

⁷ The Constitutional Amendment 59/2009 establishes that the attendance of compulsory education from 4 to 17 years should be universalized until 2016. It is, undoubtedly, one of the biggest challenges for basic education in PNE, present in several goals and strategies of the plan.

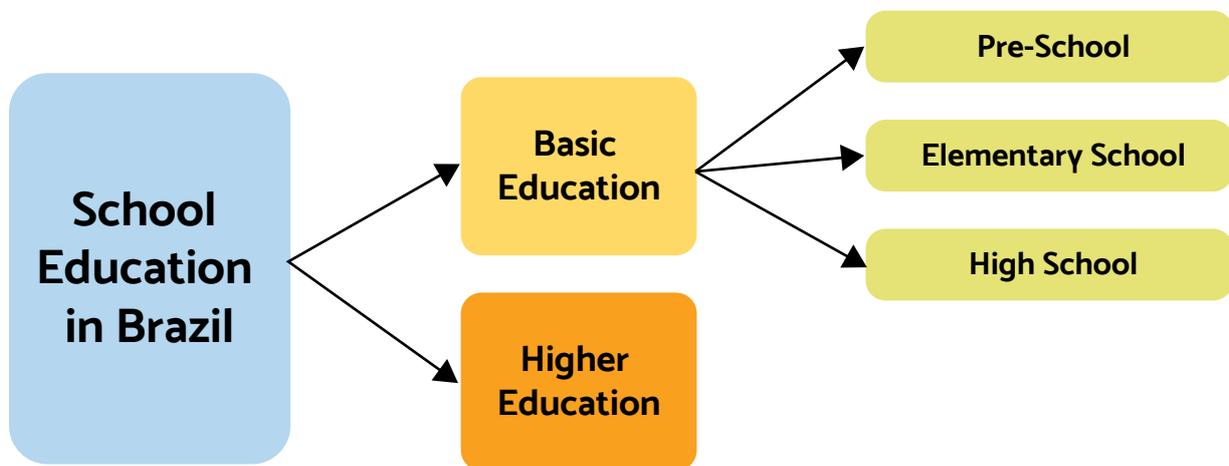
⁸ In Brazil, higher education offered by the private sector is a state concession.

The jurisdiction of each federated entity is expressed in § 2 of article 8 of the LDB, which states: “education systems will be free to organize in accordance with the law”, as prescribed in articles 16, 17 and 18. Given the understanding of the field of operation, we will detail the levels, stages and modalities of teaching of the Brazilian Educational System, from the perspective of legal provisions.

1.2 – Levels, stages and modalities of teaching from the Brazilian educational system: recognition of differences.

The 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) Act organized education at levels, stages and educational modalities. With regard to the organization in levels, the LDB divided the education into two, namely: basic education and higher education (article 21). Basic education is subdivided into three stages: pre-school education, elementary school and high school, as represented in Figure 1:

Fig. 1 - Organization of Education Levels in School Education in Brazil



Source: Law No. 9,394/96

Article 22 of the LDB establishes that Basic Education: (...) “aims to develop the learner, ensure the common formation which is indispensable for the exercise of citizenship and provide them with the means to progress in work and in further studies” (BRASIL, 1996).

The three stages of basic education⁹ demonstrated in Figure 1 do not constitute separate divisions. They delimit temporal and pedagogical spaces of human development with their own characteristics and singularities. Each of these stages has a social policy function, with peculiar educational intentionality establishing pedagogical actions through educational projects to be developed in the schools together with the students. The stages complement and reinforce each other in a pulsating motor for the formation of the individual as a whole (BRASIL, 2010).

Table 3 shows the duration and the age range of each level of education and modality established in the School Education of Brazil, according to LDB of 1996.

