

Unified Educational Centres (CEUs) - democratic and intersectoral management to promote popular participation¹

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ABSTRACT. Despite the legal consecration, the democratic management of the public school remains a difficult task to achieve in terms of building intersectionality, both among government bodies and with the local community. There are normative references, but they are insufficient to guarantee the democratization of school management in terms of encouraging popular participation, recognition of the territory, and the feeling of belonging.

This text, based on the analysis of the legislation, presents some of the political and organizational as well as historical and cultural obstacles that have hindered the achievement of democratic management of the „Unified Educational Centre“ public space.

Keywords: Democratic management; School management; Democracy; Intersectionality.

ABSTRAKT. Trotz gesetzlicher Verankerung bleibt die demokratische Verwaltung staatlicher Schulen bezüglich des Aufbaus der Intersektorialität eine Aufgabe komplexer Verwirklichung, sowohl bei staatlichen Behörden als auch innerhalb der Kommunen. Es bestehen Referenznormen, die aber unzureichend sind, um die Demokratisierung der Schulverwaltung bezüglich der Förderung gemeinschaftlicher Partizipation. Dieser Text basiert auf der Analyse von gesetzlichen Bestimmungen und präsentiert einige politische, organisatorische und kulturelle Hindernisse, die die Umsetzung der demokratischen Verwaltung des öffentlichen Raumes der „Vereinigten Bildungszentren“ (CEUs) schwer gemacht haben.

Stichwörter: demokratische Verwaltung; Schulverwaltung; Demokratie; Intersektorialität.

Introduction

Some of the questions posed by the research „Dealing with new spaces: children and adolescents in the appropriation of the architectural complex of the CEU Butantã (São Paulo, Brazil)“, refer to the strategies created at the CEU, both by the students and the adults:

- What strategies are created by the students (children, and adolescents) so that they can take over the social and educational spaces of CEU Butantã?

1. This article is a product of the project “Dealing with new spaces: children and adolescents in the appropriation of the architectural complex of the CEU Butantã (São Paulo, Brazil)”, financed by Mack research. Linked to the Research Groups in Social Pedagogy and Studies in History of Culture, Societies, and Media, of the Graduate Program in Education, Art, and History of Culture, of Mackenzie Presbyterian University, in partnership with the Universities of Singer and Alanus, Germany, and the Municipal Secretariat of Education of São Paulo. It also counts on the collaboration of researchers from other national and international universities.

- What strategies are created by adults (members of management teams, teaching staff, staff, and families) in the school community to foster the processes of appropriation of the social and educational spaces of this CEU;
- The strategies created by both learners and adults are expressed in meaningful learning capable of promoting in learners the development of human capacities - creativity, attention, thought, language (sign, oral, written, artistic), curiosity, concentration, memory, affectivity, among others?

The research aims to observe, describe and analyze the behavior of the students of the educational, cultural, and sports project of CEU Butantã in their daily life and the complex reality of their neighborhood as „appropriation of social spaces“, to understand and verify possible results of this coexistence.

Management, or rather managers, assume an important role in this context, because integration actions, actions aimed at a broader collective than students, depend on them. On the Manager depends the offer of spaces beyond the existing environments in the three educational units.

The Unified Educational Centers - CEUs - bring together in a single space several public facilities (schools, theatre, laboratories, pools, sports courts, library, and telecenters) coordinated by the Municipal Department of Education of the City of São Paulo. The initial project shared the management with the Municipal Secretaries of Culture and Sports and Leisure. It also maintained center permanent cooperation with several Secretariats: Urban Security, Communication and Social Information, Health, Social Assistance, Green and Environment, Development, Work and Solidarity.

The CEU synthesized, at the time it was implemented, the concept of education that we want for the city of São Paulo: the articulation of a network of relations, which promotes the dialogue between the different areas and the different equipment, guaranteeing the specific function of the school and expanding the possibilities of integral formation of the human being:

The CEU highlights the curriculum that is built in different times and spaces, in the manifestation and production of knowledge, in the coexistence between people of different ages and places. Knowledge is built, therefore, beyond the conventional classroom space: in the break, in the patios, in the meals, in the teachers' rooms, in the parks, in the courts, in the gate, in the swimming pool, in the theatre, in the dance room, in the library, in the string orchestra, in the big band and other spaces. Curriculum conceived as a privileged instrument for the construction of identities - which are only built in the relationship with others, and subjectivities, in a cultural, political, and historical context. It manifests itself in the relationship between subjects, permeated by the exercise of power. (City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP², 2003).

