

A ELEIÇÃO DIRETA DE DIRETOR ESCOLAR: DESAFIOS NA GESTÃO DEMOCRÁTICA NO MUNICÍPIO DE MEDICILÂNDIA – PARÁ

LA ELECCION DIRECTA DEL DIRECTOR DE LA ESCUELA: RETOS EN LA GESTION DEMOCRATICA EN EL MUNICIPIO DE MEDICILÂNDIA – PARÁ

DIRECT ELECTION OF SCHOOL DIRECTOR: CHALLENGES IN DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF MEDICILÂNDIA – PARÁ

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RESUMO: Este estudo aborda discussões sobre a gestão escolar e a eleição direta de diretores e sua relação com a democratização no processo de tomada de decisões, buscando refletir como se constitui o processo de eleição de diretor realizada na Escola Municipal de Ensino Fundamental Abraham Lincoln, que compõe a rede de ensino de Medicilândia-Pará, e em que medida esse mecanismo tem favorecido a participação da comunidade escolar e local nos processos decisórios da gestão escolar. Buscamos problematizar até que ponto o processo de eleição de diretor realizada na Escola Municipal de Ensino Fundamental Abraham Lincoln que compõe a rede de ensino de Medicilândia-Pará possibilita a organização do trabalho na escola na perspectiva da gestão democrática, e se esse mecanismo favorece a participação da comunidade escolar e local nos processos decisórios da gestão escolar. Como objetivo geral, analisa-se as percepções dos diversos sujeitos sociais presentes no espaço escolar sobre o processo de eleição direta para a escolha da direção escolar e sua possível relação com a gestão democrática na Escola Municipal de Ensino Fundamental Abraham Lincoln da rede municipal de Medicilândia-Pará. Por meio de uma pesquisa qualitativa com base em autores como Paro (2003; 2005; 2007; 2010), Luck (2008; 2009), Azevedo (2011), Cabral Neto (2009), Vieira (2007), Dourado (2007), nossos resultados demonstraram que nossos entrevistados possuem certa compreensão sobre o processo eleitoral direto para escolhas dos dirigentes escolares, e que esse mecanismo influencia significativamente para que ocorra uma gestão democrática escolar, uma vez que os participantes da pesquisa demonstraram conhecimento sobre seu papel participativo no cotidiano da comunidade escolar e frequentemente participam da gestão escolar, que é compartilhada através dos conselhos, reuniões administrativas, reuniões de pais e mestres, construção e avaliação do PPP, reuniões e/ou oficinas sobre a organização do trabalho pedagógico. No que se refere à legislação municipal (Leis, Resoluções e PME), foi possível observar que as mesmas estão em consonância com o que expressa nossa LDB e nossa Constituição Federal de 1988, com dispositivos legais definidos, delineados, bem elaborados e

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com sua base alicerçada na gestão e organização do trabalho pedagógico macro através da Semed e micro por meio da gestão da unidade escolar na escola básica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Gestão democrática. Eleição de diretor. Participação.

RESUMEN: *Este estudio aborda las discusiones sobre la gestión escolar y la elección directa de los directores y su relación con la democratización en el proceso de toma de decisiones, buscando reflejar cómo el proceso de elección del director celebrado en la Escuela Primaria Municipal Abraham Lincoln, que compone la red de la escuela de medicina de Medicil-ndia-Pará, y en qué medida este mecanismo ha favorecido la participación de la escuela y la comunidad local en los procesos de toma de decisiones de la gestión escolar. Buscamos problematizar hasta qué punto el proceso de elección de director celebrado en la Escuela Primaria Municipal Abraham Lincoln que compone la red de educación medicil-ndia-pará permite la organización del trabajo en la escuela desde la perspectiva de la gestión democrática, y si este mecanismo favorece la participación de la escuela y la comunidad local en los procesos de toma de decisiones de la gestión escolar. Como objetivo general, analizamos las percepciones de los diversos temas sociales presentes en el espacio escolar sobre el proceso de selección directa para la elección de la dirección escolar y su posible relación con la gestión democrática en la Escuela Primaria Municipal Abraham Lincoln de la red municipal de Medicil-ndia-Pará. A través de una investigación cualitativa basada en autores como Paro (2003; 2005; 2007; 2010), Luck (2008; 2009), Azevedo (2011), Cabral Neto (2009), Vieira (2007), Dourado (2007), nuestros resultados demostraron que nuestros entrevistados tienen una cierta comprensión del proceso electoral directo para los líderes escolares, y que este mecanismo influye significativamente en el desarrollo de la gestión escolar democrática, ya que los participantes en la investigación demostraron conocimientos sobre su papel participativo en la vida diaria de la comunidad escolar y a menudo participan en la gestión escolar, que se comparte a través de consejos, reuniones administrativas, reuniones de padres y maestros, construcción y evaluación ppp, reuniones y/o talleres sobre la organización del trabajo pedagógico. Con respecto a la legislación municipal (Leyes, Resoluciones y Pymes), fue posible observar que están en línea con lo que nuestro LDB y nuestra Constitución Federal de 1988 expresan, con disposiciones legales definidas, delineadas, bien elaboradas y basadas en la gestión y organización del trabajo macro pedagógico a través de Semed y micro a través de la gestión de la unidad escolar en la escuela básica.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Gestión democrática. Elección del director. Participación.

ABSTRACT: *This study approaches discussions on school management and the direct election of principals and their relation with democratization in the decision-making process, seeking to reflect how the process of election of principal held at the Abraham Lincoln Municipal Elementary School is done, which composes the teaching network of Medicilândia-Pará, and to what extent this mechanism has favored the participation of the school and local community in the decision-making processes of school management. We seek to problematize the extent to which the process of election of principal held at the Abraham Lincoln Municipal Elementary School that composes the Medicilândia-Pará education network enables the organization of work in the school from the perspective of democratic management, and whether this mechanism favors the participation of the school and local community in the decision-making processes of school management. As a general objective, we analyze the perceptions of the several social subjects present in the school space about the process of direct election for the*

choice of school direction and its possible relation with democratic management in the Abraham Lincoln Municipal Elementary School of the municipal network of Medicilândia-Pará. Through a qualitative research based on authors such as Paro (2003; 2005; 2007; 2010), Luck (2008; 2009), Azevedo (2011), Cabral Neto (2009), Vieira (2007), Dourado (2007), our results demonstrated that our interviewees have a certain understanding of the direct electoral process for school leaders' choices, and that this mechanism significantly influences the development of democratic school management, since the research participants demonstrated knowledge about their participatory role in the daily life of the school community and often participate in school management, which is shared through councils, administrative meetings, parent-teacher meetings, PPP construction and evaluation, meetings and/or workshops on the organization of pedagogical work. With regard to municipal legislation (Laws, Resolutions and SMEs), it was possible to observe that they are in line with what our LDB and our Federal Constitution of 1988 express, with legal defined devices, delineated, well elaborated and based on the management and organization of macro pedagogical work through Semed and micro through the management of the school unit in basic school.

KEYWORDS: *Democratic management. Director's election. Participation.*

Introduction

The discussion around educational management remains in constant debate in our society, due to the movement of different social sectors that demand greater participation in the sharing of decision-making in the elaboration and implementation of policies in the educational field, as a condition of the social quality of education. Demands strengthened in the period of political openness and the process of redemocratization of the Brazilian State experienced in the 1980s and 1990s, through mobilization that defended the need for decentralization and democratization of public social policies (DOURADO, 2007; MILÉO, 2007; FERREIRA; AGUIAR, 2006).

With the achievements ensured by the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, when it enshrined the principle of “democratic management of public education” and the guarantee of civil society participation in the management councils, and subsequently with the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) - Law no. 9394/1996, which created expectations and legal conditions regarding the strengthening of the autonomy of the management of school institutions as mechanisms for the construction of this democratic space, through the participation of the school and local community in the school councils, according to Paro (2005) and Luck (2008), as an important participatory channel in the democratization of public education, for having been celebrated “[...] as a fundamental basis for the meaningful organization and establishment of unity of the educational processes and

mobilization of the people concerned for the development and improvement of the quality of education they offer”⁴ (LUCK, 2008, p. 33).

However, different studies carried out by researchers in the field (CABRAL NETO, 2009; PARO, 2007; VIEIRA, 2007) have pointed out socio-cultural and political obstacles, by highlighting that the consolidation of democratic management is not sustained only from legal issues, because educational and school management is based on human actions and demand material and immaterial conditions. Although considered extremely important to guarantee the right to participation and the exercise of citizenship, the authors emphasize that due to the totality of relationships that materialize within institutions in general, educational management suffers interferences from the most diverse sectors that have interests not always aligned democratic principles, embodying practices resulting from conservative characteristics and a tradition of authoritarianism, still present in the Brazilian reality, which may come to distort its meaning.