Table 3 - Levels, Modalities, Duration and corresponding Age Range in Brazilian Education

LEVELS	STAGES		DURATION	AGE RANGE
Basic education	Pre-School	Nursery	3 years	From 0 to 3 years
		Pre-school	2 years	From 4 to 5 years
	Elementary School		9 years	From 6 to 14 years
	High School		3 years	From 15 to 17 years
Higher education	Courses and programs (undergraduate and post-graduate) per area.		Varying	From 18 to 24 years

Source: Law No. 9,394/96

In Brazil, compulsory and free schooling starts in the pre-school (4-5 years), part of the kindergarten and completes in the secondary school (15 to 17 years). Paragraph I of article 208 of the Federal Constitution, as amended by Constitutional Amendment 59/2009, extended the State's obligation to provide compulsory basic education free of charge from 4 to 17 years of age, which also included free offer for all those who had no access at the right age. This device shelters and regulates social demands, due to the increased access of people aged 15 or over who have not finished elementary school. Another change in legal provisions is regarding fundamental education, which through Law no. 11,274/2006, began to last for 9 years, with the suggested age range of 6 to 14 years.

⁹ Etymology of the term Base comes from the Greek “*básis*”, “*eós*” and means, at the same time, pedestal, support, foundation as well as walking, setting in motion, advancing (CURY, 2002).

In compliance with the federative agreement, LDB also defined the responsibilities and obligations of each of the federated entities, regarding the offer of each stage of basic education (articles 9, 10 and 11).

It is worth it to note that with the amendment of the LDB by virtue of Law 13,415/2017, Brazil approved the normative document National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which applies exclusively to school education and defines the organic and progressive set of learning that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of Basic Education (MEC, 2017). However, there are other understandings regarding this normalization, as Lopes and Oliveira point out: “valorization of large-scale testing as a control of what is learned [...] control processes transform the right to learn in the duty to learn certain knowledge in certain ways, disregarding the multiple differences produced in the curricular process” (2016, p.02).

As far as the Ministry of Education (MEC) is concerned, the document includes both the knowledge and the capacity to mobilize and apply it. To dimension the levels, stages and modality of the Brazilian educational system, the details of the organization of the system from the legal devices are shown in Table 4.

Quadro nº 04- Detalhamento do Sistema Educacional Brasileiro.

LEVELS	MODALITIES
Child Education Primarily Municipal Education Network	Nursery
	Pre-School
Elementary Education (EF) Primarily Municipal Education Network Primarily State Education Network	Initial years (1 st to 5 th grade)
	Final years (6 th to 9 th grade)
High School (EM) Primarily State Education Network	Regular
	Normal/professorship
	Integrated to professional education
Professional Education (EP) Primarily State Education Network Federal Government Institutes	Concomitant with High School
	After High Education
Special Education (EE) State and Municipal Education Network	Specials classes + Special schools
	Common classes

LEVELS	MODALITIES
Youth and adult education (EJA) - EF Primarily State Education Network	Face-to-face
	Integrated to professional education - Face-to-face
	Integrated to professional education - Semi face-to-face
Youth and adult education (EJA) - EM Primarily State Education Network	Face-to-face
	Integrated to professional education - Face-to-face
	Integrated to professional education - Semi face-to-face
Higher education (ES) Primarily Federal Government	Face-to-face undergraduation
	Distance learning undergraduation
	Sequential face-to-face courses
	Sequential distance learning course
NOTE: The private school network offers all levels and modalities, after authorization of operation given by the Municipal, State or Federal Education Councils.	

Source: Law No. 9,394/96

The detail shown in Table 4 denotes how challenging it is to guarantee the right to education in line with national guidelines – especially when we consider 5,570 municipalities within the 26 States and one Federal District. In each one of them, mobilizations are necessary to move forward in improving access, permanence and learning with quality, at all levels, stages and modalities. The discussion in Brazil therefore requires the establishment of policies, strategies and actions that contribute to the improvement of education. We have, for example, the National Agreement for Literacy in the Right Age – from 2012 – with the aim that all children are literate by the age of eight – at the end of the 3rd year of elementary school. It is a formal commitment of the Federal Government, the Federal District, the states and municipalities.

It is important to note that actions need to be engendered in the investment of the federated entities in the policies of initial and continuing training, career and salary plans, as well as improvement of working conditions. Regarding this, Brazil has the National Education Plan (PNE¹⁰) as a Law which establishes 20 goals and 253 strategies for attending basic and higher education for ten years (2011 to 2020), in line with the

¹⁰ The plan was approved by Law 13,005 of June 25, 2014, after three years of discussion in the Brazilian National Congress. The plan allocates 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) to education and provides that expenditures with child-care centers and programs such as the Student Financing Fund (FIES) and the University for All Program (PROUNI) will enter the investment plots.