The concept of education that we want for the city of São Paulo encompasses all Units of the Municipal Education Network in the construction of a policy of appropriation of public spaces and equipment by the population, through Intersecretarial actions, which promote the organization and articulation of social projects and actions of local interest, contributing to integrate public policies and organized social movements, within the scope of the Subprefectures, in favor of the interests that emerge from the community. (City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP, 2003).

Its conception met three specific objectives: (i) integral development of children and young people; (ii) community development center; and (iii) innovation center of educational experiences.

To achieve the proposed objectives it was necessary to rescue the capacity of the educational unit and the surrounding community to plan their actions, sharing problems, proposals, and solutions, rescuing and expanding the role of the school council and student unions and, above all, expanding the existing forms of community involvement.

In this context, education assumes the role of mediating the process of historical-cultural-social construction of subjects, and, in this sense, it is necessary to understand the political dimension of public

2. PMSP – Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo

management in education in territoriality. The State, the population, and the territory have formed the triad present in the concerns of the managers of the public sphere.

As the CEUs have a role beyond receiving students, during their first year of existence instruments were jointly built to support the action of the Manager. The main one is the Rules that have been improved over the years, with the participation not only of the professionals who work there but also of the Managing Council:

Art. 1 Unified Educational Centers - CEUs - are composed of nuclei, educational units, spaces, and territories of a multidimensional nature, which enhance the intersectionality of municipal public policies through the strengthening of social protection networks and articulated inter-secretariat actions aimed at educational, social, cultural, sports and technological development of the territory and the city.

Art. 2 It is the responsibility of the CEUs to promote integral, democratic, emancipatory, humanizing and social quality education, articulating education, culture, sports, leisure and recreation, and technologies, promoting the development of the human being in its entirety as a person, citizen, and subject of its history.

Art. 3 The CEUs are educational spaces that consolidate the integration between education and life, ensuring the right of access to knowledge, culture, art, sports and leisure, recreation and technology, articulated to local knowledge and potential around an educational project that is significant and socially relevant for all generations, also constituting a space for the organization of the working classes through the appreciation and expansion of their knowledge. Chapter I - Characterization, Nature, and Conception.

(City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: the citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP, 2003)

Territoriality is understood as „being“ somewhere collectively producing one's existence, which implies encompassing the plurality of meanings built by the collectivity in and by social relations, seeking to understand public actions beyond the state, that is, intrinsic to the daily dimensions of territoriality.

Such a concept of territoriality requires the participation of the subjects who are part of it and experience it daily. This social coexistence, in individual and collective terms, does away with a conception of politics as a democratic practice that favors emancipation, also reflecting on what a public space is.

Public space must be shared, requiring new organizational formats in the relationship between the State and Civil Society. For Public Management it is essential to develop strategies that preserve public space in a much broader institutional context.

In addition to the conception of a Curriculum that reflects and recognizes the subjects in this context, it is necessary to reaffirm the principle of democratic participation in different educational instances, valuing the relations in/with the Educational Unit with the region, strengthening the bonds, enabling the implementation of democratic management while creating conditions for the permanence of the student and the improvement of the social quality of education.

The process of decentralization of power (valuing school councils, meetings with headmasters and other actors present in the educational community and respecting the specificities of the different regions of the city) can trigger practices that make explicit different moments of appropriation of the concept of Education, establishing bridges between the school and the community. This is undoubtedly an indicator of change and the construction of the social quality of education.

CEU's structure has provided for horizontal relations, favoring the elaboration of strategic projects for the integration of CEU, respecting the autonomy of its nuclei - educational, cultural, and sports - and school units (CEI, EMEI, EMEF, and EMIA)³, as well as the occupation of spaces.