Issues such as social participation, democratization of education, election of directors of educational institutions emerged as elements of a movement in defense of democratic institutional processes and public services that can boost sharing in decision-making regarding the direction of education. Based on the above, this study points out the election of the school principal as a mechanism that allows the democratic conceptions of school management to be revealed and possible approximations or distances with regard to the democratization of decision making in the administrative and pedagogical scope of schools (PARO, 2003), because this professional is responsible for leading the construction and execution of the pedagogical project, as well as organizing the school's functioning and interacting with the various subjects who are there.

In this perspective, we problematize the following question: How is the process of electing a principal held at the Abraham Lincoln Municipal Elementary School, which makes up the teaching network of Medicilândia-Pará? To what extent has this mechanism favored the participation of the school and local community in school management decision-making processes?

As a general objective, we analyzed the perceptions of the various social subjects present in the school space about the direct election process for the choice of school management. As specific objectives, we seek to examine the legal bases that support the

⁴ “[...] como base fundamental para a organização significativa e estabelecimento de unidade dos processos educacionais e mobilização das pessoas voltadas para o desenvolvimento e melhoria da qualidade do ensino que oferecem”

election of school management in Medicilândia; to identify the conceptions of the different social actors present at the school level about democratic management; to verify, from the interviewees' positions, how school management influences the organization of work at school from the perspective of democratic management in the investigated school.

This study is based on qualitative research through an exploratory case study at the Abraham Lincoln Municipal Elementary School, which according to Yin (2010), “is used in many institutions, to contribute to our knowledge of individual phenomena, group, organizational, social, political and related”⁵.

The research initially had a literature review relevant to the topic addressed, based on authors such as Paro (2003; 2005; 2007; 2010), Luck (2008; 2009), Cabral Neto (2009), Vieira (2007), Dourado (2007), Azevedo (2011). Regarding the documents dealing with democratic management, we analyzed the Federal Constitution of 1988, LDB 9394/96, the School Rules - Resolution no. 085, of January 31, 2011; Complementary Law no. 001/2015, which provides for the reformulation of the Plan of Positions, Careers and Compensation of Professionals in Basic Education of public education in the municipal network of Medicilândia and its management; Law no. 430/2015 that approves the Municipal Education Plan. These documents guided the systematization as to the standardization and understanding of the conceptions about participation, democratic management and the process of election of the school administration.

As a research technique, we adopted semi-structured interviews, which were carried out with 6 teachers, with two teachers interviewed being counselors, one president of the School Council and the other is secretary. We also interviewed the representatives of the current school management (2016-2018), the principal and the pedagogical coordinator; two 9th grade students, and two Municipal Secretaries of Education - 2001-2004 period and the current one (2017-2020).

The article is structured in three sections. In the first section, we approach the discussions related to the socio-political context that marked the debate in the Brazilian scenario on education management; in the second section we bring reflections on the legal/institutional framework on democratic management as a principle in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and in LDB 9394/96, as well as the dimensions that allow its effectiveness in the school space, giving emphasis to school councils and the process of direct election to school management. In the last part, we present the data from the case study carried out at EMEF Abraham Lincoln

⁵ “é usado em muitas instituições, para contribuir ao nosso conhecimento dos fenômenos individuais, grupais, organizacionais, sociais, políticos e relacionados”

from the municipal network of Medicilândia-Pará, based on the reports of the subjects participating in the research.

Education management in the Brazilian context: possibilities and challenges

In Brazil, the debate about the concept of school administration and education administration, particularly in the transition period of the 1980s, was strongly marked by the political-ideological context of the time. As Azevedo (2011) points out, its historical-theoretical roots are based at the heart of the administration sciences, arising from the assumptions of Taylor and Fayol, as a parameter of the productive processes in industrial societies, having later been improved by Fordism. Exalted by the modernizing project of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime of the military governments (1964-1985), the dissemination of technical-scientific rationality started to guide the development project implanted in Brazilian society and, consequently, became the main instrument of planning for public policies, with all controls/regulation centralized at the federal level.

Vitor Paro highlights (2010) that this model of school administration was characterized by rational, technical and mechanical measures of resources and activities-means and activities-end, that is, actions that directly involve the teaching-learning process, by separating the execution planning, reinforced by technical-bureaucratic logic. The author considers that the administrative character of education seeks the “rational use of resources for the achievement of determined ends”⁶ (PARO, 2010, p. 18), in order to pragmatically standardize the achievement of the educational objectives of the school institution; in relation to the scope of school institutions, the object of operational administrative action in “[...] school practices carried out with the purpose of rationally seeking the pedagogical objective”⁷ (PARO, 2010, p. 72).

According to Luck (2008), education management from the 1980s overcomes the limited focus on administration when considering that the educational problem is complex and demands a globalized and continuous focus, with articulated, dynamic and participative performance. The author argues that the democratic teaching management policy advances when it brings with it the dimension of participation in decision-making processes, as a mobilizing strategy for collectively organized work teams, centralizing forces in the direction of teaching policies and their systems based on the defense of quality education. Like this,

⁶ “utilização racional de recursos para a realização de fins determinados”

⁷ “[...] práticas escolares realizadas com o propósito de buscar racionalmente o objetivo pedagógico”

The concept of management results from a new understanding regarding the direction of the organizations' destinations, which takes into account the whole in relation to its parts and between them, in order to promote greater effectiveness of the group. Management appears, therefore, as overcoming the limitations of the concept of administration, as a result of a paradigm shift (LUCK, 2008, p. 34).⁸

When dealing with the concept of "Management", it is necessary to understand the meaning of terms that are interconnected, but that keep in themselves aspects that need to be considered in terms of competences and attributions. When we refer to Educational Management, it is situated at the macro level of Education, that is, within the scope of the federal, state and municipal educational systems in articulation with higher bodies of the Brazilian education systems, and are responsible for the general guidelines and definitions that regulate the educational policies, as well as planning, monitoring and evaluation. Regarding School Management, its scope is established at the micro level, that is, in school institutions, and its main task is to prepare the pedagogical proposal, as well as to manage its staff, its material and financial resources. According to Vieira (2007):

Educational management refers to a wide range of initiatives developed by the different levels of government, whether in terms of shared responsibilities in the provision of education, or in other actions they develop in their specific areas of activity. School management, in turn, as the expression suggests, is situated at the school level and concerns tasks that fall within its scope (VIEIRA, 2007, p. 64).⁹

However, when debating issues related to education management, we need to consider the socio-political transformations resulting from a reformist movement in recent decades in the Brazilian context, with regard to the elaboration of public policies promoted by the State, as an institution responsible for the organization of different social sectors. Such changes result in a set of institutional determinations with the objective of implementing reforms that significantly alter the legislation, public administration and central government structure, in order to provide greater governance to the State (CABRAL NETO, 2009).

⁸ O conceito de gestão resulta de um novo entendimento a respeito da condução dos destinos das organizações, que leva em consideração o todo em relação com as suas partes e destas entre si, de modo a promover maior efetividade do conjunto. A gestão aparece, pois, como superação das limitações do conceito de administração, como resultado de uma mudança de paradigma (LUCK, 2008, p. 34).

⁹ A gestão educacional refere-se a um amplo espectro de iniciativas desenvolvidas pelas diferentes instâncias de governo, seja em termos de responsabilidades compartilhadas na oferta de ensino, ou de outras ações que desenvolvem em suas áreas específicas de atuação. A gestão escolar, por sua vez, como a própria expressão sugere, situa-se no plano da escola e diz respeito a tarefas que estão sob sua esfera de abrangência (VIEIRA, 2007, p. 64).

These changes are the result of a worldwide movement caused by the macros and micro trends of productive relations resulting from a complex process of globalized economic restructuring based on the neoliberalist model, which can be seen in the thick set of economic, political, cultural and geographical changes, characterizing the world of present. The reforms of state actions implemented in the different nations in recent years interfere directly and indirectly in educational policies, in the design of schools and in the organization of pedagogical work, according to Libâneo (2012). In his analyzes of neoliberalism, the author points out that these reformist actions have some constitutive lines, which are “changes in production processes associated with scientific and technological advances, superiority of free functioning and a reduction in the role of the State”¹⁰ (LIBÂNEO, 2012, p. 42).