Brazilian educational challenges in the different systems education institutions, and society in general.

Guided by article 204 of the Federal Constitution, the Guidelines of the National Plan of Education (article 2) that will subsidize educational policies in Brazil are:

I - eradication of illiteracy;

II - universalization of school attendance;

III - overcoming educational inequalities, with emphasis on promoting racial, regional, gender and sexual orientation.

IV- improvement of the quality of education;

V- training for work and citizenship;

VI - promotion of the principle of democratic management of education;

humanistic, scientific, cultural and technological promotion of the country.

VII - establishment of a goal for the application of public resources in education as a proportion of the gross domestic product, which assures the fulfillment of expansion needs, with a standard of quality and equity;

VIII - valuing of education professionals;

VIX - promotion of the principles of respect for human rights, diversity and socio-environmental sustainability.

X - dissemination of the principles of equity, respect for diversity and democratic management of education;

Considering the federative organization of the Brazilian State, the effectiveness of the PNE as a planning instrument requires its deployment in State and Municipal Plans of Education. In this sense, Law 13,005/2014 determined that “the states, the Federal District and the municipalities should prepare their corresponding education plans or adjust the plans already approved by law, in accordance with the guidelines, goals and strategies set forth in this PNE, within one year of its publication” (article 8). Adjustments will require from the federated entities budget guidelines in the annual budgets that subsidize the presaged goals in the PNE.

We emphasize that the execution of the plan, considering the political nature of the planning process, will occur from the support of the actors committed to the continuous monitoring and periodic evaluations of the goals. Thus, we emphasize the importance of monitoring and evaluation of educational levels in four instances: Ministry of Education (MEC); Education Committees of the Chamber of Deputies and the Education, Culture and Sport Commission of the Federal Senate; National Council of Education (CNE); National Education Forum (FNE).

We believe that effective participation in conferences and the proposal of amendments to the Reference Document constitute an important channel for the broad participation of civil and political society, in order to achieve PNE goals and, therefore, an education of quality for all.

Regarding quality, it is important to reflect: “What quality” and “For whom?”, since we are invited continuously to reinforce discourses marked by hierarchies, control and models of conduct, beliefs and values that marginalize and stigmatize social groups in favor of others.

Hence, in the section below we will present a brief discussion about how the current Educational System of Brazil is conceived and how this organization responds to the recognition of social groups considered as minority, from the details of the teaching modalities recommended in LDB/1996.

2. Modalities of Education recommended in LDB: reflections on the recognition of differences and multiple identities.

According to studies carried out by Santos (2006), the legitimation of modern science was based on the denial of the rational character to all forms of knowledge that were not based on the epistemological principles and the methodological rules diffused by the technical rationality. Confidence in the potential of science to reveal truth explains the extension of methods and the scientific lexicon to other areas.

In this sense, struggles for signification are manifested and become objects of reflection in this article when we resignify the school in the perspective of a liberating education previously discussed, especially when countering hegemonic ways of producing knowledge and manifestation of multiculturalism.

Studies by Said (2011, p. 308) reveal that, even in the face of Western science's attempts at universalism, "pan-African, Pan-Asian activists emerge; nothing could stop them." This 'pan' movement is a reaction to the belief in the intellectual inferiority of peoples of non-European descent, through militancy of struggles over the place of intellectuals, [...] "the hegemonic ways of producing science and valuing inner plurality of science are questioned" (p. 308).

One of the struggles for significance of groups recognized as minorities, victims of the universalism of Western science, is exclusion, requiring government policies to correct and/or minimize the great challenge with the difficulties in completing primary and secondary education in the right age in the two levels of education (basic and higher).