When we talk about building a participatory political-pedagogical project, we are referring to the complex relationships existing in the school space, expanded in the CEU space:

3. CEI – Early Childhood Education Center (0 to 3 years and 11 months); EMEI – Municipal School of Early Childhood Education (4 to 5 years and 11 months); EMEF – Municipal Elementary School (6 to 14 years old); EMIA – Municipal School of Artistic Initiation. These are the stages of organization of Education in Brazil, for children and teenagers.

Politics at school means getting to know the students deeply, their reality, their context, their needs, potentialities, and expectations, as well as establishing the right balance of forces and representativeness of the various collective subjects of the school in the management and definition of the policies that lead to the administrative, financial and pedagogical issues of the school institution. (PADILHA, 2002, p. 22)

Building a truly democratic education policy means that the leaders will be able to set general guidelines, the rest being decided by the local teams, which are the life of the schools, respecting the guidelines (AZANHA, 1993; FREIRE, 1997; PADILHA, 2002).

Democratic and intersectoral management

To democratically construct the appropriation of public spaces, it is necessary to articulate the presence of government areas such as Culture, Sports, Social Assistance, among others, to participate in intra (government agencies) and intersectoral (State and Civil Society) management in the strategic coordination of actions for the occupation of these spaces:

Art. 10. The organizational structure of the CEU provides for horizontal relations, especially those understood in these Rules of Procedure as Integrating and Structuring Projects, under the terms foreseen in its articles 107 and 108, respecting the nature of its nuclei, educational units, and equipment, as well as the guidelines established by the respective Municipal Secretaries and by the Intersecretarial Committee for Shared Management of the CEUs. (TITLE II - Organizational Structure.

(City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: the citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP, 2003).

In this context, the CEUs were designed for a democratic acquisition that should not admit so many difficulties in the implementation of its management, i.e., the sharing of management among the bodies present - Education, Culture and Sport - to promote participation and..:

- strengthening institutional relations between the CEUs and the Education Coordinators and between the CEUs and the Secretariats involved, especially those of sports and culture. These general meetings were important to strengthen the intersectionality that began to be designed in the elaboration of the CEU project;
- ensure the participation of existing working groups in the elaboration of the political-pedagogical project of the CEUs, defining common principles and guidelines to support the construction of the Action Network;
- reflect and evaluate the management concept present in the CEU's pedagogical policy proposal, seeking the constant improvement of relations;
- contribute to the construction of a curriculum geared towards social transformation, from an emancipatory perspective.

One question would be the impossibility of building shared and democratic management respecting the inherent politics of each body. Here, more than a problem of difficulty in democratization, is how this is reflected in the occupation of existing spaces from a normative ideal reflected in the CEUs' regulations.

Art. 31: The management of the CEU must be democratic, articulating representative participation in the different collegiate bodies, in the organization, planning, execution, and evaluation of the CEU's Political-Educational Project, respecting the competencies of the municipal public power and the limits of current legislation.

§ 1 It is the responsibility of those responsible for the equipment, units, and nuclei that make up the CEU, as well as the community, to promote the participation of the collectivity.

§ 2 The Managing Council is the highest decision-making body, of a permanent nature for administrative and educational decisions, and is also responsible for leading and articulating the participation of the different collegiate and other participatory bodies.

Art. 32: The management of the CEU has as its principles:

I - integral education with social quality;

II - democratic participation, with collective decision-making with the direct participation of the population in the electoral and evaluation processes;

III - democratization of access to the CEU and its public information;

IV - a democratization of access to education, culture, sport, leisure and recreation and technologies;

V - continuous monitoring and evaluation of management and processes

Administrative. (TITLE III - Management, Composition, and Assignments.

(City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: the citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP, 2003)

In addition to the technical efficiency of the leadership that the manager must possess, it is also necessary to understand the forms of participation of the community that frequents this public space, a perception that is not necessarily found in management specialists. Managing equipment such as the CEU requires the development of a Pedagogical Political Project based on recognition of the territory.

The planning and elaboration of the political-pedagogical project cannot be thought of as a document that once written will be ready, but rather as a document that deserves continuous revisions, returns, and resumption and the local management teams need to assume their autonomy, built from decision-making (FREIRE, 2006).