In this sense, if, in the 1980s, the agenda defended in the Brazilian educational scenario was based on a movement in favor of the democratic management of public education and the guarantee of its quality standard through the establishment of a legal framework that would guarantee the exercise of democratic practices and the social control of state actions via popular participation in public spaces, through the election of principals and the implementation of school councils as strategies for innovation or panacea for the educational field (PARO, 2003). The 1990s, in turn, were marked by the modernization process of the Brazilian state apparatus, which adjusted its profile and its competences to the new model of Regulatory State through the Master Plan for State Reform (PDRAE, 1995), through the adoption of managerialism or new public management, which according to Miléo (2007, p. 70):

It is a reform based on three dimensions: institutional - which is responsible for the transformations of normative and fundamental institutions; cultural - which implies a change in the way of thinking about social services; and management - based on total quality management, a model developed by the private sector, appears as a basic government strategy in the pursuit of excellence in the administration of public affairs.¹¹

With the restructuring of the State, the Brazilian government affirms the neoliberal principles from the narrowing of the relationship between education and economic development, in line with the guidelines of international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Bank, Inter-

¹⁰ “mudanças nos processos de produção associadas a avanços científicos e tecnológicos, superioridade do livre funcionamento e redução do papel do Estado”

¹¹ Trata-se de uma reforma assentada em três dimensões: a institucional – que é responsável pelas transformações das instituições normativas e fundamentais; a cultural – que implica em mudança na forma de pensar os serviços sociais; e a gestão – fundamentada na gestão da qualidade total, modelo desenvolvido pelo setor privado, figura como estratégia básica do governo na busca da excelência da administração da coisa pública.

American Development Bank, among others. Such assumed changes have implied complex and nonlinear transformations both at the level of the educational system and in the other social sectors, directed by different political forces and governments, observing in recent years, advances and setbacks that directly imply in educational and school management, as a result of a set of guidelines and lines of action based on an instrumental rationality of productivity and competitiveness hidden by the discourse of quality and excellence as a prerogative of making the country more competitive in a globalized world. When analyzing this issue, Azevedo (2011) considers that,

According to the principles that governed the administrative reform of the Brazilian State, managementism sought, among other aspects, to involve the community directly with the school decision-making processes, also defending the principle of participation, as in democratic management perspective. However, through a restricted and controlled process, since the hard core of decisions remained the privilege of a few, generally attached to the central power (AZEVEDO, 2011, p. 420).¹²

In this sense, the management of school education goes through changes resulting from the process of privatization of the public sector made possible by the transfer of resources and powers to state and municipal governments via political and administrative decentralization; for the rationalization of investments and centralization of decision-making processes in relation to the elaboration and implementation of educational policies, contributing in no way to the democratization of education, as highlighted by Azevedo (2011). On the contrary, we verified the contradiction regarding the democratic ideology in the following decade, as these suffer offensives in view of the implementation of educational policies guided by managerialism, which give the results of the schooling process the supposed inefficiency, especially in the management of systems and schools, that is, management gained an approach linked to specific references in the neoliberal current of education. However, these offensives against democratic educational actions have not succeeded in overcoming the idea of management based on the principle of democracy in school spaces, aspects that will be discussed below.

The principles of democratic management and the mechanisms for filling the position of school principal

¹² Segundo os princípios que regeram a reforma administrativa do Estado brasileiro, buscou-se, com o gerencialismo, dentre outros aspectos, um envolvimento direto da comunidade com os processos das decisões escolares, defendendo-se, também, o princípio da participação, tal como na perspectiva da gestão democrática. Porém, por meio de um processo restrito e controlado, visto que o núcleo duro das decisões permaneceu privilégio de uns poucos, em geral adstrito ao poder central (AZEVEDO, 2011, p. 420).

Addressing discussions related to democratic management implies understanding the re-dimensioning of the sociocultural function of school activities that transcends the institutional space, bringing with it different understandings and perceptions that sometimes converge, sometimes disperse participatory actions and decision-making processes, as these are materialized by educational agents that work in the school and in the other governing bodies. Thus, the concept of democratic management is linked to the defense of the quality of education, considering the process of universal teaching, as well as the fundamentals of gratuity, permanence and terminality (PARO, 2003; CURY, 2005).

As discussed, the institutionalization of democratic management in Brazil was marked by a period of political, economic and social changes; but equally, for popular struggles and reforms. For Luck (2008), all this dynamics resulted in the establishment of legal / institutional frameworks, achievements and contradictions, since it contributed to reinforce the confrontation with authoritarian and centralizing forces still present in the state and municipal education departments, when they establish an unequal correlation of forces with schools in relation to decision-making processes.

On the other hand, democratic management needs to be understood as more of a political act and less of an administrative and bureaucratic action, because as Paro (2005) emphasizes, democratic management alludes to the concretization of new processes of organization and management based on a joint relationship which provides the opportunity to build participatory processes and share decision-making power.

Thus, guaranteed in the Federal Constitution of 1988, in Article 206, Item IV, "[...] democratic management of public education, in the form of the law", represents a constitutional principle that strengthens education as a right of all, to the while expressing the idea of participation and a democratic culture in the sphere of public education.

This principle is affirmed in the 1990s, with the approval of the LDB - Law 9394/96, when it provides for the “democratic management of public education, in the form of the Law and legislation of education systems” (Art. 3, Inc VIII). LDB advances by prescribing the strategies and dimensions that school institutions can adopt to implement democratic management. According to Vieira (2007, p. 62), as a dimension of this management model, this Law advocates in its art. 12 the strengthening of the relationship between the school and society, which should “articulate with families and the community, creating integration processes”, and also with the responsibility of “informing parents and guardians about the frequency and

performance of students, as well as on the execution of its pedagogical proposal” (Inc. VI and VII).

Another aspect to be highlighted is the detail that LDB makes in relation to the need for complementary laws within the scope of education systems, to ensure democratic management, as expressed in the *caput* of art. 14.

Art. 14. The education systems will define the norms for the democratic management of public education in basic education, according to the 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).¹³

With the prerogative to rethink the direction of education in the country, the National Education Plan (PNE) - Law no. 10,172, of January 9, 2001, with the proposal to enable actions that involve the participation of society and all educational agents of the school community, having as one of its goals the creation of School Councils in official basic education establishments, aiming at achieve significant impacts in improving the quality of the teaching-learning process. However, this PNE did not achieve the expected success, since “in fact, education plans tend to have two problems: on the one hand, the excess of proposals; on the other, the lack of budget forecasting”¹⁴ (VIEIRA, 2007, p. 60).

In 2014, the PNE - Law no. 13,005, which in Goal 19 establishes a period of 2 years after its approval, to guarantee conditions for “effective democratic management of education, associated with technical criteria of merit and performance and public consultation with the school community, within the scope of public schools, providing resources and technical support from the Union to do so”¹⁵ (BRASIL, 2014). In this assertion, democratic management even supported by legislation still implies challenges in the school context, as it expresses new processes of organization of school work based on a dynamic that provides collective and participative decision-making processes (PARO, 2005).

¹³ Art. 14. Os sistemas de ensino definirão as normas da gestão democrática do ensino público na educação básica, de acordo com as 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).

¹⁴ “em verdade, os planos de educação tendem a pecar por dois problemas: de um lado, o excesso de propostas; de outro, a falta de previsão orçamentária”

¹⁵ “efetivação da gestão democrática da educação, associada a critérios técnicos de mérito e desempenho e à consulta pública à comunidade escolar, no âmbito das escolas públicas, prevendo recursos e apoio técnico da União para tanto”

According to Paro (2007), when dealing specifically with democratic management in the context of educational institutions, he argues the need to make use of measures that make it possible for school users to participate in decision-making processes on the socio-cultural actions of public schools and which are brought together in three types: those based on collective participation channels - the school council, parents 'and teachers' association - these spaces for collective deliberations strengthening social control in school units; direct election for the choice of school leaders - allowing the community to participate directly in the electoral process; and those that are within the scope of other participatory initiatives and in the involvement of students, teachers and parents in school activities.

When we talk about democratization of education, we need to consider that the processes of its organization and management are linked to the different degrees of autonomy that exist in school systems through the effective participation of its segments in decision-making processes, seeking to ensure the existence of “progressive degrees of pedagogical and administrative autonomy and financial management”¹⁶ (LDB, Art. 15). Autonomy that guides the construction of the identity and history of the school institution, its own way of existing (AZEVEDO, 2011; VIEIRA, 2007).

According to Luck (2006), autonomy is the most cited concept in teaching management systems, in the programs of the Ministry of Education, constituting a condition for the implementation of constitutional principles and educational legislation, since the autonomy of school management, with the resources of local control, with the leadership of the direction, community participation and organization of pedagogical work is considered an essential pillar for the democratization of education.

It is undeniable that these proposals resulting from the legislation in the context of school management have brought about changes in the role of the school community, however, they need to be effectively implemented, as is the case of School Councils, in which today there is still limited participation, as analyzes Aguiar (2008). According to the author, even with the approval of Ministerial Order no. 2,896/2004, which instituted the National Program for Strengthening School Councils in public basic education schools, there is a scant attendance of fathers and mothers in meetings called and in approved decisions, as these are often to reiterate measures already adopted or previously decided by the school's teachers and technical-pedagogical team; or those determinations that the school management needs to implement, by previous definitions of the municipal or state secretariat.

