

## **Educational leadership, school management and quality of education as a right** *Educational leadership, school management and quality of education as a right*

Antonia Vieira Teixeira  
Elemquelma Almeida Vilar  
Keyla Silva Costa Lopes  
Lindomar José Soares do Nascimento  
Mirian Costa dos Reis

### **ABSTRACT**

This article seeks to delve deeper into the topic of Educational Leadership, School Management, and Quality of Education as a Right, exploring specific aspects of the Brazilian context in relation to this topic, more specifically the principle of democratic management and the quality of education in our country. The reflection focuses on the themes of democratic management and quality education. Democratic School Management in the school environment provides us with greater freedom and leads to greater productivity in the workplace. The analysis of the quality of education must take place within the school context. Public policies fulfill formative processes across different levels, cycles, and educational modalities. However, our analysis will focus on basic education, where public schools are the best space to fight for social equality. A democratic school is committed to culture, transmitting meaningful knowledge, regardless of particular interests, in the pursuit of human evolution.

**Keywords:** Leadership and democratic management; Educational legislation and social rights.

### **ABSTRACT**

This article seeks to delve deeper into the topic of Educational Leadership, School Management and Quality of Education as a Right, exploring specificities of the Brazilian context in relation to this theme, more specifically the principle of democratic management and the quality of education in our country. The reflection focuses on the theme of democratic management and quality education. Democratic School Management in the school environment gives us more

freedom and brings us more productivity in the workplace. The analysis of the quality of education must take place in the school context, public policies fulfill formative processes at different levels, cycles and educational modalities, but our analysis will be about basic education, where public schools are the best space to fight for social equality, a democratic school is committed to culture, in the transmission of knowledge with meanings, despite private interests, in the search for human evolution.

**Keywords:** Leadership and democratic management; Educational legislation and social rights.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Social struggles for the democratization of the State, such as the relationships that exist in schools, are shaped by Brazilian history. The colonial cultural heritage that hierarchized society, marking authoritarianism, is not only a political phenomenon but also manifests itself in education. Meanwhile, Democratic Management emerged in the 1980s, alongside Brazil's redemocratization, championed by teaching professionals who sought a democratic framework established among school officials. It is true that national education experienced a late democratization, having gone through numerous phases. Only after 1988, with the promulgation of the Constitution (BRASIL, 1988), was Democratic Management established among the principles of Brazilian public education, at all levels. Thus, the constitutional text institutionalized the practices of state and municipal education systems:



It is not an end in itself; it is a powerful and indispensable tool for the ongoing construction of citizenship, social justice, and shared freedom. It guarantees the principle of unrestricted equality among all. (CORTELLA, 2014, p. 146). It is important to emphasize that School Management does not aim to manage the environment, but to improve the quality of education, consolidating a public decision-making sphere, which strengthens social power over the State and ensures that the population is adequately served by public schools.

Freire (2018) states that education is not equivalent to the means of transforming society, although it participates in such a process. From a legal point of view, Democratic Management is supported by the Federal Constitution (BRAZIL, 1988), the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN) (BRAZIL, 1996) and the National Education Plan (PNE) (BRAZIL, 2001); (BRAZIL, 2014).

The struggle to democratize society is part of the dynamic of democratizing education. Thus, Democratic Management becomes an end, not just a means, since it is not an administrative shift from technocracy to democracy. Democratic Management participates in the national democratic construct. The Political-Pedagogical project, school councils, principal elections, and autonomy are all democratic pedagogical processes, both inside and outside the school, since participation is built within these means. Conceptions and representations of what constitutes quality education change over time and space, especially considering the most significant transformations in society.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.4 DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The vision of quality education and the leadership required to implement changes in teaching and learning appear to be associated with the profile of the municipal secretary of education. Among the skills that enable secretaries to articulate and lead the educational landscape are their qualifications and previous experience, as well as other factors that contribute to successful leadership capable of influencing the performance of municipal schools, such as involvement with local political parties, especially the mayor's party, and a strong connection with the school environment. Regarding the secretaries' management model, two distinct profiles were observed:

The rational and technical modality, with power more concentrated in the hands of the secretary; and the participatory modality, which prioritizes the political commitment of all relevant actors in the educational context. Two typical cases, both yielding good results in terms of developing students' cognitive skills (op. cit., p. 46).

