

From the polysemy of words: political education and democracy in the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985)*

Da polissemia das palavras: educação política e democracia na ditadura civil-militar brasileira (1964–1985)

De la polissemia de las palabras: educación política y democracia en la dictadura civil-militar brasileña (1964–1985)

Marcus Aurélio Taborda de Oliveira^I

Katya Braghini^{II}

ABSTRACT

Analyzing the period of the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985), it is argued that democracy is an inaccurate concept if its historical trajectory and the contexts in which it is mobilized are not considered. A documentary corpus is employed that makes it possible to unravel a narrative of political education intended to give visibility to, and embody, the ideology of the régime. It is shown that, within this ideological project, education was central to the dissemination of values and forms of political behavior. Far from denying the concept of democracy, the technocrats prescribed an indirect and tutelary democracy that evoked the value of the community in national life under an authoritarian framework.

Keywords: History of Education and Dictatorship. Political Culture. Democracy and Education. History of Political Sensibilities.

RESUMO

Analisando o período da ditadura civil-militar brasileira (1964–1985), sustentamos que democracia é um conceito pouco preciso e não levamos em consideração o seu percurso histórico, os contextos nos quais é mobilizado. Operamos com um conjunto documental que permite deslindar uma narrativa sobre a educação política cuja pretensão era dar visibilidade e encarnar a ideologia do regime. Mostramos que, naquele projeto ideológico, a educação foi central na disseminação de valores e

* This work emerged from the work demanded by GT 02 of ANPEd for the National Meeting held in 2021, to which the authors were invited. Part of the results emerge from the project *Uma cultura comum? A dimensão estética como educação moral e política dos trabalhadores em perspectiva transnacional (entre as décadas finais do século XIX e as iniciais do século XXI)*, funded by CNPq in the research productivity grant n. 303068/2022-1.

^IUniversidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil. Email: marcustaborda@uol.com.br  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6079-9710>

^{II}Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brazil. Email: katya.braghini@gmail.com  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7790-2884>

formas de comportamento político. Longe de negar o conceito de democracia, os tecnocratas civis e militares prescreviam uma democracia indireta, tutelada, que evocava o valor da comunidade na vida nacional, sob a batuta autoritária.

Palavras-chave: História da Educação e Ditadura. Cultura Política. Democracia e Educação. História das Sensibilidades Políticas.

RESUMEN

Analizando el período de la dictadura cívico-militar brasileña (1964–1985), sostenemos que la democracia es un concepto inexacto si no tenemos en cuenta su curso histórico, los contextos en los que se moviliza. Operamos con un documento que nos permiten desentrañar una narrativa sobre la educación política que pretendía dar visibilidad y encarnar la ideología del régimen. Mostramos que, en ese proyecto ideológico, la educación fue central para la difusión de y formas de comportamiento político. Lejos de negar el concepto de democracia, los tecnócratas civiles y militares prescribieron una democracia indirecta y tutelada que evocaba el valor de la comunidad en la vida nacional, bajo la batuta autoritaria.

Palabras-clave: Historia de la Educación y Dictadura. Cultura Política. Democracia y Educación. Historia de las Sensibilidades Políticas.

INTRODUCTION: A DICTATORSHIP EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY?

The history of the present time invites reflection on the conservative or reactionary political reflux observed worldwide for several years and its relationship with educational practices. Within this movement, it is not uncommon to observe multiple uses of the word democracy alongside the denial of political education.

Regardless of its conceptual value or radical political exercise, the word democracy has been used to justify all types of thought and action, even when a minimum level of democratic practice is violated. In attempts to counterpose themselves against the reactionary-authoritarian wave currently in vogue, politicians, the media, academia, and significant segments of different civil societies have evoked the democratic State, republican values, respect for institutions, and voting rights as apparently unequivocal democratic values.¹

This situation is no different in Brazil, a country that, at least since 2013, has undergone an intensified process of anti-democratic agendas, including the criminalization of social and youth movements, the escalation of state violence, gun rhetoric, the erosion of the State's social role, attacks on human rights, the manipulation of the political system by members of the judiciary, and the open defense and praise of dictatorship. All of this, combined with abject social and economic inequality, constitutes fertile ground for authoritarian ventures (Schwartzman, 2015). One expression of this process, among others, was *Escola sem Partido* (Partyless School), which for years guided the debate about the meaning of schooling in the country. Often, amid this reactionary mixture — which

1 When referring to reactionary thought, we distinguish it from the conservative expressions in politics. Conservative thought is grounded on their conceptions defending principles and values that mean the *status quo* maintenance, from different bases such as religion or even the natural right that would justify the differences between individuals. We consider reactionism a nostalgic movement that praises a lost time that, theoretically, expresses a better world than the one experienced, even with not enough bases to support such assertive. The most evident expression is denial, often violent, of the present and praising an ideal past that should be restored.

articulates economic neoliberalism with a religious and conservative agenda on customs devoid of politics — discourses are heard defending the rights of those who advocate authoritarianism as part of the democratic game. Combating authoritarian brazenness and attempts to appropriate the right to a dignified life for all have been denounced as “anti-democratic.” Would this simply be a discursive inversion?

This work argues that it is not. On the contrary, by analyzing the period of the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985), it is argued that democracy becomes a generic descriptive concept, lacking precision, when its historical trajectory and the contexts in which it was mobilized are ignored.² As Bobbio (2000) reminds us, there is no equivalence between the ideal concept of democracy and its real use, that is, what is grounded in the modern world, such as the delegation granted by citizens to their representatives — namely, electoral rights and the right to vote. The rhetoric surrounding the democratic, almost “sacred” values of the modern Western world thus moves between analytical and axiological dimensions (Bobbio, 2000, p. 371). Following Bobbio’s perspective (2000), the article seeks to navigate between what is factual — by presenting evidence from documents on the uses of the word “democracy” — and what belongs to the axiological sphere, that is, the study of the values attributed to the same term when judgments emerge about what is good, fair, and desirable in a society, based on the opinions of those who assume power and establish an authoritarian regime. The intention is not to determine whether the period was or was not governed by a democratic order, as it clearly was not. This, however, does not preclude authoritarian regimes from making their own historical use of the term during the social and political struggles of the military regime.