¹⁶ “progressivos graus de autonomia pedagógica e administrativa e de gestão financeira”

According to Luck (2006), a collegiate body is an instrument of school management with the objective of sharing decisions in the collective, with interactional participation from the school community, meaning society's commitment in everyday school life. This participatory commitment may occur in different ways, as decided by the council, such as through activities for the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of the political pedagogical project; involvement in the school's pedagogical activities; participation in conversation circles with parents, in order to discuss the trajectories in relation to the education of their children; support actions to develop the school's pedagogical work; among others.

This means that the organization of the school in a democratic perspective needs to be guided by principles of solidarity, collective participation, and power sharing; aspects that presuppose shared management, in the sense of overcoming centralizing practices and trends of traditional hierarchical control, stimulating greater involvement and commitment of all subjects concerned with the school's decision-making process. Paro (2005) considers that parents, students, teachers and other employees need to participate in decision-making from the initial stage of pedagogical planning to the phase of implementation and evaluation of school practices.

Another strategy that contributes to the improvement of democratic management is the choice to fill the position of school principal, as emphasized by Luck (2006), who must be elected by the school community, breaking with the imposing model by politicians. However, these initiatives have not been disseminated in all Brazilian schools, and the direct election, depending on the way it is carried out, does not signify the democratization of the management policy of the school units involved.

For Gadotti and Romão (2006), this choice can occur through the nomination, the public contest, the direct election, or even, by the adoption of the mixed scheme. According to the authors, the appointment occurs through the practice of appointing the principal as a position of trust by a person outside the school; in most cases, this indication is made by the municipal manager or governor. Gadotti and Romão (2006) consider that this form of choice does not offer security for the democratic management and for the professional, because, when it is an indication based much more on political-clientelistic criteria than technical-academic, this professional is linked to the interests of who made the indication, and can be replaced at any time, compromising management practices.

Paro's position (2003) is close to the understanding evidenced by Gadotti and Romão (2004), as he considers that the main problem that arises from this practice of choosing school management without democratic criteria is the favoring of the particular interests of the local

executive or the political forces responsible for nomination to the detriment of guaranteeing the interests of the school and local community, from which the right to exercise their citizenship is removed.

According to Paro (2003), this form of occupation of the school management position prevailed until the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution, whose justification for its maintenance was based on the prerogative of representative democracy, that is, if the local executive was elected by society to define issues and demands of the different social segments, therefore, these appointments would have legitimacy and avoid conflicts in the administration. However, this non-democratic procedure remains to this day in the vast majority of Brazilian municipalities, bringing risks to the effectiveness of democracy in school units, feeding authoritarian, physiologists and nepotists..

In relation to the public competition, this can be carried out through tests and titles, which aims to assess the degree of technical knowledge and the verification of the appropriate academic background for the exercise of the proper functions of the position of school principal. According to Gadotti and Romão (2004), if on the one hand this form of choice can present objective conditions for the effective exercise of the position, such as professional competence and the reduction of nepotism and clientelism, there is criticism on the part of the school community in relation to this mechanism. Although the competition defines objective and technical criteria, it fails to assess the leadership capacity of the candidates for the position and also removes the possibility for the community to participate in the process of electing school principals. Thus, “the contest ends up being democratic for the candidate, who, if approved, can choose the school where to work, but is undemocratic in relation to the will of the school community, which is obliged to accept the choice of the first”¹⁷ (GADOTTI; ROMÃO, 2004, p. 94).

With regard to direct election to fill the position of principal, Paro (2003) considers this mechanism the closest to guaranteeing the democratic management exercise of the school and collegiate unit, as it allows dialogue in the school space, as well as the involvement of local and school community in the distribution of decision-making power, also fulfilling the perspective of the technical and political competences necessary to exercise school management. It can be done in different ways: through direct, representative, uninominal voting or from choices via triple or multi-nominative lists. For this reason, the author considers this mechanism to be favorable, given its “the relevance of considering direct election, by school personnel, students

¹⁷ “o concurso acaba sendo democrático para o candidato, que, se aprovado, pode escolher a escola onde irá atuar, mas é antidemocrático em relação à vontade da comunidade escolar, que é obrigada a aceitar a escolha do primeiro”

and the community, as one of the criteria for choosing the principal of a public school”¹⁸ (GADOTTI; ROMÃO, 2004, p. 26-27).

As for the mixed election scheme, it combines two or more steps in the process of selecting principals. According to Gadotti and Romão (2004), these steps may consist of tests to check the candidates' formation and technical competence, and elections to verify their experience in the administrative area of education, leadership skills, among other aspects. Through the adoption of this mixed scheme, there are possibilities for the school community to participate in one or more stages of the selection process, ensuring greater interaction and commitment between the chosen direction and the users of the school institution.

As we can see, the Brazilian legal provisions describe the rules to be implemented by public administrators at different levels of government in the field of education management; however, we agree with Vieira (2007) when he says that there is still a long way to go in terms of strengthening communication between professionals working within the education departments and school institutions, the normative bodies of the education systems or other institutions that constitute the educational system, at the different levels of the Public Power.

The investigated context: the election of school management in the city of Medicilândia

The theme addressed in this study has a differentiated specificity because it is a practice that is still not very common in Brazilian schools. The process of direct election for the position of school principal as a mechanism of democratic management, although it has legal support in CF/1988 and LDB 9394/96, is not a common practice in Brazilian municipalities, still prevailing the method of the local executive nominating for the exercise for this position, as attested by Paro (2003) and Gadotti and Romão (2004).

In this statement, the methodology that supports our reflections is based on qualitative research, as this approach explains the particularity of the object of study, enabling the interpretation of the social phenomena found in the investigated locus. According to Minayo (2010, p. 21), qualitative research is concerned with the field of Social Sciences “[...] with a level of reality that cannot or should not be quantified. In other words, it works with the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes [...]”¹⁹.

¹⁸ “a relevância de se considerar a eleição direta, por parte do pessoal escolar, alunos e comunidade, como um dos critérios para a escolha do diretor de escola pública”

¹⁹ “[...]com um nível de realidade que não pode ou não deveria ser quantificado. Ou seja, ela trabalha com o universo dos significados, dos motivos, das aspirações, das crenças, dos valores e das atitudes [...]”

As a research strategy, we opted for an exploratory case study, as it allows a study of the particularity and complexity of a given context, which leads to understand its activity under important circumstances. For Yin (2010), a case study refers to an empirical investigation that aims to study a phenomenon in depth, involving aspects related to planning, data collection techniques and their analysis, whose purpose is to allow a familiarization on a subject that will be approached, in order to provide the delimitation of the theme and its objectives to be studied later, making the problem more explicit.

Ludke and André (1986) understand the case study as a methodology that aims to study from an approach that encompasses the complexities of the phenomena in their interconnections with reality and with the subjects that are part of it. Thus, the researcher seeks to “[...] reveal the multiplicity of dimensions present in a given situation or problem, focusing on it as a whole. This type of approach emphasizes the natural complexity of situations, highlighting the interrelations of its components”²⁰ (LUDKE AND ANDRÉ, 1986, p. 19).

For Yin (2010), the researcher needs to appropriate the complexity and dynamism inherent to this type of research, in order to allow the reader to understand and build new knowledge. For that, he highlights three general strategies that guide the analysis of the evidence collected in the case study. The first refers to the theoretical propositions related to the investigated object, which underlie the objectives, the research questions, the literature about the theme addressed and the conjectures that may emerge during the investigations. The second analytical strategy is linked to competing explanations that help the researcher to make evaluations of the case studied. Finally, the author highlights the case description, which is responsible for organizing the descriptive structure in order to organize the case study, being considered an indispensable activity when the researcher faces difficulties in using competing theoretical propositions or explanations.

Data collection was carried out with support from the school management team, based on semi-structured interviews with the current pedagogical management and coordination; six teachers, two teachers being members of the school board; two students from the 9th grade of elementary school; and also, two Secretaries of Municipal Education, regarding school space and routines, of school management actions in order to identify the impressions, challenges, possibilities, as well as about the contributions of the experiences acquired on democratic management through the direct election process for the position of the school principal.

²⁰ “[...] revelar a multiplicidade de dimensões presentes numa determinada situação ou problema, focalizando-o como um todo. Esse tipo de abordagem enfatiza a complexidade natural das situações, evidenciando a inter-relação dos seus componentes”

The field research at the school unit took place in the months of May and June 2018, at the Abraham Lincoln Municipal School of Education (EMEF), with code in MEC no. 15106829, located in the urban perimeter of the municipality of Medicilândia, state of Pará.

