

PUBLIC POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: THE PROCESS OF CURRICULARIZATION OF UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes an in-depth analysis of public policies aimed at higher education in Brazil, with special attention to the process of integrating extension activities into the university curriculum. In its approach, it seeks to understand not only the superficial aspects of this initiative, but also its historical roots and the political context that has contributed to its current configuration. The first point of discussion involves an investigation of the historical and political context that shaped the Brazilian higher education system. This includes an analysis of regulatory frameworks, changes in educational legislation, and social and economic influences that have affected the sector's development. Subsequently, the article outlines the definitions and fundamental concepts associated with the integration of extension activities into the curriculum. This implies examining not only what this policy aims to achieve, but also how it relates to other areas of higher education, such as research and teaching. The subsequent development of the article focuses on four crucial topics for a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the integration of extension activities into the curriculum. This involves a detailed analysis of implementation strategies, challenges faced by educational institutions, impacts observed in the communities served, and an evaluation of the results achieved so far. Finally, final considerations are presented that highlight the challenges faced and the future prospects of this process. This includes reflections on the effectiveness of current policies, suggestions for future improvements, and possible directions for further research on the topic. It seeks to provide a comprehensive and critical view of the policies for integrating extension activities into the Brazilian higher education system, with the aim of contributing to the advancement of the debate and the continuous improvement of these initiatives.

Keywords: Public Policies, Higher Education, Integration of Extension Activities into the Curriculum, Brazil.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public policies regarding higher education in Brazil have been the subject of ongoing debates and reforms, reflecting the social, political, and economic changes the country has faced

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over time. Among these policies, the process of curricularization of university extension stands out as an initiative aimed at integrating extension activities into the academic curriculum, with the goal of providing a more comprehensive education that is committed to social realities.

To fully understand the importance and challenges associated with the curricularization of extension, it is essential to examine both the historical trajectory of higher education in Brazil and the opportunities this policy presents. Over the years, higher education in the country has undergone various phases of development, influenced by political, social, and economic changes. From the colonial period to the present day, there has been a constant movement towards the expansion and diversification of the higher education system, marked by governmental initiatives and the pursuit of greater access and educational quality.

The curricularization of extension emerges as a response to contemporary challenges faced by Brazilian higher education, such as the need for training that is more connected with societal demands and the encouragement of student participation in practical activities aimed at community development. By integrating extension into the academic curriculum, educational institutions seek to promote a more holistic education that not only provides theoretical knowledge but also develops practical skills and civic values in students.

This article aims to critically analyze the policy of curricularization of university extension, exploring its importance, impacts, and future prospects. Aspects such as the effectiveness of implementation strategies, the challenges faced by educational institutions in integrating extension activities into the curriculum, the observed benefits for students and the communities served, as well as possible directions for the improvement of this policy in the future, will be considered.

Through a critical and reflective approach, this article seeks to contribute to the advancement of the debate on the curricularization of university extension in Brazil, identifying opportunities for improvement and proposing solutions to the challenges encountered. By gaining a better understanding of this policy and its impacts, it will be possible to promote higher education that is more inclusive, relevant, and committed to the needs of Brazilian society.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

The history of higher education in Brazil is marked by different phases and institutional models, influenced by political, economic, and social contexts. According to Saviani (2008), the expansion of higher education in the country was driven by social demands and international pressures, resulting in the diversification and expansion of courses and institutions. In this context, the curricularization of extension emerges as a response to the need to bring the university closer to society, promoting the democratization of access to knowledge and social development. From the early days of colonization to the present, Brazilian higher education has undergone significant transformations, shaping not only the training of professionals but also the very social and cultural structure of the country.

2.1. Colonization and Jesuit Education

Higher education in Brazil has its roots in Portuguese colonization, with the arrival of the Jesuits in the 16th century. They established schools and seminaries that served as centers of higher education, such as the Colégio de São Paulo, a precursor to the University of São Paulo. Authors like Antonio Joaquim Severino highlight the influence of the Jesuits in the formation of Brazil's first intellectuals.

During the colonial and imperial periods, access to higher education was restricted to the elites, primarily through colonial universities like the University of Coimbra in Portugal, where many young Brazilians went to study. The influence of Enlightenment and European liberalism stimulated the creation of higher education institutions in Brazil, such as the Rio de Janeiro School of Medicine, founded in 1808.