What we observe is that even though references to leadership emerge, this is not a determining factor in identifying managers, situated within a generic epistemological space, with other attributes being considered more prominently. Another study that identifies leadership as a strategic presence in the composition of school effectiveness, entitled "Learning Networks: Good Practices of Municipalities that Guarantee the Right to Learn," was conducted by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (UNDIME) (undated). The research found that in some networks, the profile and role of school administration is cited as a success factor, as seen in a comment on the research:

Just under a quarter of the visited networks cited the performance and capacity of school principals as a success factor. In general, principals are cited as partners and inspirers of school practices, as well as guarantors of good working conditions.



and guardian of the focus on learning. In some of the networks visited, directors are elected by direct vote of the community. In others, they are appointed by the mayor or the municipal education director—in the latter case, always with the mayor's endorsement. (undated, p. 78).

It is interesting to note that the study deals with management in municipalities and in this topic, leadership appears as a positive condition for the exercise of school management, but once again, in a generic way, without qualifications and with little explanation of the characteristics necessary for successful school leadership.

In addition to the studies discussed within the literature on school effectiveness, it is also worth noting that, for a considerable period of time, interests in the area were limited to specific leadership themes (PENA, 2013; ROMANO; OLIVEIRA, 2015).

Only in the second decade of the 21st century did studies begin to emerge that sought to investigate more effective relationships between leadership and other school variables, linking principal leadership to educational outcomes. Recent literature also highlights a study on the interplay between leadership and organizational climate in school management.

Along with its relatively low presence in the literature on Brazilian school management, it is worth noting the scarcity of initiatives specifically aimed at fostering leadership within education systems. Although it appears as a focus of school principal selection processes and training courses, it cannot be said that, in its literal sense, the topic has achieved a prominent place in Brazilian education policy.

Parallel to these circumstances, according to the *thesis* stated at the beginning of this reflection, the formulation and pursuit of implementation of the principle of "democratic management" in public schools would be strongly associated with the political dimension of school leadership and, therefore, significantly intertwined with the topic. Considering this scenario, it would be plausible to assert that the theme of democratic management has somehow overlapped with that of leadership in the debate and policies associated with educational and school management in Brazil. To further explore this *thesis*, it is opportune to identify empirical evidence that can somehow contribute to supporting this argument. First, it is necessary to examine the broader context of the country in which ideas are conceived and circulated that may or may not ultimately materialize as guiding theses for the formulation and implementation of educational policies.

A set of elements suggests that the perspective considered above makes sense, connecting it to the debate on democratic governance, forged amid the movement for political redemocratization. This movement began in the late 1970s and consolidated within the movement for direct elections and a Constituent Assembly, which resulted in the 1988 Constitution. The topic gained prominence among educators advocating for a democratic public education forged on new foundations.

The second program—School of Managers—was a nationwide training initiative sponsored by the Ministry of Education (MEC). It was developed in 2005 and was part of the Education Development Plan (PDE). It was implemented by federal universities in a large number of Brazilian states. Its creation stemmed from the need to develop school management processes compatible with the proposals and concept of social quality in education, based on the principles of modern public administration and advanced management models for public educational institutions. The content covered in this course covers topics related to the fundamentals of the right to education, education policy and management, school planning and management practices, and educational topics.

Lima (2018) points out that Democratic School Management could be a natural achievement, derived from the democratic regime, being a continuous and never concluded dynamic in the deepening and democratic trajectory in schools.

In parallel with the broader trend outlined here, it is worth noting that in public schools, school management is being established and configured as a model with multiple dimensions – pedagogical, administrative, financial, human resources, results, school climate, etc. – which will be carried out by the school principal or by a group of people responsible for managing the school. Without explicit definition of the responsibilities and competencies required of school administrators, it's safe to assume that the topic of leadership hasn't penetrated the realm of school policy and management in Brazil as it has in other contexts, including Ibero-American countries. It's also true that, unlike leadership, the topic of democratic management is rooted in the legislation that underpins Brazilian educational policy, as will be seen in the following section.

### 1.5 HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

These transformations reorganized Brazilian education, redefining its social functions, and although the reforms do not change the scenario, they can point the way to fulfilling society's desires.

In this context, 'participationism' defines the situation of irrelevant decisions, in which democratic management differs little from technocratic management. It is a fact that democracy is not taught in autocratic schools, which embrace elitist practices. Thus, democracy is more than a form of government; it is, above all, a form of associative life, a shared experience:

Public, free, secular, democratic, inclusive and quality education at all levels and modalities is a right that overcomes social inequalities and recognizes diversity (BRASIL, 2014).

In a public school, management is understood as a democratic process, and democracy is a principle, since the school is funded by the community and must meet the needs of that same community. It is also a methodology, a democratizing dynamic, since it is an educational action, as it shapes collective praxis in education as a phenomenon with political intentionality. Even if such ideals do not manifest themselves in the school environment, the concepts are consistent with reality, and the democratic magnitude is very useful for studying the theme.