According to Torres (2015), the school won this name because of the founding of the project “*Agroindustrial e Canavieiro da Usina de Açúcar Abraham Lincoln*” (Agro-industrial and Sugarcane Plant of Sugar Abraham Lincoln), a name given by the military in order to honor the American president. The school was founded between 1971 and 1972, in the process of colonization of the Transamazônica by the Médici government, which initially offered the initial grades of lower elementary education, the state government being in charge of administering it, with the assistance of the federal government, because this location was part of the colonization project at the time. Later, in 1978, with the arrival of the Franciscan sisters from the south of Brazil, they were responsible for the first local school administration, and implemented the larger elementary school, becoming the main school of the municipality.

Torres (2015) states that the first building of this school unit was a wooden structure distributed in classrooms and a community shed; in 1985, the local community got a more adequate physical structure of masonry, after organizing itself in entourage and taking off to Brasília, in order to claim financial resources for the maintenance of the school, proposing that the manpower for the construction of the school would be the counterpart of the local residents. EMEF Abraham Lincoln was recognized by the State Education Council (CEE) only on September 14, 1989, through Resolution no. 322/1989 / EEC. School management was the responsibility of the state government until 1997, because, as a result of the process of municipalization of education implemented in the state of Pará²¹, started to be managed by the municipal government through adherence to municipalization through Agreement no. 010/1997.

It is a large school, with 46 classrooms, a teachers' room, a boardroom, a coordination room, a secretarial room, a library, a reading room, a computer room with internet access with computers for student use, covered patio, covered sports court, warehouse, cafeteria and

²¹ The process of municipalization of education was due to the wide process of decentralization of public policies initiated in the 1990s and the educational reforms implemented by the FHC government in that period. An example of this was the process of municipalization of education that took place throughout the country, under the terms of EC 14/96, which instituted the implementation of the Fund for the Development of Elementary Education and Valorisation of Teaching - FUNDEF. According to Miléo (2007), the municipalization of elementary education in the state of Pará was foreseen in the elaboration of the State Education Plan (1995-1999) under the government of Almir Gabriel, being the first state in the country to implement FUNDEF, based on the proposal entitled “Municipalization of Elementary Education in the State of Pará”, approved by State Law no. 6,044, of May 16, 1997, presented in August of the same year by the State Education Secretariat - SEDUC. Between September and December, 42 municipalities joined the proposal for municipalization, including the municipality of Medicilândia.

bathrooms. In its staff, there are 79 full teachers, 05 Libras assistants/monitors/translators and other complementary support servers, totaling 158 employees.

According to data from INEP, in 2017 this school unit had a total of 1,973 enrollments distributed in 83 classes in the three working shifts - Elementary Education (initial and final years) and Youth and Adult Education; and a total of 123 students enrolled full time.

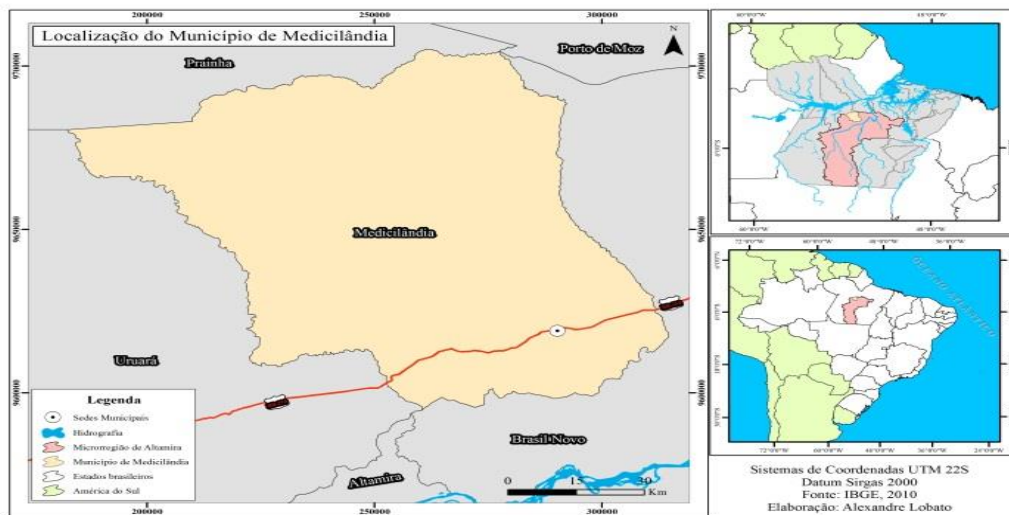
Table 1 - IDEB, Goal, Approval Rates for Initial Years, Standardized Score for *Prova Brasil*, Standardized Coefficients for Portuguese Language and Mathematics. Initial and Final Years of Elementary Education at EMEF

	2013		2015		2017	
	Initial Years	Final Years	Initial Years	Final Years	Initial Years	Final Years
IDEB	44,1	33,4	34,3	33,4	44,7	33,5
Goal	44,3	44,4	44,5	44,7	44,8	45,0
Approval rates	00,87	70,74	00,84	00,74	00,88	00,76
Standardized Score for <i>Prova Brasil</i>	44,72	44,52	55,18	44,63	55,30	44,53
Standardized Coefficients for Portuguese Language	44,6	44,4	55,0	44,5	55,2	44,5
Standardized Coefficients for Mathematics	44,8	44,6	55,4	44,8	55,4	44,6

Source: MEC/INEP.

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2010), the origin of the municipality of Medicilândia is related to the National Integration Program (PIN), instituted in 1970 and implemented in 1971, by the Federal Government, which aimed to develop a colonization program in the Amazon with the opening of the BR 230 - Transamazônica Highway. In 1984, the municipality was a district of the municipality of Prainha, having been dismembered and elevated to the category of municipality on May 6, 1988, with headquarters at km 90-lane, installed on January 1, 1989.

Figure 1 - Map of the municipality of Medicilândia - Pará.



Source: DeVised by the authors.

The municipality belonging to the Mesorregião do Sudoeste Paraense, micro-region of Altamira, is located on the banks of the Transamazônica BR 230 towards Altamira - Itaituba; it has its limits with the municipalities of Prainha, Porto de Moz, Brasil Novo and Uruará. Its estimated population is 30,726 inhabitants. It has an area of territorial unit of 8,272,629 km², and its demographic density is 3.3. It is considered the national cocoa capital, where there is the Cacaaway chocolate factory (IBGE, 2017).

The municipality's schooling rate (for people aged 6 to 14) was 94.5% in 2010, placing the municipality in the 87th position of 144 cities in the state and in the 5,134 position of the 5,570 Brazilian cities. IBGE data point to 4,693 the number of enrolled in Elementary Education, in the 43 existing municipal public schools. The illiteracy rate, in 2010, was 6.5%, a rate considered high compared to the national reality, which was 8.7% in 2012, but consistent with the situation in the North region, which was 28% (IBGE, 2010).

The school unit, along with the school board, administers the following federal programs: Direct Money to Schools Program (PDDE, Portuguese initials) Direct Money to Schools Program Integral Education (PDDE-EI, Portuguese initials) and the More Education Program. In 2018, it was awarded the Program instituted by the Ministry of Education “More Literacy”, through Ordinance no. 1,144, of October 10, 2016, created with the purpose of strengthening and supporting schools in the literacy process of students in the 1st and 2nd years of elementary school, which will serve one class of 1st year and two classes of 2nd year.

The school also participates in institutional assessments during the academic year at all levels and spheres, municipal, state and federal, which evaluate the general performance of the institution and also the sectors that compose it, as well as the performance of students; as an

example we have: *Prova Brasil* (ARENSC); *Provinha Brasil*; National Literacy Assessment (ANA); Functional performance assessment (municipal); Mathematics Olympiad in public schools and Evaluation of Matematicando (OBMEP), local and municipal level.

Democratic management via the direct election process to the position of school principal

With prospects of following the guidelines and principles of democratic management determined by the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law of Directives and Bases of Education (LDB 9,394 / 96), the Municipality of Medicilândia has undertaken measures, such as Complementary Law no. 01/2015, which provides for the reformulation of the Positions, Career and Compensation Plan for professionals in Basic Education of Public Education in the Municipal Network in Medicilândia, its management and other measures, where in Chapter I, Article 1, Item III, establishes “The participation of the public servant in the elaboration and execution of the Political Pedagogical Project of the School” and in Item V “the commitment to a truly citizen school”.

In that same document, in section XI, Article 32, which deals with the annexes of this Complementary Law, the PCCR (annex of the Law) recommends the holding of the election for the position of principal and vice-principal, which should be occupied by teachers with qualification in Pedagogy or specialization in management, and also discriminates the attributions of school management and pedagogical coordination, which must be occupied by Pedagogue or graduate with specific specialization (MEDICILÂNDIA, 2015).