The instances provided for in the CEU's regulations have the function of helping the manager to plan the use of the spaces, to integrate the existing units in the use of the spaces together. The PPP⁴ of the CEU should consider encouraging the use of CEU spaces by the local community:

Art. 33: The CEU has the following bodies for democratic participation:

I - Management Board;

II - Assemblies:

a) General;

b) Sectoral;

c) Children;

d) Youth;

III - Association of Parents, Masters, and Servants, Users and Friends of CEU - APMSUAC;

IV - CEU Youth Gremio.

Single paragraph. The bodies provided for in items I and II, point „a“, of the „caput“ of this Article may:

I - decide to hold sectorial meetings of the segments represented on the Board, the purpose of segmented election of Directors or to discuss matters of exclusive interest to the respective segments;

II - decide at any time to set up thematic commissions to discuss specific subjects which are not included in one of the bodies provided for in items I to IV of the „head“ of this article.

(City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: the citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP, 2003).

The Managing Council, according to Art. 35, is highlighted because one of its tasks is to promote,

The participation, organization, and social control of the instruments of implementation of the CEU's public policies, as the highest decision-making body of a permanent nature, respecting the competencies of the

4. PPP - Pedagogical Political Project

municipal public power and the limits of the legislation in force, as well as acting to defend the interests of babies, children, adolescents and the population of the territory.

(City Hall of São Paulo, Unified Educational Center - CEU: the citizenship taking off in São Paulo. São Paulo, PMSP, 2003)

The CEU's Governing Council is joint and composed of 15 (fifteen) representatives of institutional equipment, 6 (six) representatives are elected by the teachers and other workers from the equipment belonging to the CEU, and 3 (three) representatives must belong to the social equipment of the surrounding area and the CEUs. The other 15 (fifteen) representatives belong to the community:

- a) 5 (five) students, over the age of 10 (ten), who may be representatives of internal or external school units or academic units;
- b) 5 (five) family members of students from the CEU⁵ territory;
- c) 5 (five) community representatives, among them the associations of residents and/or neighborhood councils, such as the environment and sustainability, human rights, the elderly, people with disabilities, cultural diversities, ethnic-racial movements (black, indigenous and immigrant), gender and LGBT, educational - movements for education, peripheral culture, sports, solidarity economy, religious and business entities.

The College of Integration brings together those responsible for all existing units in the CEU. The College is responsible for articulating the actions, projects, and public policies of the Municipal Departments of Education, Culture, Sports, Leisure and Recreation, the Intersecretarial Committee for Shared Management, the Regional Board of Education, the Sub-City Hall, and other bodies and organizations of civil society existing in the territory.

The proposal is to consolidate the work plans of each unit, integrating them in the use of the CEUs spaces, aiming to articulate a joint action, breaking the isolation of each unit or Nucleus, making human, financial, and material resources compatible.

The joint action of all the auxiliary management bodies (councils, assemblies, among others) was proposed to guarantee the guidelines to consolidate the CEU as a pole of educational innovations within its territory.

The manager is responsible for the CEU, but to carry out his or her role he or she relies on the bodies that aim to democratize access and encourage community participation and integration with the territory. The manager coordinates the planning process, the preparation of integrated action programs and projects, and the resulting programming of CEU activities, promoting the integral development of the territory. The regulations are a legal framework to support the manager's social action.

Democratic Management

Making democracy a reality in school management, especially in the CEUs, is an arduous task even in political, constitutional, and social contexts which, at least formally, are favorable. The democratic context is not sufficient to guarantee effective democratic management, since the profile of the manager ends up influenced by activities, actions, and the encouragement of participation.

In the CEUs, the strategy to be formulated for the appropriation of the various existing spaces conceives as fundamental the attitude of the Manager, in the sense of achieving shared management capable of breaking with authoritarian practices and the technique of administration.

The democratic management of the school is not only an organizational or management problem, but a central issue in the process of democratization of education, expansion, and realization of the right to education, the possibility of education for and for democracy and participation.

5. CEU - Unified Educational Center

Democratic management is built on the promotion of human rights as well as the participation of management auxiliary bodies, community participation in the organization and management of space. That is why democratic management becomes a constituent part of the school curriculum itself and not just a model of management or rhetoric of discourse. It is one of the dimensions of the educational process.