In short, Democratic Management would be an ideal type, which is understood as a framework for understanding empirical reality. The development of concepts about Democratic Management is a topic addressed by several renowned authors, such as Licínio Lima (2013).

The democratization of school management from a conceptual perspective, focused on interventions guided by democracy, carried out by school agents, grounded in institutional contexts, and impacting the development of such democratic structures and processes within the school system. For the author, democratic management is political, articulated with democratic actions. Furthermore, it should not only involve democratic actions or participatory dynamics in decision-making processes, but, above all,



of political education actions, depending on whether they are actions that recreate more democratic possibilities in school practice and in its power relations.

Ferreira (2000) emphasizes that Democratic School Management is a global value, despite not always being incorporated into global social and educational practices. There is no doubt about its relevance as an element of community participation and citizenship development.

It is crucial to building a more just and egalitarian society, serving as a source of humanization. It is worth noting that equality of opportunity remains a liberal principle that has not yet been fully implemented. The notions of organization and management are structured into distinct categories, depending on the student's educational approach. In this sense, there are technical-scientific and socio-critical approaches. Democratic Management supports the paradigm of a dialectical understanding of reality, from the perspective of a subjective interrelationship between subject and knowledge, understanding the individual as a historical being who submits to reality and can intervene in it.

For Libâneo (2021), management is based on policies that determine the objectives and strategies to be followed by the school. When decentralized, the critical sociological conception brings coherence to shared power.

To be democratic, a school must uphold the principles of participation and autonomy. From a pedagogical perspective, schools must have tools at their disposal that guarantee these principles and educate citizens, not only regarding predefined knowledge, but also regarding the concept of the individual they intend to develop. In an educational institution, autonomy equates to decision-making power over objectives and organizational structure, with a degree of independence from centralized power, managing their own financial resources.

In the context of the school, the function differs from other processes, since in addition to guiding its employees to carry out their activities effectively, it has to have intention, define the direction of the school and make decisions based on school, social and political goals.

When fulfilling the social function of mediator, the school influences the formation of the subject and, therefore, political and pedagogical goals are indispensable (LIBÂNEO; OLIVEIRA; TOSCHI, 2012).

. In this sense, the role of the manager in school work depends on his or her ability to participate, dialogue, reflect collectively, and be autonomous, all practices that are essential to Democratic Management, although democracy increases responsibilities.

While 13 decisions are made collectively, it is up to them to be implemented through participation, and to achieve this, the school must be well-managed and coordinated. Indeed, the success of an educational institution does not depend exclusively on the principal who centralizes decisions. It is important to understand that the principal is a leader, the figure who unites the aspirations and desires of the school community and integrates everyone's participation into a single project. The principal's role is not limited to administrative matters; in their role, they must envision the entire school and its actions, understanding the cultural, pedagogical, administrative, and economic aspects.

Libâneo, Oliveira and Toschi (2012) highlight that the choice of director demands responsibility on the part of the educational system and the community.

It is a fact that a public system still prevails that arbitrarily appoints principals, based on nominations, based on political interests and convenience. This practice transforms the principal into an executive figure in the school. Therefore, other election mechanisms exist, such as public selection processes and direct and representative voting. In this case, it is possible to require training.

professional and technical competence, such as leadership skills and pedagogical and didactic knowledge.

## 1.6 EDUCATION HUMAN RIGHTS OF A SOCIAL NATURE

The 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution expanded the scope of fundamental rights and guarantees. From its preamble, it provides for the structuring of a rule of law, founded on democracy, with the objective of ensuring the exercise of social and individual rights, freedom, security, well-being, development, equality, and justice as supreme values of a fraternal, pluralistic, and non-discriminatory society. However, of all the rights proclaimed, the right to education requires the utmost care, clarity, and forcefulness.

Therefore, Brazilian education according to the 1988 Federal Constitution will be offered: “Art. 206. Education will be provided based on the following principles: – equal conditions for access to and permanence in school; –

- I freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate thought, art and knowledge; – pluralism
- II of ideas and pedagogical concepts, and III coexistence of public and private educational institutions; IV – free public education in official establishments; V – appreciation of school education

professionals, guaranteed, in accordance with the law, career plans, with admission exclusively through public examination of tests and qualifications, for those in public networks; VI – democratic management of public education, in accordance with the law; – guarantee of quality standards; VII VIII – national professional minimum wage for public school education professionals, in accordance with federal law” (BRAZIL, 2012, P. 56).