In that municipality, Municipal Law no. 430/2015, which deals with the approval of the Municipal Education Plan (PME), in accordance with the provisions of article 8 of the National Education Plan (PNE), Law no. 13,005 / 2014. As a result, one of the guidelines of the PNE was maintained in Article 2 of the PME, which is “VI promoting the principle of democratic management of public education;” (MEDICILÂNDIA, 2015). Goal 19 of this PME has a period of one year after its approval for democratic management in education to be carried out, with technical criteria and public consultation with the school community within the scope of public school units, as provided for in the current PNE.

Regarding the election process for school management, Resolution no. 085, of January 31, 2011, which approves the Unified School Rules and Curriculum Structure for the Municipal Teaching Network of Medicilândia - PA, Section II, deals with the Principal and Vice-Principal being elected by the school community.

This Resolution cited subsidized the creation of Complementary Law no. 01/2015, in relation to the electoral process for school management, the guidelines being expressed in chapter II, section X, Article 25, which provides: “the functions of management and vice-management of educational establishments in the municipality of Medicilândia must be filled by elected professors, and the Executive Power is responsible for nominating the winner of the election ”. In paragraph 1 of that law, it says that the electoral process will be organized and carried out by the School Council, and that in order to run for office, the civil servant must be effective in the education framework, with at least three years in total and one year in the school in which one is a candidate. In the 2nd paragraph, it advises that at the time of registration, the competitor must present own pedagogical project and work plan for the management period (MEDICILÂNDIA, 2015).

When we observe these documents, we verify that they are in accordance with the established by LDB 9394/96, which when dealing with education professionals, determines, in its article 67, sole paragraph, that “teaching experience is a prerequisite for professional practice of any other teaching duties, in accordance with the rules of each education system”²². Furthermore, the National Education Council, when standardizing this LDB provision, places, in Resolution CEB/CNE 03/97, Article 3, § 1: “The minimum teaching experience, a prerequisite for the professional exercise of any teaching duties, other than teaching, will be 02 (two) years and acquired at any level or public or private education system”²³.

However, through the “History of the Abraham Lincoln School” by Torres (2015), it appears that the administrations that assumed the school administration were by indications made by the state and municipal executive powers, however, in 2003, begins the process of direct elections for principal and vice-principal, an achievement that had the participation of the managers of the time, Teachers Rejane Malveira Vaz (principal) and Elizabete Catarina Podanoschi and, also, the participation of the school community (TORRES, 2015).

In an interview with the Municipal Secretary of Education of the administration in which the election process for principal was created (2001-2004), we asked him how the democratic school management process was thought and what his conception about it. His position:

Believing that it would be a way to organize the functioning of the public school in terms of political, administrative, technological, cultural, artistic

²² “a experiência docente é pré-requisito para o exercício profissional de quaisquer outras funções de magistério, nos termos das normas de cada sistema de ensino”

²³ “A experiência docente mínima, pré-requisito para o exercício profissional de quaisquer funções de magistério, que não a de docência, será de 02 (dois) anos e adquirida em qualquer nível ou sistema de ensino público ou privado”

and pedagogical aspects, with the purpose of providing transparency to actions and acts, enabling the school and local community to acquire insight, knowledge, ideas and dreams, through a process of learning, inventing, creating, dialoguing, building, transforming and teaching. Democratic school management, basically, would be the implantation in the school units of a dynamic that guarantees collective processes of participation and decision, requiring more than simple changes in the organizational structures, it requires changes of paradigms that base an educational proposal based on the collective with a focus on quality and in society's novelties about knowledge, continue and continuing changes.²⁴

According to this professional, it is necessary to problematize the country's educational process, with a view to overcoming "[...] the failure and exclusion education for a quality education, in view of the perspective of more participation and control for the education actors"²⁵. He also considers that only through democratic management, the school opens possibilities for parents to participate "[...] in the definition of the pedagogical proposals of their children's school, following the school development and evaluating the results"²⁶ (Municipal Secretary of Education, 2001-2004).

In view of this report, we observed that the interviewee presents an understanding of democratic management that promotes changes in the daily life of school practices and exclusionary educational paradigms, since it allows the involvement of different educational agents and segments in the pedagogical processes, seeking to improve the quality of teaching and the monitoring of students' learning by their family. For Bordignon and Gracindo (2006, p. 147), "management transforms educational goals and objectives into actions, giving concreteness to the directions set by the policies"²⁷. Consequently, management cannot be treated as a technical activity, on the contrary, as a "contextualized political-administrative process, through which the social practice of education is organized, oriented and made possible"²⁸, in common agreement with the school and local community.

²⁴ *Acreditar que seria uma maneira de organizar o funcionamento da escola pública quanto aos aspectos políticos, administrativos, tecnológicos, culturais, artísticos e pedagógicos, com a finalidade de dar transparência às ações e atos, possibilitando à comunidade escolar e local, aquisição de conhecimentos, saberes, ideias e sonhos, através de um processo de aprender, inventar, criar, dialogar, construir, transformar e ensinar. Gestão escolar democrática, basicamente, seria a implantação nas unidades escolares de uma dinâmica que garanta processos coletivos de participação e decisão, exigindo mais do que simples mudanças nas estruturas organizacionais, requer mudanças de paradigmas que fundamentam uma proposta educacional baseada no coletivo com foco na qualidade e nas novidades da sociedade quanto ao conhecimento, mudança contínua e continuada.*

²⁵ "[...] a educação de fracasso e de exclusão para uma educação de qualidade, diante da perspectiva de mais participação e controle dos atores da educação"

²⁶ "[...] na definição das propostas pedagógicas da escola de seus filhos, acompanhando o desenvolvimento escolar e avaliando os resultados"

²⁷ a gestão transforma metas e objetivos educacionais em ações, dando concretude às direções traçadas pelas políticas"

²⁸ "processo político-administrativo contextualizado, através do qual a prática social da educação é organizada, orientada e viabilizada"

Results and discussions: the voices of the research subjects

The so-called democratic management of the public school needs to transcend the idea of centrality in the figure of the school principal as the sole responsible for decision-making processes, an image that overloads this professional with administrative and pedagogical functions, in view of aspects of regulation, monitoring, control and evaluation of the school curricular component. In recent years, school management has had a renewed focus, especially after the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, ratified by LDB 9394/96, with a model geared to the role of school management, with changes in functional demands and changes in the roles educational and school management.

Thus, the discussions that fall within the field of school management, particularly those that bring democratic propositions in themselves, make it necessary to listen to the subjects that make up the school space, such as principals, teachers, students, members of the school board and other people in the local community, as Libâneo says(2008, p. 122) when referring to democratic-participative management as a management model that “is based on the organic relationship between management and the participation of team members”²⁹.

Considering this question in the study carried out, we asked our interviewees how they conceive school management and democratic school management. Their reports show understandings that demonstrate appropriation of their participative meaning and sharing of decisions, similar to those presented by Paro (2007).

For me, school management is carried out by a group of education professionals (teachers) to manage the school and carry out the pedagogical work and assist students who have conduct or learning problems and that all seek together, a quality education. Democratic management, in addition to these specificities, goes a little further, as it involves the people for whom education is intended: parents, students, organized civil society; it involves other administrative segments, such as the health and environment secretariat, giving the opportunity to participate and suggest to manage the school and share responsibilities with its power of representation through the school council. (Teacher A).³⁰

I understand that this is what makes the school move towards the future, together with all the teachers, students, administrators, support, family and others involved in the educational process. When everyone participates, give

²⁹ “baseia-se na relação orgânica entre direção e a participação dos membros da equipe”

³⁰ *Para mim, gestão escolar é feita por um conjunto de profissionais da área de educação (professores) para administrar a escola e realizar o trabalho pedagógico e atendimento aos alunos que apresentem problemas de conduta ou aprendizagem e que todos busquem juntos, uma educação de qualidade. Já a gestão democrática, além dessas especificidades vai um pouco mais além, pois envolve as pessoas a quem a educação se destina: pais, alunos, sociedade civil organizada; envolve outros segmentos administrativos como, secretaria de saúde e meio ambiente, dando a oportunidade de participação e sugestão para administrar a escola e dividir responsabilidades tendo seu poder de representatividade através do conselho escolar. (Professora A).*

*opinions, develop their work with freedom to change what needs to be changed, correct, create, it is automatically democratizing school management. (Teacher B).*³¹

*It is a way to manage a school unit, which aims to meet the needs of the sectors that involve these practices, such as: employees, physical structure of the school. In my view, democratic school management should be composed of the participation of the various segments of the school community (parents, teachers, students and staff), in all aspects of the school. Participating directly and indirectly in the different stages of planning, implementation and evaluation. (School Council President).*³²

*School management must be a democratic process in which all employees must contribute to better performance. (Secretary of the School Council).*³³

As for the reports of the school principal and pedagogical coordination, their testimonies move towards pointing out democratic management as practices that articulate the democratic experience through the participation of all educational agents and the family, aiming at improving students' learning, which also affects the good performance of the school institution.