Without embarking on a history of concepts — in this case, democracy — a broad documentary corpus from the Brazilian dictatorial period is analyzed, allowing the reconstruction of a narrative about political education intended to unveil and incorporate the ideology of the military regime. The aim is to demonstrate that, within this ideological and educational project, school education was central to disseminating principles, values, and forms of political behavior that were not always explicit and that have not been fully studied by Brazilian historians of education. This analysis is grounded in the understanding that every ideological formation requires educational conceptions and practices, whether school-based or not, to affirm itself and gain relevance over time and space. Without mass or subtle means of teaching and disseminating its assumptions, any ideology would amount to little more than dust in the wind. The context examined spans from the year of the military coup to the first indirect presidential election after the military period. Although this timeframe coincides with a traditional and often questioned periodization, it is argued that democracy can only be formally discussed after its minimal rules are fulfilled, which occurred only after 1985. Even so, far from denying the concept of democracy, civilian technocrats and military members prescribed an indirect, tutelary democracy that evoked the value of community in the organization of national life under the rule of a “strong” authoritarian government.

2 Sometimes, the review of the denomination of a historical period seems pointless because the terminological disputes in historiography might not be a problem for the subjects in the past but represent a dispute of those interpreting it in the present (Motta, 2018). However, this concern over the term “military dictatorship” is presented in the book *Apontamentos sobre uma ‘teoria do autoritarismo’* by Florestan Fernandes (1979) when showing the role of a bourgeoisie, which benefits from its relationships with the military, establishing an autocratic-bourgeois state under the guise of self-defense and the maintenance of privileges. Several authors use the term “civil-military dictatorship” precisely to point out the legitimation grounds of the regime from the societal perspective. Fico (2004) states that the coup was successful due to the association between civilians and the military. Nonetheless, during the dictatorship period, we can see military infiltration in the civil administration, and, in this case, the dictatorship implementation is military. Mathias (2004) takes this interpretation when discussing the militarization of state bureaucracy mainly in communication and education. In this article, we used the term “civil-military dictatorship” to indicate that we see civil and military actions in parallel and interconnected with the educational processes.

POLITICAL EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL TRAJECTORY

While the expansion of school education in Brazil at all levels was experienced, the use of K-12 schooling as an ideological tool was also observed, with the consequent weakening of educational quality, the strengthening of the logic of education as a business and profit opportunity, and the production of a technocratic curriculum inspired by Human Capital Theory, education for work, and the tutelage of teachers. The school institution thus became a strategic investment in disseminating a specific type of democracy. In authoritarian rhetoric, so-called democrats were defined as good citizens, Christians, lovers of order, work, family, and country. Democracy was understood as a harmonious community without ruptures and characterized by non-critical participation in the construction of the nation. This type of representation persisted even during the most violent moments of that authoritarian experience.

Echoes of this way of thinking about democratic life may have reverberated in contemporary authoritarian discourses. In this sense, the dictatorship's educational investment in a pedagogy with a strong essentialist nature appears to have produced results, establishing a notion of success that has no direct or necessary correlation with the central historical role of schools in cultural transmission.

To advance these assumptions, written and visual sources were analyzed in order to capture how education, from primary school to university, served as a basis for disseminating an ideal intended to exalt the formation of the nation and the worker. The work *ethos* and the vainglorious *Brasil Grande* (Great Brazil) constituted central axes in the curricular organization of elementary, middle, and high school, as demonstrated in the works of Martins (2002) and Taborda de Oliveira (2018).

Continuing this effort, the analysis focuses on the attention given to young students. The aim is to show how the ideologues of the dictatorship conceived young people participation in the country's political life through the tutelage of the authoritarian State and its roots in educational institutions, particularly at the secondary and higher education levels. The periodical press is primarily used to observe the dispute for students' hearts and minds, indicating that young students were on the front lines of groups opposing the dictatorship, including armed fights.

The article concludes with a reflection on the polysemy of the concept of democracy and its possible deflation when reduced to the simple exercise of voting, since authoritarian practices and their corresponding forms of political education may be developed, fostered, and perfected through the combination of rhetoric and institutions that claim to be its defenders.

The sources used include didactic manuals, teaching programs for selected subjects, periodical magazines, and documents from State bodies. These materials capture curricular prescriptions and practices aligned with the technocratic foundations of Human Capital Theory (HCT), the touchstone for economists who have occupied the educational field since the 1950s in what George Freedman Oliveira (2024) called the industrial modeling of educational thought. At the same time, they reveal a set of assumptions that go beyond the economic dimension, complementing it. An essentialist curriculum, as it will be shown, integrates a political education that sought to capture hearts and minds.

AN ESSENTIALIST-TECHNOCRATIC CURRICULUM AND THE STUDENTS' PLACE IN POLITICS

The student is a social status that can only be conceived within schooling. This civil position is immediately connected to dialogue with a teacher and refers to processes of formation and conformation of the citizen within technical-scientific and sensorial dimensions that operate in the constitution of modern civilization.

School, as a social technology, acquires the legal power to formalize the student as a “professional” of learning, while acting to establish this subject as a more refined member of this political allegory known as the National State. The student is both the target and the product of this political game. To a great extent, this figure is a planned actor, conceived by adults, with future plans and strategies.

At the same time, the student constitutes an institutionalized milestone of life courses, representing a living teleological project of social improvement and future utopias. The student is a social artifact, as school grades merge with life trajectories. It is analytically productive to examine how students deal with representations, official forms of knowledge, and expectations regarding appropriate behavior during school life, as well as to study the processes of intergenerational negotiation that occur throughout this experience (Williams, 1961).

This analysis cannot ignore that students, as a school project, live within a closed system marked by social separation, since the school operates with the notion of a “subject under construction.” Nevertheless, other variables also dispute education and peer sociability, such as family and the market. It must be recognized that students’ status as beings of and in school is not fully open to negotiation, as students constitute a “profession” defined by engagement in study.

As a social status linked to schooling, students were expected to remain within this space, and potential processes of destabilization of this historical tradition were complex to operate amid social and political contradictions. Different historical examples demonstrate the generalized practice of discouraging student political action, often labeling students as “tramps.” During the civil-military dictatorship period, the student status was doubly contested. At times, students aligned with the 1960s discourse of “youth power,” presenting themselves as active subjects rather than as individuals awaiting entry into the adult public sphere. At other times, their roles were strictly controlled, based on the assumption that specific ideal characteristics would confine them exclusively to schooling spaces.