Thus, the history of higher education in Brazil dates back to the early days of Portuguese colonization, when the Jesuits played a fundamental role in establishing and organizing the first educational centers in the country. The arrival of the Jesuits in the 16th century brought with it a model of education focused on the evangelization and training of indigenous peoples, but which also ended up influencing the colonial elite.

The Jesuits established schools and seminaries in various regions of Brazil, the most famous being the Colégio de São Paulo, founded in 1554, which was a precursor to the current University of São Paulo (USP). This college's main objective was the training of priests, but it also admitted the children of Portuguese settlers and indigenous people, providing them with an education focused on the classical humanities, sciences, and religion.

Severino (2006) emphasizes the importance of the Jesuits in the founding of the first educational centers in Brazil and in the formation of the country's first intellectuals. According to Severino, the Jesuit educational model, based on Ignatian pedagogy and the principles of the Society of Jesus, had a lasting impact on Brazilian culture and society, shaping thought and educational institutions for centuries.

In addition to the Colégio de São Paulo, the Jesuits established other schools and educational missions in different regions of the country, such as the Colégio de Salvador in Bahia and the Colégio de Olinda in Pernambuco. These institutions played a crucial role in the dissemination of the Catholic faith and the spread of knowledge among the colonial populations, contributing to the formation of a literate elite and to Brazil's cultural and intellectual development.

However, it is important to note that Jesuit education was mainly aimed at the training of the colonial elites and the dissemination of the Catholic faith, leaving out the poorer strata of the population and indigenous peoples. Despite its elitist nature, the educational system implemented by the Jesuits marked a milestone in the history of Brazilian education, influencing the structure and institutional models that followed.

The historian José Antônio Tobias (1972), in his book *A Educação no Brasil Colonial* (Education in Colonial Brazil), points out that despite the limitations and contradictions of Jesuit education, it contributed significantly to the formation of a cultural and national identity in Brazil,

laying the groundwork for the later development of the country's educational system.

With the expulsion of the Jesuits from Brazil in 1759 by the Marquis of Pombal, the colonial educational system underwent a reorganization, with the creation of new educational institutions and the secularization of education. However, the legacy left by the Jesuits continued to influence Brazilian education for many years, leaving deep marks on the country's culture and society.

Colonization and Jesuit education played a fundamental role in the history of higher education in Brazil, contributing to the formation of a literate elite and to the country's cultural and intellectual development. Despite its limitations and contradictions, the Jesuit educational model left a lasting legacy on Brazilian culture and society, influencing educational institutions for centuries.

During Brazil's imperial period, which spans from 1822 to 1889, higher education underwent significant transformations, reflecting the interests and needs of society and the government of the time. This period was marked by the consolidation of the national state and the search for a unique cultural and intellectual identity, which directly influenced the educational policies implemented in the country.

One of the main higher education institutions during the imperial period was the University of Coimbra in Portugal, where many young Brazilians sought academic training. The influence of the Portuguese university was significant, as much of Brazil's intellectual and political elite was educated there. According to historian Emília Viotti da Costa (2010), in her work *Da Senzala à Colônia* (From the Slave Quarters to the Colony), the education of Brazilian students in Coimbra contributed to the dissemination of Enlightenment ideas and to the formation of a national consciousness in Brazil.

However, reliance on higher education provided by Portugal was seen as an obstacle to the country's development. In this context, initiatives to create higher education institutions in Brazil emerged, with the aim of training an intellectual and technical elite capable of contributing to the country's progress and development.

One of the first measures in this direction was the creation of law schools in São Paulo and Olinda in 1827, through the Law of August 11. These schools aimed to train jurists and lawyers to meet the demand for qualified professionals in the legal and administrative fields. The establishment of law schools was a milestone in the history of higher education in Brazil, as they were the first higher education institutions created in the country.

According to historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1990), in his book *Raízes do Brasil* (Roots of Brazil), the creation of law schools represented a significant advance in the formation of Brazil's intellectual elite by providing access to higher education to a larger portion of the population. However, law schools were primarily focused on training a literate elite and did not meet the demand for professionals in other fields of knowledge.

In addition to law schools, other higher education institutions emerged during the imperial period, such as medical, engineering, and fine arts schools. These institutions aimed to train qualified professionals to meet the needs of society and the government of the time. However, access to

higher education was still restricted to the more privileged sectors of society, which limited the democratization of education and the country's development.