*School management is a job that aims to organize and articulate the institution's daily work, with the aim of improving teaching efficiency. Democratic school management is one that guarantees democracy, the participation of all employees of the institution and the community in general, aiming at improving students' learning and development. It is a way to manage a school unit, which aims to meet the needs of the sectors that involve these practices, such as: employees, physical structure of the school. In my view, democratic school management should be composed of the participation of the various segments of the school community (parents, teachers, students and staff), in all aspects of the school. Participating directly or indirectly in the different stages of planning, implementation and evaluation. (School Director, 2016-2018).*³⁴

³¹ *Compreendo que é o que faz a escola caminhar para o futuro, juntamente como todos os professores, alunos, administrativos, apoio, família e demais envolvidos no processo educativo. Quando todos participam, opinam, desenvolvem seu trabalho com liberdade para mudar o que precisa ser mudado, corrigir, criar, está automaticamente democratizando a gestão escolar. (Professora B).*

³² *É uma forma de administrar uma unidade escolar, que visa atender as necessidades dos setores que envolvem essas práticas, tais como: funcionários, estrutura física da escola. Na minha concepção, a gestão escolar democrática deve ser composta pela participação dos vários segmentos da comunidade escolar (pais, professores, estudantes e funcionários), em todos os aspectos da escola. Participando direta e indiretamente nas diferentes etapas de planejamentos, implementação e avaliação. (Presidente do Conselho Escolar).*

³³ *A gestão escolar deve ser um processo democrático na qual todos os funcionários devem contribuir para um melhor desempenho. (Secretária do Conselho Escolar).*

³⁴ *A gestão escolar é um trabalho que visa organizar e articular os trabalhos diários da instituição, com o intuito de melhorar a eficiência do ensino. A gestão democrática escolar é aquela que garante a democracia, a participação de todos os funcionários da instituição e da comunidade em geral, visando à melhoria na aprendizagem e desenvolvimento dos alunos. É uma forma de administrar uma unidade escolar, que visa atender as necessidades dos setores que envolvem essas práticas, tais como: funcionários, estrutura física da escola. Na minha concepção a gestão escolar democrática deve ser composta pela participação dos vários segmentos da comunidade escolar (pais, professores, estudantes e funcionários), em todos os aspectos da escola. Participando direta ou indiretamente nas diferentes etapas dos planejamentos, implementações e avaliação. (Diretora Escolar, 2016-2018).*

School management must be a democratic process, respected and valued by the school community, that is, with the participation of school staff, students and parents where everyone can contribute to the good performance of the Teaching Unit. It is of fundamental importance for the good performance of the school, where principals and coordinators go to great lengths around the institution. Where the process is democratic as its central focus; must have all their decisions guided by pedagogical criteria and must propose the best for the teaching and learning process. School management is necessary for the smooth running of school activities and for ordering within the educational space. (School Pedagogical Coordination, 2016-2018).³⁵

Regarding the position of the Municipal Secretary of Education for the current administration (2017-2020), he said he defends democratic management, as it allows collective decision-making: “I defend democratic management. Making the entire faculty available for decision-making is sharing the results of the work”³⁶.

When dealing with the management of the school in a democratic perspective, Libâneo (2008) argues that its validity must be defended and legitimized by all involved, since it favors the creation of an organizational culture that promotes more qualitative school results; in addition to changing the school's culture and pedagogical routines from inclusive actions, which respect the existing diversity in the school space:

On the part of the principals and pedagogical coordinators, it is necessary to be able to lead and manage cooperation practices in a large group, in order to create an organizational culture, that is, a school organization mentality established from perceptions, ways of thinking and acting, practices, typical of the culture that exists among the members of the management team (LIBÂNEO, 2008, p. 103).³⁷

Regarding the reports of the interviewed students, in response to the question regarding the concept of democratic management, they reported that school management is good and democratic due to the school being organized, so they respect the school management.

³⁵ *A gestão escolar deve ser processo democrático, respeitado e valorizado pela comunidade escolar, ou seja, com a participação dos funcionários da escola, alunos e pais onde todos podem contribuir para o bom desempenho da Unidade de Ensino. A mesma é de fundamental importância para o bom desempenho da escola, onde diretores e coordenadores não medem esforços em torno da instituição. Onde o processo é democrático como seu foco central; deve ter todas as suas decisões orientadas por critérios pedagógicos e devem propor o melhor para o processo ensino e aprendizagem. A gestão escolar se faz necessário para o bom andamento das atividades escolares e para que haja ordenamento dentro do espaço educacional. (Coordenação Pedagógica Escolar, 2016-2018).*

³⁶ “Defendo a gestão democrática. Oportunizar todo o corpo docente a tomada de decisões é partilhar resultado do trabalho”

³⁷ Por parte dos diretores e coordenadores pedagógicos, é preciso capacidade de liderar e gerir práticas de cooperação em grande grupo, de modo a criar uma cultura organizacional, ou seja, uma mentalidade de organização escolar instituída a partir das percepções, modos de pensar e agir, práticas, próprias da cultura existente entre os integrantes da equipe gestora (LIBÂNEO, 2008, p. 103).

Based on these considerations, we asked respondents how they perceive the election process for school management and whether it favors the effectiveness of democratic management. We obtained positions that affirm the conviction that the process of choosing school management favors the participation of all. The dialogue and the debate between the candidates for the position and the school and local community and, also, to know their proposals regarding the actions to be developed during the mandate, as we can see in the excerpts below:

I think my position and opinion are important and I try to make it clear to potential candidates what I am waiting for, as I usually charge for campaign promises and carefully study the management plan they present. (Teacher C).³⁸

I think it is a wonderful way to bring those interested in the educational process to effective participation in the school to solve the many problems it has. It is much better than a principal appointed by the municipal administration with centralized power. Yes, it is already a process of democratization of management, but this process will be truly democratic when there is a democratic management that is able to place the student at the center of the teaching process. The school can sometimes do this, but it is not a routine, there are sporadic events and the whole of Brazil needs to look for ways in this direction in all spheres of education, even in higher education. (Teacher D).³⁹

The election process for the school management is a very important democratic act, since the actors involved in the teaching-learning process have the right to vote and be voted, that is, they participate and interact directly in the entire pedagogical, philosophical political process, etc. (Educational coordinator).⁴⁰

I see myself as a person who makes a difference, because I have my own choices. (9th grade student).⁴¹

Paro (2005), when discussing the participation of the school and local community in the management of education, states that the school needs to be a space that involves its users in

³⁸ *Penso que meu posicionamento e opinião são importantes e procuro deixar claro aos possíveis candidatos aquilo que estou esperando, pois costumo cobrar as promessas de campanha e estudar cuidadosamente o plano de gestão que apresentam. (Professora C).*

³⁹ *Penso que é uma maneira maravilhosa de trazer os interessados no processo educativo para a participação efetiva na escola a resolver os muitos problemas que possui. É bem melhor que um diretor nomeado pela gestão municipal com o poder centralizado. Sim, ele já se constitui um processo de democratização de gestão, mas esse processo será democrático de fato quando houver uma gestão democrática que consiga colocar o aluno no centro do processo de ensino. A escola já consegue às vezes, fazer isso, mas não se constitui uma rotina, são eventos esporádicos e o Brasil inteiro precisa buscar caminhos nesse sentido em todas as esferas do ensino, até mesmo no ensino superior. (Professora D).*

⁴⁰ *O processo de eleição para a direção da escola é um ato democrático muito importante, pois os atores envolvidos no processo ensino aprendizagem têm o direito de votar e ser votado, ou seja, participa e interage diretamente em todo o processo político pedagógico, filosófico, etc. (Coordenadora Pedagógica).*

⁴¹ *Percebo-me como uma pessoa que faz a diferença, pelo fato de ter minhas próprias escolhas. (Aluna do 9º ano).*

decision-making processes through the transmission of information about school functioning and results, considering this as one of the essential elements to foster participatory processes, because

It is through information that parents and other members of the community can become aware of their rights and duties towards the school institution, as well as learn about the facts and relations that occur within the educational establishment and that concern their interests as users of the same (PARO, 2005, p. 192).⁴²

It is identified that, in the author's view, the concept of participation represents a central point when we think about the democratization of schools. For him, participation is a channel that allows the school institution and those involved in the educational act to be instrumental in defining the pedagogical and administrative objectives, such as the organization of the selection of principals, in the choice of counselors who will compose the school council, constituted both by representatives of the school community (principals, vice-principals, teachers, students and staff), as well as people from the local community (parents of students, popular movements, residents' associations, mother's clubs, cultural groups), making these social subjects co-responsible for management (PARO, 2007).