Therefore, during the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship, there was an attempt to control student movements, perceived as a political ensemble — progressive or conservative — by instigating omission and silence, thereby alienating students from political practice. More than removing student movements from schools and universities, there was a history of praising the “silent majority,” that is, students who respected the typical framework expected to those of school age: staying in class, studying, and maturely waiting for an appropriate political manifestation; working for the country’s good. According to those responsible for educational policy at the time, this process should begin in Elementary school. This analytical perspective focused less on student movements themselves and more on the formative processes that delineated the character of an adequate student.

The number of Brazilian students in that period was very limited. Data indicate that 52.7% of the Brazilian population was under 20 years old in the 1950 Census, and the age range between 0 to 14 years encompassed 41.7%. In 1959, of every 517 students enrolled in primary school, only 40 could reach Year 4. Secondary education received only 33 of these young people. In 1967, universities enrolled 160 thousand young people, representing 2% of the population between 19 and 25 years old.³ These children and young people were not exempt from political education; on the contrary, it began in K-12 education.

In the curriculum construction proposed by techno-bureaucrats working for the dictatorship, carefully analyzed by Leticia Meira (2021), values related to a national project were under dispute. For

3 Cf. Censo Demográfico do Brasil (Brasil, 1950); Fulbright Comission – Brasil (Brazil-Fulbright Commission, 1960). Sinopse Estatística do Ensino Médio of 1961 (Brasil, 1962); Revista *Realidade* (1967); Arthur José Poerner (1968); Aparecida Joly Gouveia and Robert James Havighurst (1969).

their defenders, these values assumed a model of collaborative citizenship — one that was noncritical and Christian, mainly Catholic. These principles were pillars of traditional values such as the nuclear family, property, work, and a conservative customs agenda. Such values constituted the foundation upon which, in the education plan, the “Great Brazil” of the Brazilian megalomaniac vainglory would be built.

Thus, it is not surprising that defenders of the dictatorship constantly alluded to “democracy.” In prescribing the 14 “objectives of the educational civic-democratic actions and the preparation of Brazilians for citizenship,” the Guide of Civism entitled “*Água do Paraíso*” (Paradise Water) highlighted, in item 2.2., the constitutional *democratic foundation* of Brazil just before Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5): love for freedom in all its manifestations; representative democracy — “All power emanates from the people, who exercise it through their elected representatives or directly, under the terms of this Constitution”; and the right to education entrusted to the family and the school, inspired by ideas of freedom, “with interior responsibility bestowed by the belief in God.”

The book, aimed at secondary education, was written by Major Hélio Casatle da Conceição and earned third place in a contest held by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1968. Published in 1972, its opening “Warning” presents numerous structuring principles of the dictatorial ideal: emphasis on work and the defense of free initiative, Christian evocation, praise of the armed forces, and the role of the family, composing the tripod “Character, Love of country, and Action.” The unmistakable focus was the praise of Brazil and its preservation against “exotic, materialistic ideologies, contrary to the aspirations of Brazilians and national interests” (Conceição, 1972, p. X).

Regardless of the assumed aspirations, it is evident that, even before Law No. 5,692/71, which redefined the foundations of K-12 education in the country, the dictatorship was already concerned with textbook contests that could foster the political education of Brazilian youth through the redefinition of subject matter and educational practice in *Educação Moral e Cívica* (Moral and Civic Education — EMC), as established by Decree-Law No. 869 of September 12, 1969. Article 2 defined part of its objectives:

Art. 2. Moral and Civic Education, grounded in national traditions, aims to:

a) The *defense of the democratic principle* through the preservation of the religious spirit, the dignity of the human person, and love of freedom with responsibility, under the inspiration of God (Brasil, 1969).

The guiding principles of this type of initiative were grounded in two fundamental dimensions: disciplining the population and moralizing customs. Sensibilities were under dispute. The dictatorship sought to “form for adequacy, cultivate cooperation, and discipline the spirit” (Martins, 2014). With regard to young people, discrimination was added to this scenario, as observed in the context of the Argentine dictatorship by Pablo Pineau (2014). The technocratic curriculum proposed more than simple training aligned with the interests of the capitalist economy. Not by chance, the education reform defined in 1971 entailed a reorganization of school structures.

Report No. 853/71 of the Federal Council of Education allows for a longitudinal analysis of the curriculum, defined as comprehensive. The curriculum was expected to produce relationships, ordering, and sequencing, as expressed in its text. It advocated a general education anchored in the following assumptions: “Think, act, and create,” “Against empty and inconsistent intellectualism,” “Connection with reality,” “Work; harmony in the use of mind and hands,” “Conscious exercise of citizenship,” culminating in a focus on “Humanism nowadays” (Brasil, 1971b).⁴

4 Together with the curriculum doctrine presented in Law no. 5,692/71, the report defined the Common Framework for elementary, middle, and high school. The reporter was Valnir Chagas, one of the exponents of technocratic pedagogical thought. In that project, basic education was divided into areas. Martins’s (2002) and Meira’s (2021) works acutely analyze those assumptions.

An example of this broad project can be seen in the area of Communication and Expression, which brought together Portuguese Language, English Language, Physical Education, Art Education, Moral and Civic Education, and Brazilian Social and Political Organization. Their contents were to be developed in an integrated manner in classrooms and other school practices or activities, such as civic parades, flag-raising ceremonies, folkloric celebrations, sports, and school clubs.

A book that underpinned the modernization of communication in the Brazilian pedagogical context was *A comunicação humana* (On Human Communication), by Colin Cherry, published in Brazil in 1974. The original versions were published in 1957 and 1966 by the International Study Center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The book was used in some teacher training courses in the country and defined the concept and importance of communication. In it, communication is described as “essentially social. Human language distinguishes us from animals,” in addition to contributing to the development of “the awareness of self and the sense of social responsibility” (Cherry, 1974, p. 22-23). The book was used to lend a modernizing veneer to the dictatorship’s initiatives. Its author stated:

As the words we use to unveil the true nature of things, as the truth is shown to each of us, the many words referring to social communication are quite revealing [...] to the extent in which you, the reader, and I are communicating, we are one (Cherry, 1974, p. 23).

In the appendix, Cherry (1974, p. 464) defined society as “people in communication.” Communication would represent “the establishment of a social unit from individuals, through the use of language or signs” (Cherry, 1974, p. 459).