The creation of higher education institutions during the imperial period represented an important advance in the history of Brazilian education by providing access to higher education to a larger portion of the population. However, the higher education model adopted in Brazil during the imperial period reflected the social and economic inequalities of the time, limiting access to knowledge and academic training to the country's political and economic elites.

2.2. Republic and the Expansion of Higher Education

With the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889, there was a drive to expand higher education in Brazil, aiming to meet the demand for qualified professionals to modernize the country. During this period, several universities and higher education institutes were established, such as the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) and the University of São Paulo (USP). Authors like Simon Schwartzman (1988) highlight the influence of republican ideals on the organization of the Brazilian educational system.

The republican period in Brazil, which began in 1889, brought a series of transformations in the educational field, including the expansion of higher education. This period was marked by political, social, and economic changes that directly influenced the country's educational policies. The expansion of higher education during the Republic reflected the pursuit of modernization and national development, as well as the demands for qualified professionals in a context of growing urbanization and industrialization.

One of the main initiatives for the expansion of higher education during the Republic was the creation of new higher education institutions in different regions of the country. In 1891, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) was founded, becoming the first federal university in Brazil and playing a fundamental role in consolidating higher education in the country. The creation of UFRJ represented a milestone in the history of Brazilian education, as it democratized access to higher education and promoted the training of professionals in various fields of knowledge.

As noted by sociologist Schwartzman, the expansion of higher education during the Republic was driven by the ideal of modernization and national development, which required the formation of an intellectual and technical elite capable of driving the country's progress. In this context, several higher education institutions emerged in different fields of knowledge, such as engineering, medicine, law, and humanities, which contributed to strengthening the Brazilian educational system.

Alongside the establishment of new higher education institutions, the Republic also promoted the implementation of access policies to higher education, aiming to expand academic training opportunities for a greater number of Brazilians. One such policy was the creation of the quota system for admission to public universities, which reserved places for low-income students, black, indigenous people, and people with disabilities, with the aim of promoting social inclusion and reducing educational inequalities in the country.

The expansion of higher education during the Republic was also driven by the creation of new courses and academic training programs, focused on the demands of the labor market and the needs of society. Technical, vocational, and university extension courses were created to train qualified professionals in specific areas such as agriculture, industry, commerce, and services, contributing to the country's economic and social development.

However, despite the progress made in the expansion of higher education during the Republic, challenges and inequalities in access to higher education persisted in Brazil. The democratization of higher education faced resistance and obstacles, such as a lack of financial resources, adequate infrastructure, and effective inclusion policies. Furthermore, the quality of higher education remained a critical issue, with educational institutions of varying standards and levels of excellence.

To address these challenges and promote a more inclusive and sustainable expansion of higher education, continuous policies and investments in improving quality, infrastructure, and access to higher education were needed. Maria Helena Guimarães de Castro (1999), in her book titled *The Expansion of Higher Education in Brazil*, highlights the importance of these policies for promoting equality of opportunity and the country's human and social development.

Thus, the Republic and the expansion of higher education in Brazil represented a period of significant advances and transformations in Brazilian education, promoting the democratization of access to higher education and contributing to national development. However, challenges and inequalities persisted, requiring continuous policies and investments in improving quality, infrastructure, and inclusion in Brazilian higher education.

2.3. Military Dictatorship and University Reforms

During the period of the Military Dictatorship in Brazil, which began in 1964 and lasted until the mid-1980s, higher education underwent significant transformations that reflected both setbacks and advances in the structure and functioning of academic institutions. The university reforms implemented during this time aimed to control the academic environment and direct higher education toward areas considered strategic for the regime, such as engineering and medicine.

The military government introduced a series of measures designed to suppress freedom of expression and control political activities within universities. Through Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5), enacted in 1968, constitutional guarantees were suspended, and the powers of the military regime were expanded, allowing for intervention in universities and the persecution of students and professors deemed subversive.

One of the most notable university reforms during the Military Dictatorship was the University Reform of 1968, which sought to restructure higher education institutions in line with the interests of the military regime. This reform introduced governance structures in universities that centralized power in the hands of rectors appointed by the government, reducing the involvement of students and faculty in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the 1968 University Reform brought changes to curricula and educational programs, aiming to direct student training toward areas considered strategic for national development, such as engineering, medicine, and exact sciences. Faculties and courses focused on these areas were established, while social sciences and humanities were marginalized, suffering from censorship and ideological persecution.