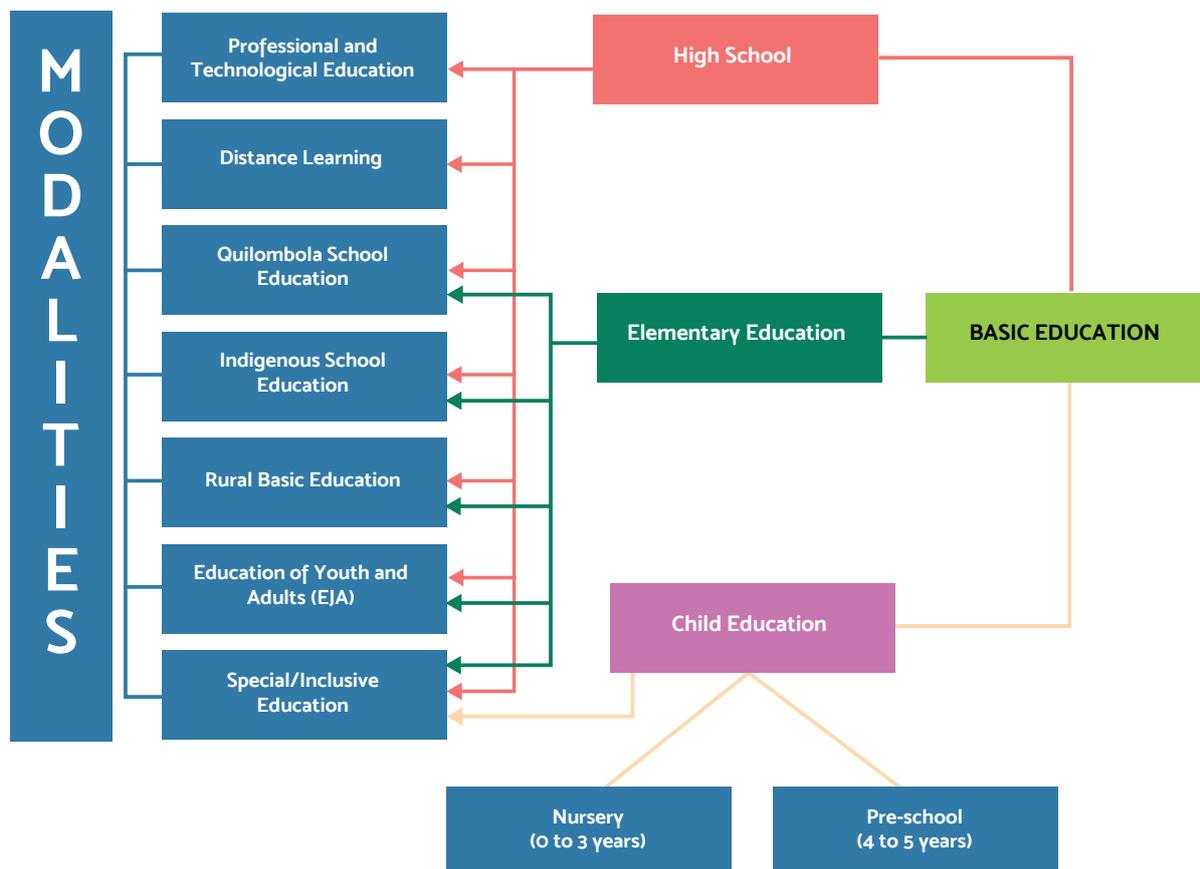
In this perspective, LDB contributes to the minimization of exclusion by defining as modalities: a) youth and adult education (EJA) to those who did not have access or continuation of studies in primary and secondary education in the right age (article 38) ; b) professional and technological education, which integrates with the different levels and modalities of education and the dimensions of work, science and technology (Article 39); and, c) special education, to learners with disabilities or giftedness, and should be offered, preferably, in the regular network of education (article 58).

In addition to the aforementioned modalities, in Brazil there are prejudices of origin, race, gender, age and other forms of discrimination, at the same time as the legal bases foment and try to promote access and permanence, respecting regional specificities, particularly socio-cultural and environmental diversity. We highlight: indigenous school education, *quilombola*¹¹ school education, education for youth and adults who are

11 Note from the translator: *Quilombolas* are descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until abolition in 1888. They are slaves who have been refugees in *quilombos*, or descendants of black slaves whose ancestors, during the period of slavery, fled sugarcane plantations, farms and small estates where they performed various manual labor to form small villages called *quilombos*.

deprived of their liberty in penal establishments, education in the countryside, as well as riverside and forest populations. Those are policies of inclusion and affirmative action that fight against social inequalities and regional asymmetries in Brazil, which is diverse and plural.