In light of this recommendation, aligned with what was considered most modern in communication in the Anglo-Saxon world, the entire conceptual architecture of the dictatorship appeared coherent. Nation, Democracy, and Community emerged as amalgamating concepts of the nation, as seen in the pedagogical ideal of the period and in Major Conceição’s *Guia de Civismo* (Civism Guide). How could such concepts be neutral if they defined their own becoming? How could children and young people be educated toward these ideals? The cover images of some textbooks also conveyed these principles.

Children dressed in green and yellow compete with smiles on their faces. A happy and enthusiastic audience — men, women, Black and White individuals, adults and children — appears united under the same ideal, the Great Brazil. The cover of the Portuguese Language book draws attention when considering its constant handling by adolescent students (Figure 1). Its message leaves little doubt: “This is a country going forward,” as proclaimed in the boastful song of the period: “This is a country going forward/ A friendly and joyful people, This is a country going forward? A united people of great value/ A country that sings and grows/This is the Brazil of our love.”⁵

The song, written by Heitor Carillo and recorded by the band *Os Incríveis*, was released as a double compact disc in 1976, under the title *Trabalho e paz: de mãos dadas é fácil* (Work and Peace: it is easy when holding hands), featuring the participation of many artists aligned with the dictatorship’s vainglorious and developmental ideals. The following year, it was released by RCA Records as an LP, in the *Os Incríveis* collection, as part of the *Disco de Ouro* series. Also in 1977, the band — which had previously recorded the hit *Eu te amo meu Brasil* (I love you, my Brazil) (1970), the National Anthem, and the Anthem of Brazilian Independence (1971) — released the simple

⁵ T.N.: In the original, “Este é um país que vai pra frente/ De uma gente amiga e tão contente, Este é um país que vai pra frente/ De um povo unido de grande valor/ É um país que canta trabalha e se agiganta/ É o Brasil do nosso amor”.

compact *O Brasil é feito por nós/ Você precisa acreditar* (Brazil is made by us/You have to believe) through the same label, in contrast to a broader cultural movement that questioned the dictatorship and its foundations (Taborda de Oliveira, 2021). In the authoritarian ideal, this was a country that was working. School education and the music industry appeared to vouch for its success.

Figure 1 – Book cover of the Guided Study for Portuguese Language (1976).



Source: private collection of the author.

DEMOCRATIC STUDENTS AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

What was aimed at young students during this period? The student statute was under dispute during the military dictatorship. This situation constitutes a crucial sociohistorical element for explaining the deep hatred that part of society felt toward politically active young people. Many aggressions were recorded in daily newspapers, and a large portion of the discontent was concentrated on a minority of students, considered precocious because, being young, they were supposedly incapable of engaging in politics. Politics was understood as a space reserved for adult activity, conventionally prepared through schooling, mainly at the high school level (but not only) and later in higher education.

Politics was seen as a social practice of adults. However, some students in the 1960s raised their own opinions about the criteria for dividing subjects related to public power, mainly by taking these debates to the streets, transforming urban space — squares, statues, marquees, stairways, car roofs, and buses — into sites of political positioning, thereby fueling the anger expressed in journalistic discourse. Young people were insulted daily. The least offensive terms included the “disgraceful new generation” and “traitors of the country,” according to Braghini (2015).

When Law No. 4,464 (November 09, 1964), known as Suplicy de Lacerda Law, which determined the end of free student organizations, was enacted, an article published in the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* (OESP) urged reader not to lose heart in the face of a minority of corrupted young people, who should be led to silence and immobility.⁶ Silencing this minority was on the agenda of the minister of Education, Flávio Suplicy de Lacerda, during his public speech on Independence Day, September 7, 1965, in which he advocated for an “authentic democratic mystic” (Editora do Brasil, 1965, p. 24). Thus, “problematic” young people and their alleged political precociousness were to be reshaped, as such actions were considered deviant, requiring efforts to return these individuals to “normalcy.” Those considered “good students” were to be praised.

Within this plan to sanitize rebellious youth, another group was presented as a counterproposal to those who disturbed order by promoting student protests in the streets. They were understood as the “good youth,” committed to work and study. These young people also acted politically but did not follow the same paths as their “rebellious” peers. They were labeled “democratic students,”⁷ henceforth known as the “Brazilian vanguard.” In the discourse of Minister Suplicy de Lacerda, these students were transformed into the “living force of Brazil.” Young people, added to the 80 million Brazilians, were expected to participate more actively and consciously in community life, immediately idealized as civic actors (Editora do Brasil, 1965, p. 24).

The idea of the Brazilian vanguard was summarized in the following perspectives: work as a social responsibility; remaining at school desks as studious youth; serving as good life examples guided by valued books; following patriotic academic centers; participating in government projects in a voluntary and solidaristic manner; and maintaining silence.

The valorization of these attributes extended throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s and was recorded in daily and didactic press outlets. Initiatives from the United States multiplied, such as the United Student Aid Funds, Inc. (1961), promoting among North American educators the belief that working while studying did not hinder academic progress (Editora do Brasil, 1964, p. 50-51). Since the major student strikes of the early 1960s, there persisted the idea that students only had time to engage in political action because they were socially privileged and did not work.

However, this view differed from other interpretations of the period, as seen in the magazine *Realidade* (1967) and in academic studies that portrayed the opposite. Data and analyses indicate that most Brazilian high school and university students worked while studying (Cf. Foracchi, 1964, p. 55; *Realidade*, 1967, p. 19; Gouveia and Havighurst, 1969, p. 112 and 119).

Nevertheless, for technobureaucrats, young people were expected to become a “positive value” by combining social “participation” with professional activity. To that end, the possibility of altering official age ranges and accelerating students’ pathways through the school system appeared valid. In this sense, the proposal suggested that time spent in school, viewed as a necessary gestation for adulthood, should be shortened to channel young people into economic production as quickly

⁶ Transcribed from *O Estado de S. Paulo* (1964a; 1964b).

⁷ “We can notice the use of the term “democratic students” to validate the actions of conservative young people since the 1920s in the newspaper OESP. This expression had already been used on other occasions: Students designated to support the candidacy of João Pessoa for the presidency; young people affiliated to the *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN) against famine; used against “communist” students from the *União Nacional dos Estudantes* (UNE) (Braghini, 2015, p. 959).

as possible (Gomes, 1968, p. 3). Accordingly, youth education was not regarded as undignified, even when supported by an accelerated school formation. This perspective helps to explain the tone of reforms expressed in Decree-law No. 5.692/71, which emphasized early professionalization.