When we asked the interviewees about how to organize the electoral process at school, the Secretary of the School Council reported that it must be organized in a participatory manner and needs to involve the entire school community, but that she has not yet participated in any election: *“I have been acting for 08 months on the council and I have not yet participated in any electoral process”*⁴³. A 9th student said that his vote “[...] is for that person that I think can handle taking up his position, also for now everything is fine. It means that it is a change of principals”⁴⁴.

On this issue, the President of the School Council reported that she participates in the election from her involvement as a citizen through a conscious vote, with the perspective of seeking alternatives that collaborate *“for the pedagogical and administrative development of the school. I also realize that through the election there is a decentralization of power,*

⁴² É por meio da informação que os pais e os demais membros da comunidade podem pôr-se a par de seus direitos e deveres para com a instituição escolar, bem como tomar conhecimento dos fatos e relações que se dão no interior do estabelecimento de ensino e que dizem respeito a seus interesses enquanto usuários do mesmo (PARO, 2005, p. 192).

⁴³ “Estou atuando há 08 meses no conselho e ainda não participei de nenhum processo eleitoral”

⁴⁴ “[...] é para aquela pessoa que eu acho que dá conta de assumir seu cargo, também por enquanto está tudo bem. Significa que é uma troca de diretores”

prevailing the will of the school community, because it is a choice made through direct vote”⁴⁵.

The school management (2016-2018) explained that this occurs as follows:

The electoral process is organized and carried out by the school council. To participate in this process in order to compete for the position of school manager, at the time of registration, the teacher must present his/her pedagogical proposal, work plan for the execution of his/her mandate; it must be part of the effective staff of the municipality and be allocated to education for a period of three years and at least one year in the school unit. Must be licensed in Pedagogy or Licensed in another area, and have a Specialization in School Management. Observe the plans presented by the candidates, vote and be voted among others.⁴⁶

In response to this question, the Municipal Secretary of Education of the current administration (2017-2020), stressed that this is a democratic moment and needs to be experienced by the whole community, which becomes responsible for the decision of which manager they want for the educational unit. He also informed us that he participates as an agent that mobilizes the elective process, leaving the organization under the charge “[...] of an electoral commission instituted by the school council itself. Participation takes place not only as an agent who will vote, but occurs through discussions and analysis of the profile of the candidate who will be applying for the vacancy. It is part of the political debate”⁴⁷. As for the Municipal Secretary of Education from 2001-2004, he informed that when the election process was installed, the intention was to get the community to get involved with the school and participate in the preparation of the pedagogical proposal:

I express comment on the implementation of this process at EMEF Abraham Lincoln, when I was the Municipal Secretary of Education of the municipality, we had the courage to break rules and norms that dominated the situation, with direct, purely political, indication for the principals. When implementing the direct election, we involved the students, parents, faculty and students of the school, with total freedom of expression and election campaign. As it was new, there was great repercussion and acceptance of the process, after the election the great challenge was to organize, discipline and execute the management, thanks to the high degree of professionalism and commitment of

⁴⁵ “para o desenvolvimento pedagógico e administrativo da escola. Percebo também que através da eleição há uma descentralização de poder, prevalecendo a vontade da comunidade escolar, pois é uma escolha feita através do voto direto”

⁴⁶ *O processo eleitoral é organizado e efetivado pelo conselho escolar. Para participar desse processo a fim de concorrer ao cargo de gestor escolar, no ato da sua inscrição o professor deverá apresentar a sua proposta pedagógica, plano de trabalho para execução do seu mandato; deverá ser do quadro efetivo do município e estar lotado na educação por um período de três anos e no mínimo um ano na unidade escolar. Precisa ser licenciado em Pedagogia ou Licenciado em outra área, e ter Especialização em Gestão Escolar. Observar os planos apresentados pelos candidatos, votar e ser votado entre outros.*

⁴⁷ “[...] de uma comissão eleitoral instituída pelo próprio conselho escolar. A participação ela ocorre não só como agente que irá votar, mas se dá através das discussões e análise do perfil do candidato que estará pleiteando a vaga. Está inserido do debate político”

*the elected officials, you can say that things went on and the school grew a lot, passing to prioritize, really the student. For believing that no country will achieve its development, in all aspects, without an investment, as a priority, in Education, only through the education of the citizen will we have a society that is conscious and strong enough to chart its course, therefore the participation in the school management process should be an imperative goal and commitment of government officials.*⁴⁸

In this perspective, we realize that the direct election for the choice of school management constitutes an extremely important mechanism in the effectiveness of democratic management, which needs to place itself as one of sharing collective decision-making from debates with the participation of the majority, according to (LÜCK, 2009). Thus, the election for the position of school principal must be constituted as a mechanism not of delegating or appointing a professional to a bureaucratic position, but as a way to strengthen school participation and autonomy in the choice of school practices; in his view, the role of the school principal is "to allow open dialogue with the ability to listen and understand issues on an ongoing basis"⁴⁹. Provide opportunities for everyone to share responsibilities. Have attitudes and expressions of leadership and not of command. Continuous exercise in open dialogue and the ability to listen (LÜCK, 2009, p. 75).

However, Paro (2010) clarifies that the democratic experience can only occur in school life if the manager has the understanding that he is an articulator of ideas and a mediator of collective actions and decisions in the educational context, giving freedom to other subjects to position themselves before the issues that are being discussed. It also emphasizes that direct election cannot, by itself, solve the whole problem of the school, since it demands the participation of everyone in decision-making on the different dimensions - political, pedagogical and financial - of school management.

The election of principals cannot, however, be taken as a panacea that will solve all the problems of the school, much less, in particular, those of a political nature. This, incidentally, has been the most frequent claim of those who resist the election as an alternative to the choice of the principal, that is,

⁴⁸ *Expresso comentário sobre a implantação deste processo na EMEF Abraham Lincoln, quando era Secretário Municipal de Educação do município, tivemos a coragem de quebrar regras e normas que dominavam a situação, com indicação direta, puramente política, dos diretores. Ao implantarmos a eleição direta, envolvemos o alunado, pais, corpo docente e discente da escola, com total liberdade de expressão e campanha eleitoral. Por ser novidade houve grande repercussão e aceitação do processo, após a eleição o grande desafio foi de organizar, disciplinar e executar a gestão, graças ao alto grau de profissionalismo e compromisso dos eleitos, pode dizer que a coisa andou e escola cresceu muito, passando a priorizar, realmente o aluno. Por acreditar que nenhum país vai alcançar o seu desenvolvimento, em todos os aspectos, sem que haja um investimento, como prioridade, na Educação, somente através da formação do cidadão teremos uma sociedade consciente e forte o suficiente para traçar o seu rumo, portanto a participação no processo de gestão escolar deveria ser uma meta imperiosa e compromisso dos governantes.*

⁴⁹ "Permitir um diálogo aberto com capacidade de ouvir e compreender as questões de modo contínuo"

the election is discarded because 'it is not possible to attribute the existence of democracy to just one variable, be it the contest, courses, or, even less, the election' (PARO, 2010, p. 28-29).⁵⁰

With all this, it is necessary that this electoral process for principals to be strengthened by means of more comprehensive social policies, which may politically form the subjects inserted in the context of the management of the school unit.

Final considerations

Finally, our results showed that our interviewees have a certain understanding of the direct electoral process for school leaders' choices, and that this mechanism significantly influences democratic school management, since the subjects involved demonstrated knowledge about their participative role in everyday life of the school community and often participate in school management, shared through councils, meetings of parents and teachers, construction of the PPP, meetings and / or workshops on the organization of pedagogical work. With regard to municipal legislation (Laws, Resolutions and PMEs), it was possible to observe that they are in line with what is expressed in our LDB and our 1988 Federal Constitution, with legal provisions defined, outlined, well elaborated and with their basis based on the organization of macro pedagogical work through Semed and micro through the management of the school unit.

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⁵⁰ A eleição de diretores não pode, todavia, ser tomada como uma panaceia que resolverá todos os problemas da escola e muito menos, em particular, os de natureza política. Esta, aliás, tem sido a alegação mais frequente dos que resistem à eleição como alternativa para a escolha do diretor, ou seja, descarta-se a eleição porque 'não é possível atribuir a existência da democracia a apenas uma variável, seja ela o concurso, os cursos, ou, menos ainda, a eleição' (PARO, 2010, p. 28-29).

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