These modalities are represented in Figure 2:



Source: Sousa (2017, p.75)

Figure 2 demonstrates how much the educational system seeks to open up possibilities for inclusion, provided that they are articulated and strengthened with education councils, school councils and other bodies committed to education, based on the optimization of pedagogical processes. Public authorities must ensure an integrated set of programs, materials, as well as curricular and pedagogical references that contribute to the access to diverse cultural assets.

Bhabha contributes by arguing that cultural systems are constructed in symbolic space, in which the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-signified, re-historicized and otherwise read, to symbolize and signify other things:

The broader significance of the postmodern condition lies in the awareness that the epistemological “limits” of those ethnocentric ideas are also the enunciative frontiers of a range of other dissonant, even dissident voices and histories - women, colonized people, minority groups, and those with policed sexualities. This is because the demography of the new internationalism is the history of postcolonial migration, the narratives of the cultural and political diaspora, the great social displacements of peasant and aboriginal communities, the poetics of exile, the austere prose of political and economic refugees. (BHABHA, 1998, pp. 23-24).

Thus, the teaching modalities defined by the LDB strengthen policies and actions of great importance, especially for historically neglected sectors of this level of education, such as blacks, *pardos*¹² and indigenous people. In response to this exclusion, there is an organic education action in Brazil that brings in the PNE several strategies, but we highlight the item “e” quoted below:

[...] a specific collaboration regime for the implementation of school education modalities that need to consider **ethnic-educational territories** and the use of strategies that take into account the socio-cultural and linguistic identities and specificities of each community involved, once assured the prior consultation and informed to this community. (our highlight BRASIL, 2014).

At the moment, there are 21 ethnic-educational Brazilian territories and others will be implemented. This territorial division of indigenous peoples is important to define actions and policies of specific school education for different peoples. Certainly, this social mapping will interfere in the organization and management processes of the institutions and should be considered in the expansionist dynamics of the National Education Plan (PNE) Law Project.

Still on the PNE scope, we present the ten-year plans that will have to be elaborated in the next years, through the collaboration regime and the articulated planning

¹² Note from the translator: The word *pardo* is used to refer to Brazilians with varied ethnic backgrounds; people with a mixture of skin colors, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).

between federated entities. Among the various strategies, we highlight those of item “b”, mentioned below:

b- I) secure the articulation of educational policies with other social policies, particularly **the cultural ones**; II) consider the specific needs of the rural populations, also the **indigenous and quilombola communities**, ensuring educational equity and **cultural diversity**; III) guarantee the attendance of the specific needs in **special education**, ensuring the inclusive educational system at all levels, stages and modalities (our highlight BRASIL, 2014)

It is worth mentioning that the articulation between planning, education plans and budgets, foreseen in the PNE are based on: pluriannual plan; the budget guidelines; annual budgets of the Federal Government, the states, the Federal District and the municipalities. All should also be formulated to ensure the budget allocation compatible with PNE guidelines, targets and strategies and education plans in order to enable them to be fully implemented. This set of interconnected actions is represented in Figure 3:

Figure 3 - Set of actions interconnected with PNE



Source: Figure adapted from the slides of the discipline Organization and Functioning of Basic Education. Souza (s/d)

All these fundamental initiatives for the improvement and democratization of education of quality in Brazil should be part of the planning of education and State policies, counting on the participation, monitoring and evaluation of the Brazilian society, without losing sight of those who are in the space of cultural frontier. Despite the existence of legal support, the struggle for inclusion and permanence, the search for respect for regional specificities and socio-cultural and environmental diversity are still processes of permanent tension. In view of the legal context of the educational system presented, we believe that all curricular policies should be produced in redefined space-time and, in order to help reflection on the complexity of the inter and multicultural issue, we will present a formative experience with Brazilian descendants of Japanese in Japan.

Hence, we present a formative multicultural experience.

3. Brazilian schools in Japan: the between identity place and the potential for multi-cultural intercultural curricular production

The vicissitudes of the globalized world alter the cartography of nations, hybridizing cultures and affecting national identities. However, it must be considered that global consumerism, cultural flows, shared identities or even cultural infiltration do not occur in a vacuum.