The text of the 1988 Federal Constitution prioritizes the democratic action of education, having as its principles its mandatory access and permanence of children and adolescents in school, through free and universal education.

Listed primarily in the sixth article of the Constitution, it was understood as a social right, a value of citizenship and human dignity. In turn, social rights evoke the notion of promotion, care, and protection as a state activity, which seeks to guarantee the interests of society. In this sense, social rights are linked to the principles of the Republic itself, in the understanding that the right to education constitutes a component element of a collective political project, based on the ideals of solidarity, social justice, and material equality, meeting the needs of those most in need of state protection. Mandatory provision by the State, its implementation aims to achieve equal opportunity, reduce inequalities, and improve living conditions for all. In this context, the 1988 Federal Constitution (CF/88) explicitly recognizes in Article 205 that education is a right of all and a duty of the State and the family, promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming at the full development of the individual, their preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and their qualification for work (BRASIL, 1988).

Given its mandatory nature, free education, according to Brandão (2004), may express a veiled intention of privatizing public education. Just as the idea of equal access and permanence in school, as a principle, does not determine penalties for the State, with regard to its non-obligatory nature to the law (BRANDÃO, p. 19, 2004).



Principles II and III of article 206 of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988 are essential for the provision of education in our country, since there cannot be true education without having as a reference the freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate thought... just as there will not be a broad conception of education if the teaching-learning processes do not result in a pluralism of ideas (BRANDÃO, 2004, p.19).

Not only that, but throughout other articles, education is established as a human dignity and ontological value, and is emphasized as a criterion for the realization of active citizenship. Thus, article 206 of the Federal Constitution of 1988 points to the minimum criteria that promote a relationship of equality in the implementation of public education policies, as stated:

Art. 206. Education shall be provided based on the following principles: I – equal conditions for access to and retention in school; IV – free public education in official establishments; VII – guaranteed quality standards (BRAZIL, 1988). The provisions addressing equal conditions for access to and retention in school and the quality of education have found significant support in the work of SGDCA agents, based on the Statute of Children and Adolescents.

In other words, the right to education, as a social right, obeys general standards that provide for the fulfillment of conditions for the development of every human person—one of the principles of quality. Furthermore, social rights, by their very nature, invoke a demand for resources from political power for their full applicability, in accordance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the rights

Social, economic, and cultural rights, as conceived by the Covenant, are progressively realized. In other words, these rights are subject to the State's action, which must adopt all technical measures, both individually and through international assistance and cooperation, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to progressively achieving the full realization of the rights provided for.

The principle of prohibition of regression is implicit in the current Constitution due to the very principle of human dignity, requiring the State to actively intervene to transform the declaration into reality. It thus reflects the need for its action as a "Maximum State" to find the strength to expand its actions to guarantee social rights.

From this perspective, we problematize the quality of education, the fundamental principle upon which the right to education is based. It is through the implementation of quality that the full development of active citizenship is ensured. In other words, quality education serves as an unparalleled instrument for accessing other (sometimes new) fundamental rights. Otherwise, without quality, the right cannot be implemented, which can also lead to reduced access to other basic rights, ultimately reproducing the cycle of lack of protection, violence, and violation of the rights of children and adolescents. Education, in this context, is understood as the privileged locus for the promotion of children's and adolescents' rights because it encompasses one of the driving forces behind Comprehensive Protection, in addition to the demands to ensure the recognition and affirmation of children's and adolescents' human rights. This connection is summarized in article 227 of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which originally reads:

Art. 227. It is the duty of the family, society and the State to ensure that children and adolescents, with absolute priority, have the right to life, health, food, education, leisure, professional training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom and family and community life, in addition to protecting them from all forms of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression. (BRAZIL, 1988, emphasis in the original).

In these terms, it is certain that the achievement of educational rights is an affirmation of the ECA itself, since it was the one that first regulated access and the permanence of children and adolescents in school, as well as clearly defined the repercussions of constitutional norms in relation to education, since the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education was only approved in 1996.

## 2.1 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this study is based on a qualitative approach, which has proven suitable for exploring the complex interactions between educational policies, equity, and teaching quality. Accordingly, the qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena studied, capturing the nuances and specificities that would be difficult to achieve through quantitative methods. This approach is particularly useful in studies investigating social and educational processes, where context and participant perceptions play a crucial role in determining the results.

The choice of a qualitative approach was based on the need to understand how different educational policies have been implemented in different educational contexts and what impacts they have had on equity and educational quality. This methodology also allowed us to explore the internal dynamics of educational institutions and school communities, providing insight into the daily practices and interactions that influence the success or failure of educational policies.