Although work was viewed as a responsible action, it was not the sole perspective shaping the relationship between young people and their perceived potential. This accumulated youth “energy” can be examined from several angles. One of these refers to the emphasis on youth participation in solidarity campaigns, such as *Operação Juventude* (Operation Youth) (Brazilian Navy, Pará, September 1971), which aimed to repair schools; *Campanha contra os tóxicos* (Campaign against toxic substances) (Ministry of Education, Brazil, April 1972); *Campanha em defesa da língua portuguesa* (Campaign in defense of the Portuguese Language) (*Editora do Brasil*); *Maratona Escolar para o 1º e 2º. Graus* (School Marathon for elementary, middle, and high school) (Caixa Econômica Federal, July 1977), which sought to stimulate reading habit; the *II Maratona Cultural* (2nd Cultural Marathon) with municipal, state, and national phases (Commission of Moral and Civics, Brazil, March 1980), a cultural competition designed to develop EMC; and one of the most well-known initiatives, the *Projeto Rondon* (Rondon Project), launched in 1967 (Braghini, 2015).

The Rondon Project was praised even before being announced as a permanent working group by Decree No. 62.927 on June 27, 1968. It was considered a type of Brazilian youth internship for “public life,” as it involved supportive and educational work in rural areas to implement health campaigns, provide basic notions of agricultural practices, and offer first aid to the sick. The project was seen as a major administrator of youth consciousness regarding the power of work in Brazilian reality. Guided by adults, it had a practical and non-questioning character and did not allow for digressions into what were deemed useless socialist utopias.

All these proposals followed what were considered healthy extracurricular activities:

- school practices planned by teachers with pedagogical objectives, connecting theory and practice;
- individual, solidaristic, philanthropic practices stimulated by idealistic movements in favor of “healthy principles;”
- institutional practices through which students could learn and receive remuneration for their work.

In this sense, work was understood as an “expansion of horizons” and means of understanding “national reality” (Braghini, 2015, p. 232).

If young people could not work immediately, they were expected to express their social status through civic conduct. Students should study. In a lecture by General Moacir Araújo Lopes, a mentor of the reinstatement of EMC in schools, entitled *Rumos para a educação da juventude brasileira* (Pathways for Brazilian youth education), knowledge acquisition was associated with a form of divine illumination. For this proponent of civic education, freedom was linked to responsibility as a “perfect truth,” implying an expectation that the Brazilian population should reach such enlightenment (Lopes, 1967, p. 18).⁸

Six years after the reintroduction of EMC into schools, the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil* published an article in 1975 discussing its meaning. Drawing on the opinions of prominent defenders, it reiterated the subject’s power to energize lost time by rapidly inculcating historical and cultural values of nationality (*Editora do Brasil*, 1975, p. 62).⁹

8 Lecture given in the Ministry of Education and Culture at the Universidade Federal de Goiás and the *Lions Club* Leme, both in 1967.

9 The article also presents the Minister of Education at the time, Ney Braga; teacher Tarcísio Padilha, from the *Conselho Federal da Educação* (CFE- Federal Education Council); the former minister of education, Senator Jarbas Passarinho and General Bina Machado, former commander of the I Army and the *Escola Superior de Guerra* (ESG- War Higher Education School).

The empowerment of the idea of students as promoters of sovereignty and democracy was directly connected to the production of Moral (and political) Education textbooks. In addition to the aforementioned Civism Guide, works such as *Organização Social e Política Brasileira* (Brazilian Political and Social Organization) by Victor Mussumeci and *Moral e Civismo* (Moral and Civism), by the same author with Felipe Moschini and Otto Costa (1971), conceived young people as beings under construction through “four pillars of civism:” “patriotism, institutional civism, political civism, and solidarity” (Mussumeci, 1964).¹⁰ Young people were expected to act in favor of major Brazilian institutions — once again, family and country, etc. — guided by the essence of an “ethics of solidaristic civism” (Mussumeci, 1964).

A canon of children’s and youth literature circulated with works deemed appropriate. Alongside valued books of the period, there existed a forbidden index that gained prominence as practical knowledge. Today known as the “cursed” works, it included *Revolution in the Revolution*, by Debray; *Os pensamentos de Mao*; *Os Diários da Revolução*, by Ernesto Guevara; *O Vietnã segundo Giap*, by Vo Nguyen Giap; *Eros e Civilização*, by Herbert Marcuse, as well as works by Lukács, Gramsci, James Joyce, Herman Hesse, and Norman Mailer. Among Brazilian authors were Caio Prado Jr., with *A Revolução Brasileira*; Celso Furtado, *Um Projeto para o Brasil*; and Luiz Carlos Bresser Pereira, *Desenvolvimento e Crise no Brasil* (Ventura, 1988, p. 55).

The approved canon for good students followed a different path: *Por mares nunca dantes navegados*, an adaptation of *Os Lusíadas* (The Lusiad) by Camões, and *Robinson Suíço* (The Swiss Family Robinson), adapted from Johann Rudolf Wyss. Mark Twain, Dickens, Swift, Kipling, Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Anderson, Segur, and Monteiro Lobato completed the list. Model characters included Robinson Crusoe by Defoe; Starck, in Wyss; and Godfrey, in Jules Verne (Editora do Brasil, 1969, p. 2-4). These figures were presented as men immersed in adverse conditions, castaways who, amid hopelessness, demonstrated resilience through ingenuity. Such content was directly associated with the idea of leadership formation.

Concern with forming leaders capable of promoting spontaneous acts of solidarity and cooperation was another facet of civism deemed necessary to consolidate Brazilian “democracy.” There was also considerable attention to leadership examples meant to inspire youth. In 1969, General Araújo Lopes, alluding to Marcuse’s philosophy, stated that young people were experiencing a crisis whose regressive vector emphasized instinct. For this reason, he argued that great leaders such as Jesus Christ, Moses, Buddha, and Zarathustra should not be overlooked as rational models (Editora do Brasil, 1969, p. 36).

Some believed that students should participate in more ceremonies expressing a “national heritage.” Accordingly, young people were expected to practice rites of reverence for nationality (Gomes, 1977, p. 63). Teacher Alfredo Gomes, a member of the São Paulo State Commission of Moral and Civics, indicated exemplary names to students, duly “purified.” These included military figures such as Duque de Caxias; well-known individuals such as Benjamin Constant; figures from science and the arts such as Carlos Chagas and Castro Alves; and a woman, Princess Isabel (Gomes, 1967, p. 3-7). This list was presented as an antidote to the identification of students with revolutionary idols and militant youth circulating worldwide through magazines and mass-circulation newspapers.