These processes are marked by conflicts, tensions and power relations that question the thesis of homogenization of culture. According to Hall (2006), if there is cultural infiltration, there are also efforts to maintain local identities even within the logic of compression. It is important to consider that the very concept of identity is complex, even when it is a single person. For this reason, nowadays, the idea of identity as the nucleus or essence of our being (human, rational, centered, conscious, stable, etc.), as it was supposed in modernity, has been replaced by another one of plural, mobile, off-center character.

The subject takes on different identities at different moments. The identities that are not unified around a coherent “I”. Within us there are contradictory identities pushing into different directions in such a way that our identifications are continually being displaced. If we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comfortable story about ourselves or a comforting “narrative of the self” [...]. Fully unified, complete, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a disconcerting and changing multiplicity of possible identities, and we could relate – at least temporarily - with each one of them. (HALL, 2006, p.13).

In brief, we can say that cultural identities are produced by multiple personal identities that are contradictory, unstable and changing in themselves. These paradoxes and contradictions of our time reveal the complexity of society whose history we are leading. As educators, we are challenged to promote an education that does not ignore and does not naturalize social injustices and neglect for life.

In this context, the singular proposal of teacher training in Brazil emerged, which met the legal provisions of the Brazilian educational system, and a demand for schooling for children of Brazilians born or residing in Japan. This happened through the Licentiate course in Pedagogy offered by UFMT in Japan – from 2009 to 2013 – as a training policy for Brazilian teachers in foreign territory. For Torres (2017), this condition made the course a unique experience engendered on the basis of an international, intercultural and interinstitutional agreement. We see this curricular policy as produced in space-time of cultural frontier.

Bhabha (2007) collaborates with this understanding by arguing that the hybrid plays a prominent role in opposition to polarities – the “inter” emerges.

The *inter* - the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the between-place that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It allows us to begin to glimpse the national, anti-nationalist and the “people” stories. By exploring this Third Space we have the possibility of avoiding the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves. (BHABHA, 2007, p.69).

Being in the “inter”, in between, demanded the willingness of all those involved in the production of the course project. Willingness to operate in a space of ambivalence, tension, negotiation and agreements between partners placed in different contexts and driven by different demands. The challenge was to break political, social and cultural boundaries without turning them into inequalities.

In the situation experienced in Japan, we saw that there are many cultural differences for Brazilians living there, even if descended from Japanese. The challenges are generated by several reasons. As a simple example – but of complex developments – the fact that the Japanese language is written with ideograms arranged in columns, from top to bottom, while Portuguese is written with words placed in horizontal lines from left to right. From these small differences, we highlight differences in patterns of behavior and schooling, leading Brazilian descendants of Japanese to create improvised schools to meet the demands of the children of Brazilians born or residents in Japan (LIMA; TORRES, 2016).

In considering this reality, there were interinstitutional articulations without losing sight of the Organizational System of Education in Brazil, such as: Secretariat of Distance Education (SEED¹³), Ministry of Education of Brazil (MEC); the UFMT; the Ministry of Education of Japan; the Brazilian Embassy in Tokyo and Tokai University/Japan. For Alonso and Onuki (2013), the partnership between these institutions represented one of the first political steps toward the recognition and incorporation of national schools into Brazilian and Japanese educational systems.

The agreement established that the course should serve as priority “teachers in service” in Brazilian schools in Japan (EBJ), considering that the majority of the professionals who worked as teachers in these Brazilian schools did not have the required training to teach professionally in Pre-School Education (EI) and in the Early Years of Elementary Education (AIEF). Those who had already graduated from higher education were graduates of other areas than licentiates. Among the graduates, there were engineers, bachelors in various areas, including doctors.

¹³ Currently extinct in MEC/Brazil.

It is necessary to emphasize that the offer of a course of Pedagogy by the UFMT, in foreign territory, was only possible by the counterpart of Tokai University, which mediated negotiations with the Japanese government. The institution also had an important role in offering an Extension Course on Japanology, concomitant to the undergraduate course, for the students of the course, in order to contribute to the process of inclusion in Japanese culture. It is worth noting that many decasséguis¹⁴ do not have enough knowledge of the language and culture of Japan, even though they have lived there for more than five years.