The literature review was a crucial step in this study, allowing us to map the main concepts and theories related to educational policies, equity, and teaching quality.

As Stake (2010) emphasizes, a literature review is essential for situating the study within a broader academic context, identifying knowledge gaps, and establishing a solid theoretical foundation for the research. A variety of sources were consulted, including academic articles, books, and research reports that address the role of educational policies in promoting more equitable and high-quality education.

To ensure the relevance and timeliness of the information, the sources were selected according to rigorous criteria, prioritizing publications from the last ten years. This ensured that the study reflected the most recent trends and debates in the educational field. Furthermore, studies that presented empirical evidence of the impact of educational policies on the topic addressed in different contexts were included, contributing to a broader and more practical understanding of the topic. The literature review revealed a diversity of approaches and results regarding educational policies.

Document analysis: In addition to the literature review, document analysis was another essential method used in this study. As described by [unclear text], document analysis is a valuable technique for examining documents containing relevant information about the phenomenon under study, allowing for the identification of recurring patterns and practices. In this study, document analysis involved examining school reports, educational policies, curriculum guidelines, and other institutional documents describing management practices and strategies adopted to promote equity and quality in education. The documents analyzed came from a variety of sources, including public and private schools from different regions of Brazil.

The diversity of sources allowed us to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and practices in implementing educational policies, enriching the analysis and contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by school leaders and policymakers (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The documentary analysis was complemented by a detailed investigation of current educational policies, with particular attention to those aimed at promoting inclusion and reducing educational inequalities (Day, 2014).



The analysis of documents also includes guidelines and reports from international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD, which have played a significant role in guiding educational policies at the national level. These documents provide a comparative overview of practices adopted in different countries and allow for a critical analysis of international recommendations in contrast to local realities. The review, updating, and analysis of specialized bibliography related to the research topic utilizes the Library's existing resources, whether in the periodicals and books in its collection, through retrieval through existing mechanisms for secondary sources, and also through access to sources available on the internet. Research the current forms of our policy through an analysis of Brazilian legislation regarding cultural heritage.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT AND FORMS OF OCCUPATION OF OFFICE

Regarding the definition of the position of school principal, the LDB provides in its Art. 64:

The training of education professionals for administration, planning, inspection, supervision and educational guidance for basic education will be carried out in undergraduate courses in pedagogy or at postgraduate level, at the discretion of the educational institution, ensuring, in this training, the common national basis.

Although democratic management of public schools in Brazil is enshrined as a principle in the 1988 Federal Constitution and the LDB, subsequent education legislation makes little progress toward conceptually defining the term and establishing the responsibilities and competencies of school administrators. The concept of democratic school management has been associated with several aspects, such as: the selection of principals with varying degrees of participation from the school community; pedagogical, administrative, and financial management autonomy; the development of pedagogical projects, school curricula, school management plans, school bylaws; and the establishment of school councils or equivalents involving the participation and consultation of the school community (including students and their families) and the local community, ensuring parental involvement in the evaluation of teachers and school administrators.

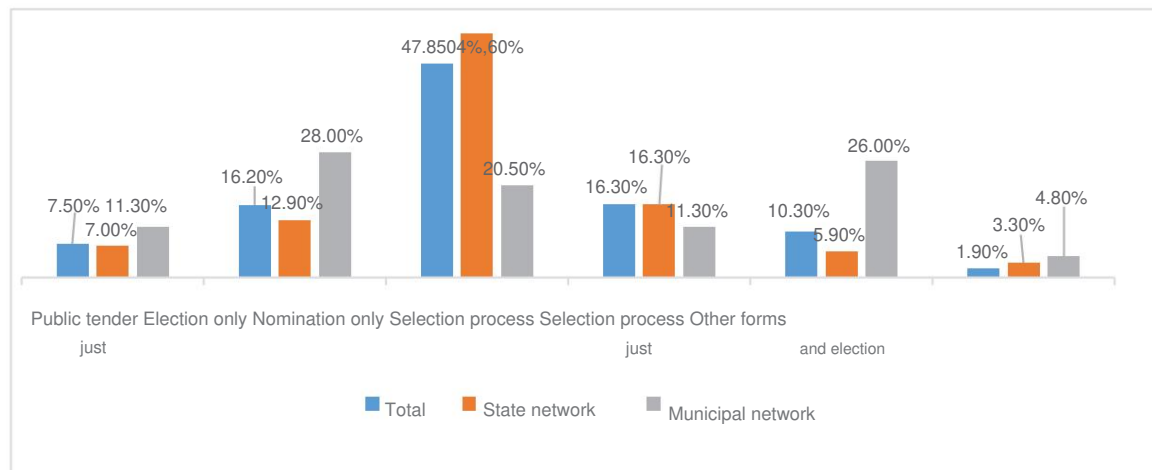
One of the most important principles for national education is the principle of democratic management of education. But what is democratic management? According to Bastos (2001, p. 68): Democratic management reestablishes civil society control over education and public schools, introducing the election of school leaders and school councils, guaranteeing the freedom of expression, thought, creation and collective organization of the school, and facilitates the fight for material conditions for the acquisition and maintenance of school equipment, as well as for decent wages for all education professionals (BASTOS, et al., 2001, p. 8).