This impression was shared by high school student Sebastião Velasco Cruz, who dreamed of becoming a guerilla fighter after noticing that Che Guevara and Fidel Castro were also young (Cruz, 1999). Fernando Gabeira, who worked at the newspaper *Jornal do Brasil*, reported that joining the armed struggle was a fantasy stimulated by newspaper descriptions portraying militants as courageous, armed young people on colorful covers (Gabeira, 1979, p. 86-87). For some, participation in armed struggle conferred prestige.

10 Preface of the 33rd edition of the *Organização Social e Política Brasileira* (OSPB) in 1964.

Opposition to this informal, popular, youth-driven, and successful media-political education emerged from the school system, notably through EMC as a subject, civic textbooks, ceremonial activities, mass media propaganda, and institutional campaigns. A counteroffensive sought to curb the circulation of revolutionary young imagery, leading to editorial disputes over the content of textbooks and other printed materials. A nostalgic appeal proposed a return to a golden age of civism in the 1930s. “Clean” leaders, athletes, and socially responsible young people were promoted within and beyond school practices. Numerous examples were identified as democratic students opposed to all forms of subversive danger.

For instance, during a convention, the *Escola Paulista de Agrimensura*, the *Centro de Química Industrial Oswaldo Cruz*, and the *União Paulista dos Estudantes Técnicos Industriais* urged 47 schools in the city of São Paulo and the countryside to engage in a struggle devoid of political or religious ideology, aimed at class unity (Diário da Noite, 1963, p. 2). With the same objective, the *Diretório Estadual dos Estudantes do Estado de São Paulo*, acting under the new law controlling academic centers, issued a manifest supporting President General Castelo Branco. According to the newspaper, the action of “democratic students” was vigorous, as, once legalized, they would invade the *Diretório Central dos Estudantes* of USP to dismantle the work of the former *União Estadual dos Estudantes* (UEE), seizing archives and forwarding them to authorities (O Estado de S. Paulo, 1965, p. 14).

Numerous student groups were registered in the “*Marcha da Família com Deus pela Liberdade*” (March of the Family with God for Liberty) in 1964, a reactionary protest against the perceived “communist threat” (Simões, 1985), indicating the presence of active reactionary youth. Cordeiro (2021, p. 6) included them among their leaders. Their denominations were explicit, including the *Associação dos Estudantes Democratas*; *Movimento de Arregimentação dos Estudantes Democráticos* (MAED); *Movimento Estudantil Democrático*; *Frente da Juventude Democrática*; *Frente da Juventude Democrática*; *Associação de Estudantes Democratas*,¹¹ among others (Simões, 1985, p. 158-161).

As observed, the term “democracy” was frequently employed to reinforce the discourse of “good students,” patriotic and supportive of ending a government elected by direct vote and replacing it with a *coup d’état* that established a prolonged dictatorship. In general, historiography scarcely mentions the “right-wing” anti-communist student movement. Nonetheless, the political participation of Catholic women at that time cannot be overlooked, as it was directly associated with student groups collaborating in anti-communist fervor, often confined to private spaces such as homes and ballrooms (Simões, 1985, p. 82-83). Even the Federal Policy targeted these national and international student entities, such as the *Frente da Juventude Democrática* (Democratic Youth Front) and the *Cruzada Estudantil Anti-comunista* (Anti-communist Student Crusade) (Arquivo Nacional, 2025).

It should also be noted that these right-aligned students acted as “student parties.” In the state of São Paulo, for example, these included the *Partido da Representação Acadêmica* (PRA), *Partido Acadêmico Renovador* (PAR), *Movimento Acadêmico Renovador* (MAR), *Partido Acadêmico Democrático* (PAD), *Partido Acadêmico Realizador* (PAR),¹² all based at the Law School of *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP) and *Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie*.

All operated within the legal framework, opposed the left-wing policies of *União Nacional dos Estudantes* (Students’ National Union — UNE), were anti-communists, and exclusively male. As university parties, they acted alongside professors and workers from both institutions. They frequently organized parties and balls, promoted elections, and engaged in various student

11 Translation note (T.N.): in order, Democratic Students Association; Democratic Students’ Movement Regiment; Democratic Student Movement; Democratic Youth Front; Association of Democratic Students.

12 T.N.: in order, Academic Representation Party, Renovating Academic Party, Democratic Academic Party, and Achieving Academic Party.

activities. Indirectly, the *Instituto de Pesquisas e Estudos Sociais* (Institution of Research and Social Studies — IPES), a well-known organization that financed the coup against President João Goulart, was connected to these groups through faculty members such as Luiz Antonio da Gama, Alfredo Buzaid, Vicente Ráo, Ernesto Leme, and Miguel Reale (Lima, 2021).

Members of these student parties, based on the criteria presented, can be considered “democratic” students according to the logic of the exception regime. In this context, being a democrat meant agreeing with political arbitrariness. Students with this profile constituted the legalist core of the *Comando de Caça aos Comunistas* (Communist Hunt Command — CCC). CCC operated alongside two other armed political groups, the *Frente Anticomunista* (Anti-communist Front — FAC) and the *Movimento Anticomunista* (Anticommunist Movement — MAC). Together, they were known as the “terror pyramid.” Acting as a paramilitary group under the protection of the military regime, CCC was the most violent branch among student organizations.

These groups operated through university networks to gain prominence and prestige within statutory academic centers. In the 1970s, some members became involved in the repressive apparatus, particularly in systematic human rights violations carried out during *Operação Bandeirante* (Bandeirante Operation — OBAN).¹³ Otávio Medeiros, linked to the CCC and to Tradition, Family, Property (TFP), and Raul de Lima, known as Raul Careca, were denounced in the 2014 report of the *Comissão Nacional da Verdade* (National Truth Commission), based on multiple testimonies identifying the presence of CCC members in torture sessions conducted by OBAN (Lima, 2021). According to the rhetoric of the period, kidnapping, arresting, torturing, and killing were practices defended by a political subject that was portrayed as democratic and a defender of freedom, as the authoritarian regime defined itself.

TO CONTINUE THINKING...