It is not possible to teach or learn about democracy, participation, and citizenship in authoritarian school contexts or under technical practices, since „democracy is more than a form of government; it is first and foremost a form of associative life, a shared experience together“ (DEWEY, 2007, p. 88).

In this sense, active participation, dialogue, and debate between different or conflicting positions help in the exercise of democracy. It is therefore understandable how difficult it is to democratize management, particularly of the use of public space while respecting territoriality and local power relations.

Democratizing management means communicating the actions/decisions, the means and procedures to carry them out, what motivated the decision, its objectives, in short, it means sharing decisions and responsibility in decisions. It means to democratize and broaden the spaces for decision making and political representation (collegiate).

Building intersectionality/democratic management,

According to PEREZ (2011), since the beginning of the CEUs (with the principles of democratic management present), all the working groups formed for the elaboration of the CEU project have already constituted intersectionality. This concern to group together different sectors has accompanied the entire program process and the groups formed have meant, in practice, the construction of intersectionality. It was an experiment for the practice that was wanted in this space. To advance in the role of a social articulator that was wanted for the manager of the CEUs, it was proposed that he should be elected and not only occupy the position from an appointment from the Secretariat of Education, even though he was a member of the staff of the Secretariat. The election would allow for debates on what the CEU is and the activities to be developed and would also make it possible to verify the ability of the occupant of the position of manager to articulate. Another factor that makes it difficult for the manager to articulate is the appointment of the coordinators of the Nucleus of Cultural Action and the Nucleus of Sport, Leisure and Recreation, most of whom are professionals who have no connection with Education and the territory.

Discussing the management of the CEUs required thinking about the role of the manager and headmaster, local (internal and community) and intersecretarial articulation, activity planning, and control, board format, etc. In this sense, it was important to consider horizontality in relations, through a process that is necessarily dialogical, not domineering, which corroborates the author Paro (2017, p.111) who states:

Man builds his specificity and builds himself as a historical being as he transcends the natural world through work. By transcending mere nature (everything that does not depend on his will and action), a man goes beyond the level of need and deals with freedom. Freedom is therefore the opposite of spontaneity, of natural need; it is something built by man as he builds his humanity. Unable to directly produce his material existence, man can only do so in relationship and exchange of effort with his fellow human beings. This relationship, to remain in the sphere of the human being, so as not to degrade to the level of the relationship between things (sphere of need), must be characterized by collaboration and knowledge of the human character of the individuals involved (sphere of freedom). Any relationship of domination is therefore a denial of the human condition. Stop 2017, p. 111).

The experience of planning and building intersectoral public facilities, idealizing each Center as a place for activities in different areas and policies - educational, cultural and sports - was extremely innovative and therefore faced more difficulties than other programs guided by only one Secretariat. A practice that has been abandoned and that brings difficulties in designing and implementing strategies for occupying spaces.

The proposal to occupy the spaces is up to each unit or will depend on individual initiatives, which makes social participation and the practice of solidarity that comes from social participation difficult.

Democratic education must be understood as a process of learning from democratic experience (DEWEY, 2007), which allows one to experience among other things: participation; collaboration; cooperation; dialogue; solidarity; responsibility; respect for diversity; the capacity to welcome curiosity, uncertainty; subjectivity; critical and reflective thinking; recognition of different proposals.

Final considerations

The development of themes related to democratic management, intersectionality, and social participation, allowed us to articulate much knowledge acquired in the implementation and monitoring of activities in the CEUs and in particular in the CEU Butantã, in the search to make happen the possibilities of interaction and teaching-learning that the educational project proposes. Among these possibilities, the appropriation of children to public space, in a practical, non-mechanical way, seems to be an important factor that brings together a conception of integral education, which values the development of subjects in their various aspects: affective, social, cultural, emotional, intellectual.

It was also possible to verify in the management of the equipment the emerging difficulties, in a space that brings together many actors, who do not always move in a confluent direction and who often depend on support mechanisms for the adequacy and awareness of the ways constituted in interaction and local coexistence.

Because of this, and even so, it is justified to welcome the local communities when defending the permanence of this CEU project in the regions, considering its integrated service to the needy population relevant, which enables the development of autonomy and the confrontation of inequality.

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