Given the lack of democratic management in schools, social services intervention is necessary to ensure children's access to and retention in school. Because patrimonialism, clientelism, and bureaucracy rooted in the political and economic system are common in Brazilian culture, they hinder the practical functioning of the education system. It is necessary to establish social control by civil society over the State, through ongoing popular participation in public decision-making.

Within the federal government, beyond the provisions of the 1988 Federal Constitution and the 1996 LDB regarding democratic and participatory management, there is no legislation that delves deeper into or explains aspects related to this topic. This absence creates a regulatory gap and allows

that the other federated entities (states and municipalities) legislate on the subject without reference frameworks that support the construction of foundations and principles and, even less, for the implementation of school management processes.

The data collected on the forms of occupation of the position presented in graph 1 show varied processes adopted by the federated entities.



Source: School Census, 2023

**Chart 1** You took over the management of this school through:

Appointment is the most prevalent (47.80%), with this figure reaching 20.50% in municipal schools and 54.60% in state schools. The combined selection and election process for school principal positions is adopted by only 10.30% of educational establishments, predominating at 26.00% in municipal schools and 5.90% in state schools. The election process is only present in 16.20% of all schools, 12.90% in state schools and 28.00% in municipal schools. Of the listed modalities, appointing principal positions by appointment is the most concerning, due to the potential for clientelism, nepotism, and partisan political interference.

However, a study carried out by shows that there is a “positive association between performance in mathematics in the 5th grade (average per school) and the leadership of principals; on the other hand, a negative association was found between the same performance results and the management of principals appointed in schools, in most cases by political appointment.

Although there is no research evidence, it is possible that the critical debate on managerialism in education (SILVA; ALVES, 2012; SILVA; SILVA; SANTOS 2016).

The limited or precarious articulation between the two themes may even account for the lack of efforts to qualify or train school managers in leadership techniques.

### 3.2 THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: PARTICIPATION, AUTONOMY, TRANSPARENCY AND PLURARITY.

In Democratic School Management, four important constituent elements are presented: participation, autonomy, transparency and plurality, each with its relevance and



synergistically contributing to the understanding of the articulation and manifestation of democratic teaching. In this regard, with regard to participation, it is defined as:

“The presence and active intervention of everyone” (DALBERIO, 2008, p. 4).

It's important to emphasize that this refers not only to listening, but also to questioning, intervention, and voting power. Students should be understood as the central agents of the educational process, the scope of Democratic Management, since developing critical and autonomous citizens does not happen spontaneously, but is stimulated by democracy.

Among the political and pedagogical possibilities for student participation, student unions, school councils, open class councils, classroom pedagogical contracts, general assemblies and the PPP deserve to be highlighted, all of which are spaces for decision-making processes, discussions and deliberations on matters that make up the school's daily life (ARAÚJO, 2009).

Regarding autonomy, the school could chart its own course with the help of teachers, students, staff, parents, and communities, thus enabling the institution's success. School autonomy is vaguely evidenced in the laws and regulations of the education system, enunciating autonomy as a value without establishing concrete methods for achieving it. Bureaucratic restructuring measures would allow higher-level sectors to operate according to institutional needs, which is not a reality. In this sense, the School Bylaws, which are the legal manifestation of the educational unit, exemplify reduced autonomy, since, in most cases, they assume a unity dictated by centralized management and conditioned by regulatory bodies, despite the pedagogical peculiarities of each institution and its interrelationship with the community in which it operates.

The PPP is the collective expression of the school community in developing its identity and is an expression of its autonomy. The participatory process in its development allows for a democratic experience, choosing leaders and defining the roles of the collegiate bodies, as they are constituted within the organic action. The process pursues common goals. Nevertheless, and despite its development being a task defined by current regulations, no significant changes are observed in the document, becoming yet another bureaucratic exercise. The documents tend, despite their actual functions, to maintain the rules established by the education system, preventing the school from self-governing and establishing restrictions on its own autonomy.