In this analytical exercise, the aim is to understand some assumptions that allow the pedagogy of the dictatorship period to be characterized as essentialist, insofar as it defended fixed or unchangeable properties for individuals and their formation. What was attributed as a right or duty for future citizens being formed in schools was considered essential to their condition: citizenship grounded in a community that was never questioned, anchored in Christian-Catholic religiosity and traditional values such as the nuclear family, property, work, and a customs-based agenda. These values defined the very particular understanding of democracy held by the dictatorship.

The prescribed curriculum, devoided of conflicts, official and unique across the country, assumed a specific and singular model of human beings and society. It dictated what students should do and how they should behave. In this sense, the school universe was considered as a subsystem of the form of community life envisioned by the dictatorship. This life was defined by a simplistic notion of society, in which the State functioned as a kind of demiurge over a set of individuals who, through communication, were expected to define social unity and affinity in order to create a feeling of national belonging — or to silence any questioning of this imposition.

Without engaging in a substantive discussion of what democracy meant, education and politics at the time merged to mask the regime’s arbitrariness. Even within a political moment of exception, those assumptions appeared to confirm the tripod that would sustain national cultural policy: economic development, accommodation of the political game, and the religious-moral agenda. School education was expected to contribute, even subliminally, to the political education

13 The *Operação Bandeirantes* (OBAN), located in São Paulo, was the main center of tortures and deaths in the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship. Supported and managed by the repression bodies of the State, OBAN was supported by businesspeople, students, and the press, symbolically or with active participation and funding. This is one of the great examples of how the Brazilian dictatorship was also the work of a significant part of civil society.

of children and young people, some of whom — now adults — continue to echo various anti-democratic practices, including authoritarian ones. Is this not an education of political sensibilities oriented toward a singular and malleable understanding of democracy?

Politics has not become a central concern for historians of education in Brazil, nor has authoritarianism in its multiple forms, except in rare works. This may be because the field has tended to assume a politically “conservative” profile. It may also be, as often occurs in studies of the history of the present, because educational practices remain marked by residues of dictatorship that continue to shape the field. These echoes persist to this day and continue to leave their marks. This scenario does not belong to a dead or frozen past, as it has affected — and continues to affect — deep psychological and social dimensions that helped shape political sensibilities (Ansard, 2019) within a strongly authoritarian political culture, in which memory and democracy are in constant struggle.

This struggle for memory has been gradually lost, even due to passivity and inaction in the face of forms of political education that engage people’s imagination. The meaning of democracy itself seems to attest to the difficulty of reaching alternative understandings of political practices capable of producing a more genuinely democratic society. As noted by Taborda de Oliveira and Bianchini (2017), in their discussion of political education in Brazil and Italy, if democracy is considered in its strong sense, it will always be difficult to educate politically for a more democratic world while living in a profoundly anti-democratic society. The plasticity of the concept also derives from its fragile exercise in social life.

How is it possible today to discuss the possibility of a coup or the viability of a dictatorship as an alternative to the most elementary principles of formal democracy? What can recent memory reveal about this? It seems necessary to attempt to grasp a historical experience that addresses not only discourses and narratives about politics and democracy, but also exclusionary and discriminatory social practices, such as the privileging of the rights of some over those of others. If this experience has affected society traumatically, how should it be confronted? What has been done — and what is done — with it by political and epistemic subjects? How should painful (hi)stories (Pérez Navarro, 2019) be addressed and the memory of horror continually reactivated?

REFERENCES

- ANSARD, Pierre. **A gestão das paixões políticas**. Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2019.
- ARQUIVO NACIONAL. Centro de Referência da Luta Política “Memórias Reveladas”. **BRAN, Rio X9. O.ESI, ACL, 1/9**. Arquivo Nacional, 2025.
- BOBBIO, Norberto. **Teoria geral da política**. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2000.
- BRAGHINI, Katya. **Juventude e pensamento conservador**. São Paulo: EDUC, 2015.
- BRASIL. **Censo demográfico, 1950**. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. Available at: http://www.ibge.gov.br/seculoxx/estatisticas_populacionais.shtm. Accessed on: June 17, 2008.
- BRASIL. Ministério da Educação e Cultura. **Sinopse Estatística do Ensino Médio – 1961**. Brasília: Serviço de Estatística da Educação e Cultura, 1962.
- BRASIL. **Lei n. 4.464, de 9 de novembro de 1964**. 1964.
- BRASIL. **Decreto-Lei n. 869, de 12 de setembro de 1969**. 1969.
- BRASIL. **Lei n. 5.692, de 11 de agosto de 1971**. 1971a.

BRASIL. Parecer n. 853/1971, de 12 de novembro de 1971, do Conselho Federal de Educação. *In*: BRASIL. **Documenta**, Rio de Janeiro, n. 132, 1971b.

BRAZIL-FULBRIGHT COMMISSION. **Fulbright Program in Brazil**. Fulbright Program, 1947–1983. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Libraries, 1960.

CHERRY, Colin. **A comunicação humana**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Edusp; Cultrix, 1974.

CONCEIÇÃO, Hélio Casatle da. **Águas do paraíso**: guia de civismo. Brasília: MEC, 1972.

CORDEIRO, Janaína Martins. A marcha da família com Deus pela Liberdade em São Paulo: direitas, participação política e golpe no Brasil, 1964. **Revista História**, São Paulo, n. 180, a01720, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9141.rh.2021.167214>

CRUZ, Sebastião Carlos Velasco. Significados da conjuntura de 1968. *In*: GARCIA, Mauro Aurélio; VIEIRA, Maria Alice (org.). **Rebeldes e contestadores**: 1968 – Brasil, França e Alemanha. São Paulo: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, 1999. p. 105-110.

DIÁRIO DA NOITE. Estudantes prepararão convenção para julho. **Diário da Noite**, São Paulo, p. 2, 7 jun. 1963.

EDITORA DO BRASIL. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 196, p. 50-51, 1964.

EDITORA DO BRASIL. Mensagem aos Estudantes. Flavio Suplicy de Lacerda. Ministro da Educação. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 210, p. 23, 1965.

EDITORA DO BRASIL. Causa da crise juvenil. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 253, p. 35-37, 1969.

EDITORA DO BRASIL. Moral e Cívica comete erros que eliminaram outras matérias. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 327, p. 58-63, 1975.

FERNANDES, Florestan. **Apontamentos sobre a “teoria do autoritarismo”**. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1979.