The Japanology course was based on:

[...] culture of difference, for reflection and discussion about the acquisition of languages and the social integration of Brazilian migrants in Japan. The highlight was for children and young people living unique experiences that deserve to be valued and shared with the society which receives them. (MIZOGUCHI, 2014, p.35).

By stating that any curricular policy can be produced in space-time of cultural boundary, the experience of the Pedagogy course offered in Japan reveals the maximum of the possibility of achievements reached in the dialogue between the State and the citizens. At the macropolitical level of mobilization of the Educational System of Brazil and Japan involving the Ministry of Education of both countries. At the curricular level of two universities, when issues that address the specific needs of Brazilian migrants in Japan are included in the subjects' schedule. At the local level, when we observe the creativity of teachers in their respective stages (Figures 4 and 5), in creating knowledge, inventing new forms of understanding and inclusion of hybrid cultures as a process of respect for different cultural forms.

¹⁴ The word decasségui derives from Dekasegu – a Japanese word formed by two verbs, deru – (leave) and kasegu – someone who leaves home to work and comes back (TORRES, 2017).

Figure 4 - Licentiate student writing on the blackboard for Brazilian children during the curricular internship of the course.



Source: (TORRES, 2017, p. 88)

Figure 5 - Licentiate student teaching how to write the vowel katakana, hiragana e kanji with a brush in a curricular internship provided by the course.



Source: (TORRES, 2017, p. 88)

The unique experience of teacher training – Brazil-Japan Pedagogy Course – and its results of curricular production in a cultural frontier space make us reflect that in the context of multiculturalism there is no victory, no defeat of cultures; these will be “merged into discourses of science, nation, market, common knowledge, religiosities and so many others, all of which are also hybrid in their constitutions” (MACEDO, 2006, 289).

Like Macedo (2006, p. 287), we understand that it is not productive to conceive school curricula as a place of confrontation between cultures and, much less, we should choose this or that side.

We believe that the curricular production in the cultural frontier space as a space of tension leads to creation, as was the Pedagogy course, within the Brazil-Japan Agreement, especially by the social movements that gain strength in the Forums, since the voices of the affected community find rifts and negotiations for multicultural curricular policy production. Therefore, “It is essential to strengthen these spaces that allow the construction of pedagogies inherent in learning communities and that the freedom of choices, expressions and creations are allowed.” (KAWAHARA, 2015, p. 241).

4. Marking the point of arrival: final considerations

Our reflections express an understanding that tensions around power (in macro and/or micro contexts) make the world active and subject to change, and that identity assumes an important role as the driving force of new understandings, negotiations and meanings.

Faced with the discussions, it is important to understand that education has a broader and vaster meaning than teaching, and that the Brazilian educational system take on one of the dimensions of education that is school education. However, we defend liberating education in accordance with the ideas of Paulo Freire, since it can promote the production of new knowledge that enhances the exercise of citizenship

in the school space without losing sight of what the constitution professes [...] “school education constitutes the right of everyone and the duty of the State and of the family”.

In the Education System of Brazil, there are two levels of education – basic and higher – based on the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law No. 9394/96, and on the current principles of the 1988 Constitution. Basic education complies with three stages: early childhood and elementary education, as well as high school. The states are responsible for high school education, municipalities for early childhood education, and elementary education is the responsibility of both organized in a collaborative way. The Federal Government will give priority to higher education, although it has obligations with elementary education, since it constitutes a subjective public right.

In regard to the teaching modalities provided by Law, they give visibility to groups considered minorities, but do not vouch the population historically disregarded in the definition of educational policies and management of educational systems and educational institutions. Actions and investments articulated between the federated entities are required.

We consider that the creation processes for the Licentiate course in Pedagogy – agreement Brazil-Japan – reveal an understanding that official policies are not produced exclusively by the State. The subjects placed in the context of the practice (parents, teachers, students, community), despite being placed in territories far from their respective nations, act on educational policies, in a perspective of promoting multiculturalism that does not operate in one-way funding.

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