Barroso (2016) clarifies that school autonomy should not be confused with 'independence', since it is a relational concept. Autonomy is considered with relativity, maintaining more autonomy for certain situations, and less for others.

School autonomy is not limited to legal and administrative issues, but rather a confluence of desires, requiring management, coordination, and negotiation. Thus, autonomy is understood as a space for harmonization between the state, administrators, teachers, students, and families. Thus, autonomy becomes a manifestation of social unity.

Araújo (2009) highlights that educational reforms, especially those reflecting neoliberalism, have allowed for a dehumanized autonomy, failing to recognize the school space as a social entity, failing to value its agents, its diversity, and its inconsistencies. From this perspective, autonomy enables the emergence of a true democracy through the exercise of school actors in confrontation with the logic of the hierarchical administrative order, without taking into account the subjects themselves and their demands.

Autonomy seems to be distorted, not assuming its meaning of freeing individuals from bureaucratic limits, or collaborating with the democratic construct of schooling. According to Oliveira's (1999) perception, there is a certain power to be exercised by educational institutions, although it is a

power to 'not receive support', that is, forcing the school to seek partnerships with organizations and other ways to maintain itself, leaving the State with the obligation to minimally invest in the sector.

Thus, this reflects the construction of a democratic way of life in educational institutions. Transparency presents itself as an effective way to give credibility to the public sphere; it is the good faith that enables the public to participate in public affairs. Thus, transparency can be understood as a constitutive component of administration, a hallmark of the interface between the public and private spheres, and a tool for revealing the methods adopted by public administrators.

Cury (2015) emphasizes that transparency brings with it the assumption of a public and open environment, in which the premise of an immediate market does not manifest itself.

It's a fact that school transparency depends on the community being involved in the school routine, engaging in public spheres, and sharing information, which can create a climate of trust and clarity of purpose among school members. Therefore, transparency can be understood more broadly, not limited to specific issues.

### **3.3 INEQUALITIES IN ACCESS AND PERMANENCE IN SCHOOL**

In the context of capitalism, the school institution emerges as responsible for preparing the docile, manipulable workforce necessary for production and, at the same time, for underpinning the cultural conditions in which the system reproduces itself (Enguita, 1989). Thus, it is not a neutral institution, but rather contested in different ideological, political, and sociocultural contexts by distinct societal projects. Enguita's (1989) classic work contextualizes that the school's emphasis on submission to routines, which aims to prepare for work in capitalist industry, distances itself from rural labor, self-employment, and even domestic labor, necessary for the reproduction of capital.

In the author's words, the old saying that school is separate from life can be interpreted in this way, because, although there is no doubt that school prepares for incorporation into wage labor (the fundamental form of work in our restricted concept of economics) and for social life (as it is and not as some of us would like it to be), there is also no doubt that the rest of social life remains largely outside its horizon (Enguita, 1998, p. 223).

It's no surprise that today's debates surrounding the future of education, which even permeate the guidelines of the new Common Curricular Guidelines, include entrepreneurship as a core element of educational policy. If the constitutional purpose of education is what purpose, for the development of which human being? The answer to these questions arises from the clashes between social classes and their refractions, bringing into conflict different perspectives on schooling.

Thus, it distinguishes the perspective that the student is a vessel to be filled with knowledge that emanates from the teacher, as it understands consciousness as intentionality about the world. Thus, it proposes reflection, inquiry, and research that scrutinizes existing knowledge and, essentially, brings educators and students together as active subjects in the construction of knowledge (Freire, 1982). These reflections point to the intentionality of educational practice and, with it, of Education Policy, as the state system that guarantees the right to education. As Brazil expands its public policy commitments, assuming the

commitment to universalize the provision of basic education (preschool, elementary school and high school) from four to 17 years of age, while at the same time expanding the impact on Brazilian society in relation to the content and form of this policy. In an analysis of the historical path of education in Brazil, they conclude that:

The current school system is still anchored to a system established at the beginning of the last century. The current generation needs much more to experience new things to understand roles and values, that is, it is necessary to include students in the process of constructing and experiencing values and not just in their transmission (Kujawa; Martins; Patias, 2020, p. 10).

Poverty is indeed a very big social problem in our country since the social program aims to change the lives of many, but corruption and lack of goodwill still thrive in our country.

"An international comparison between the degree of income inequality in Brazil and that observed in other countries proves not only that Brazilian inequality is among the highest in the world, but also contributes to understanding how a country with a relatively high per capita income can maintain, over the last 20 years, on average, around 40% of its population below the poverty line" (FARIA, 2000, p. 21).

Poverty is seen as a result of social inequality, accompanying the process of worsening it.