FICO, Carlos. Versões e controvérsias sobre 1964 e a ditadura militar. **Revista Brasileira de História**, v. 24, n. 47, p. 29-60, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-01882004000100003>

FORACCHI, Marialice Mencarini. **O estudante e a transformação da sociedade brasileira**. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1964.

GABEIRA, Fernando. **O que é isso companheiro?** Rio de Janeiro: Codedri, 1979.

GOMES, Alfredo. Civismo. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 236, p. 3-7, 1967.

GOMES, Alfredo. Juventude inquieta. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 239, p. 1-6, 1968.

GOMES, Alfredo. Civismo. **Revista da Editora do Brasil**, n. 356, p. 35-36, 1977.

GOUVEIA, Aparecida Joly; HAVIGHURST, Robert James. **Ensino médio e desenvolvimento**. Biblioteca de Educação. São Paulo: Melhoramentos/Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1969.

LIMA, Danielle Barreto. **CCC: Comando de Caça aos Comunistas**. Do estudante ao terrorista: 1963–1980. São Paulo: Almedina, 2021.

LOPES, Moacir Araújo. **Rumos para a educação da juventude brasileira**. Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Geográfico do Exército [Oficina Gráfica], 1967.

MARTINS, Maria do Carmo. **A história prescrita e disciplinada dos saberes escolares**. Bragança Paulista: EDUSF, 2002.

MARTINS, Maria do Carmo. Reflexos reformistas: o ensino das humanidades na ditadura militar brasileira e as formas duvidosas de esquecer. **Educar em Revista**, Curitiba, n. 51, p. 35-50, Mar. 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-40602014000100004>

MATHIAS, Suzeley Kalil. **A militarização da burocracia**: a participação militar na administração federal das comunicações e da educação, 1963–1990. São Paulo: Editora da Unesp, 2004.

MEIRA, Letícia. **A história do conceito de currículo no Brasil**: da emergência do termo à formação do campo de pesquisa (1823–1986). 560f. Thesis (Doctorate in Education) – Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, 2021.

MOTTA, Rodrigo Patto Sá. Cultura política e ditadura: um debate teórico e historiográfico. **Revista Tempo e Argumento**, Florianópolis, v. 10, n. 23, p. 109-137, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.5965/2175180310232018109>

MUSSUMECI, Victor. **Iniciação ao civismo**. São Paulo: Editora do Brasil, 1964.

MUSSUMECI, Victor; MOSCHINI, Felipe; COSTA, Otto. **Educação moral e cívica**. São Paulo: Editora do Brasil, 1971.

O ESTADO DE S.PAULO. A corrupção no meio estudantil. **O Estado de S.Paulo**, São Paulo, p. 3, 28 abr. 1964a.

O ESTADO DE S.PAULO. Organização dos universitários. **O Estado de S.Paulo**, São Paulo, p. 3, 29 jul. 1964b.

O ESTADO DE S.PAULO. Enérgica ação dos estudantes. **O Estado de S.Paulo**, São Paulo, p. 3, 29 out. 1965.

OLIVEIRA, George Fredman Santos. **Entre a grande elipse e a curta duração**: o programa de expansão e melhoria do ensino médio (premem) entre os anos 1968 e 1971 e o caso de Santa Catarina. 206f. Thesis (Doctorate in Education) – Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 2024.

PÉREZ NAVARRO, Camila. La intervención de las escuelas durante las dictaduras cívico-militares en el Cono Sur. Miradas desde la historia de la educación. In: PINEAU, Pablo; ARATA, Nicolás (org.). **Latinoamérica**: la educación y su historia. Nuevos enfoques para su debate y enseñanza. Buenos Aires: Editorial de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2019. p. 220-242.

PINEAU, Pablo. Reprimir e discriminar: la educación em la última ditadura cívico-militar en Argentina (1976–1983). **Educar em Revista**, Curitiba, n. 51, p. 103-122, Mar. 2014.

POERNER, Arthur José. **O poder jovem**. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1968.

REVISTA REALIDADE. **Revista Realidade**, São Paulo, n. 18, set. 1967.

SCHWARTZMAN, Simon. **Bases do autoritarismo brasileiro**. 5. ed. Campinas: Editora Unicamp, 2015.

SIMÕES, Solange de Deus. **Deus, Pátria e Família**: as mulheres no Golpe de 1964. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985.

TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA, Marcus Aurélio. **Educação física escolar e ditadura civil-militar no Brasil (1968–1984)**: entre a adesão e a resistência e outros estudos. Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2018.

TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA, Marcus Aurélio. A música popular como crítica da cultura política brasileira na era dos festivais. **Resgate: Revista Interdisciplinar de Cultura**, Campinas, v. 29, e021028, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.20396/resgate.v29i00.8665791>

TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA, Marcus Aurélio; BIANCHINI, Paolo. Educação política no Brasil e na Itália: duas histórias, muitos problemas comuns. **Revista História da Educação**, v. 21, n. 52, p. 274-294, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1590/2236-3459/69712>

VENTURA, Zuenir. **1968: O ano que não terminou**. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1988.

WILLIAMS, Raymond. **The long revolution**. Londres: Chatto & Windus, 1961.

How to cite this article: TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA, Marcus Aurélio; BRAGHINI, Katya. From the polysemy of words: political education and democracy in the Brazilian civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985). **Revista Brasileira de Educação**, v. 31, e310030, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-24782026310031>

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare that they have no commercial or associative interests that represent a conflict of interest in relation to the manuscript.

Funding: Research Abroad Program (Funding for Research Internship Abroad) by the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (Process No. 29.288) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development.

Authors' contributions: Research, Conceptualization, Writing – Review and Editing, Obtaining Funding, Resources: Taborda de Oliveira, M. A. Research, Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Analysis, Writing – First Draft, Writing – Review and Editing: Braghini, K.

Data availability statement: The research data are available in the body of the article.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MARCUS AURELIO TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA holds a doctorate in History and Philosophy of Education from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP). He is a professor in the Department of Applied Sciences to Education and in the Postgraduate Program in Education: Knowledge and Social Inclusion at the Faculty of Education of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG).

KATYA BRAGHINI holds a doctorate in Education: History, Politics, and Society from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-SP). She is a professor in the Postgraduate Program in Education: History, Politics, and Society and in the Department of Foundations of Education, and a researcher in the same Postgraduate Program at the same institution.

Received on May 23, 2024

Revised on November 27, 2024

Approved on December 17, 2024

Responsible Editor: Marcelo Siqueira Maia Vinagre Mocarzel  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2780-0054>