Men's actions are determined by the relationships of interest present in society; they are the ones who choose the form of organization of social life.

When we look back to the beginning of Brazil's development process, we realize that the decades that separate us become days when we refer to the way of thinking and the values that are still present in the representations adopted today.

It was possible to see that social inequality and poverty were part of the entire historical process, often being present in the main discussion agendas, but not as objects of effective actions that sought to confront the problem.

However, existing wealth, wealth produced and income created have always been concentratedly appropriated by minorities who suffer from a chronic state of infectious greed (GARCIA, 2003, p. 10).

Paradoxically, the search for a way to alleviate the problems arising from poverty is by blaming those who find themselves in this situation. Capitalist society's adopted representation of the individual living in poverty is that of a "vagrant," "illiterate," "unqualified," among others. This allows a single person to be blamed for a problem created by society and ultimately resolved by society. Social relations show us that the prevailing idea is to carry out actions that ensure the success of capital. It is from the above considerations that we can conclude the central role poverty plays in Marxist thought. This centrality is based on the fact that it is not a process triggered by individual needs or even those of a specific group or region, but a structural determination of the Capitalist Mode of Production itself. Journal: Rights, Labor, and Social Policy.

#### 4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article sought to delve deeper into the topic of Educational Leadership, School Management, and Quality of Education as a Right, exploring specific aspects of the Brazilian context. It was found that this has been a relatively marginal topic in the literature on school administration in the country and in continuing education initiatives, which tend to focus on content associated with school management and quality education. Evidence in this regard was found in a search of the *websites* of the Ministry of Education and State Departments of Education, where gaps in leadership content were identified in training processes. Similarly, a review of the literature on two of the main management training initiatives developed in the last decade revealed. One possible explanation for the lack of more objective reflection on leadership would be that the constitutional principle of democratic management, incorporated into educational legislation and assigned to the federated units, has polarized the attention of initiatives focused on management training. The hypothesis proposed here, however, awaits further investigation in new studies on the topic. The fact is that, to date, Brazil has not given significant attention to leadership in the way the topic is addressed in other contexts. This phenomenon must be linked to the country's specific circumstances, as well as to resistance to management models of school administration. Democratic Management in the educational sphere derives from the Federal Constitution and the elements of participation, autonomy, transparency, and plurality, which, when articulated, form the foundations for the development of a democratic style. All school practice is based on collective participation; Democratic Management manifests interests in the formation of citizens and in the very development of a democratic society. The emancipation of the individual as a citizen is a construction based on solidarity and participation. Knowledge is equivalent to a continuous dynamic of forming people who are reciprocal, dialoguing, and consciously participating in their community. It is necessary to reinforce Democratic School Management, in the public and educational spheres, committed to the formation of capable, competent individuals willing to build their own autonomy. The democratic and anti-discriminatory education system, sought by Participatory Management, is committed to a quality popular school, which forms free citizens who are aware of their social role.

#### 5. REFERENCES

ALMEIDA, Bruno Luiz Teles de. Building democratic management in the State of Bahia: contributions from the Specialization Course in School Management promoted by the School of Managers Program. Federal University of Bahia. 2015. Master's Dissertation, 2015. Available at: <https://repositorio.ufba.br/ri/handle/ri/17694>.

BENTO, Antônio; OLIVEIRA, Maria Isabel. School leadership in three dimensions: principals, teachers and students. Bragança: Ideas in practices, 2013. Available at: <https://bibliotecadigital.ipb.pt/handle/10198/9560>.

BIANCO, Monica de Fátima; SOUZA, Eloísio Moulin de; SOUZA REIS, Antônio Marcos. The new public management: a study of Pro-management focused on two priority projects in the state of Espírito Santo. Management and Planning Journal, Salvador, v. 15 n. 1, p. 118-143, Jan./Apr. 2014.

BOLIVAR, Antonio; The pedagogical leadership of school management in Spain: limitations and actions. In: LIMA, Licinio; SÁ, Virginio (orgs.). The Government of schools: democracy, control and performativity. Ribeirão: Humus Editions, 2017, p. 151-171.



BOLIVAR, Antonio. YÁÑEZ, Julián López; MURILLO, F. Javier. Leadership in educational institutions. A review of research lines. School leadership. A review of current research perspectives. Research Network on Leadership and Better Education (RILME).

Revista Fuentes, 14, 15-60. <http://institucional.us.es/revistas/fuentes/14/Firma%20invitada.pdf> .

Available in:

BRAZIL. Federal Constitution of 1988. Available at: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/constituicao/ConstituicaoCompilado.Htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/ConstituicaoCompilado.Htm) .