Despite the political repression and setbacks, the period of the Military Dictatorship also saw significant advancements in higher education in Brazil. During the 1960s and 1970s, there was a substantial increase in the number of universities and higher education institutions in the country, expanding access to higher education for a larger number of Brazilians.

Moreover, policies to encourage scientific and technological research were implemented, aiming to strengthen science and technology sectors and promote industrial and economic development in the country. Programs for research funding and scholarships for students and researchers were created, as well as research support institutions such as the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES).

Authors like Florestan Fernandes (1975) and Paulo Freire criticized the instrumentalization of higher education by the military regime, highlighting the negative effects of university reforms on the autonomy and quality of higher education in Brazil. According to them, the changes promoted by the military regime aimed to control critical thinking and foster a technical and alienated education at the expense of a humanistic and democratic education.

Fernandes, in defending the importance of scientific research in the organization of the university, emphasized that:

“to keep up with the relentless progress in various branches of scientific knowledge, the university must produce, through its own means, at least some portion of that progress; to be able to communicate the techniques of scientific knowledge to the surrounding environment, the university needs internal avenues for the discovery, application, and evaluation of such techniques” (Fernandes, 1983, p. 364).

It is crucial to highlight that Freire recognized the necessity for universities to engage with society, understanding that this would lead to meaningful cultural change. He argued that as social and political beings, individuals transform the world through their work, and this transformation is dependent on a deep understanding of their craft, even if such understanding varies in depth. As he stated, “No one knows everything, just as no one is completely ignorant” (Freire, 1983, p. 47). This issue remains central to public education today, as the prevailing belief that “theory and practice are separate” persists, along with the notion that legitimate knowledge is confined to academic authorities, while knowledge produced outside academic institutions is often dismissed as mere folklore or belief.

Although university extension was not a priority during the Military Dictatorship and remained a peripheral concern in the early 1980s (Freire, 2011, p. 11), a pivotal change occurred in 1985, as Sousa (2000, p. 97) notes: the introduction of direct elections for university leaders by

popular vote. This reform enabled individuals dedicated to advancing university interests to attain leadership positions. Consequently, extension programs began to play a crucial role as intermediaries between teaching and research, focusing on societal transformation, particularly as awareness of public welfare grew.

Nonetheless, despite these developments and achievements during the Military Dictatorship, the period was characterized by repression and authoritarianism that restricted academic freedom and democratic discourse within universities. Political persecution and ideological censorship directly impacted the quality and autonomy of higher education in Brazil, leaving a legacy of resistance and advocacy for democracy and human rights within the academic sphere.

2.4. Redemocratization and Expansion of Higher Education

The period of redemocratization in Brazil allowed for a significant political opening in universities, characterized by the election of rectors and active participation from faculty members, who began discussions about the relationship between the university and society. In this context, there was a strong emphasis on establishing this relationship in an organic and indivisible way with research and teaching. As a result, FORPROEX - the Forum of Pro-Rectors of Brazilian Public Higher Education Institutions - emerged as a key movement in shaping extension policies in the country, as previously mentioned. In 2012, FORPROEX established the National University Extension Policy, attracting participation from both member and non-member institutions of the forum, highlighting the significant impact of its influence.

With the end of the military dictatorship and the redemocratization of the country, the 1980s were marked by a movement towards democratization and expansion of higher education in Brazil. Federal universities were established, and access programs such as the University for All Program (ProUni) and the Student Financing Fund (FIES) were expanded to increase the inclusion of historically excluded groups, such as blacks and indigenous peoples. Castro (1999) emphasizes the importance of these policies for democratizing access to higher education in Brazil. The expansion of higher education during this period was marked by a series of reforms and public policies aimed at democratizing access to education, promoting social inclusion, and enhancing the quality of education in Brazil.

One of the main initiatives for the expansion of higher education after redemocratization was the creation of new federal universities and higher education institutions in different regions of the country. Between the 1980s and 1990s, dozens of new federal universities were founded, significantly increasing access to higher education for a larger number of Brazilians. These institutions played a crucial role in promoting social inclusion and regional development by offering courses and programs tailored to local and regional needs.

In addition to creating new federal universities, access policies to higher education were implemented to broaden academic opportunities for historically excluded groups, such as blacks, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and low-income students. Programs like ProUni and

FIES were established to provide scholarships and student loans for low-income students, ensuring that vulnerable groups could access higher education.

The democratization of access to higher education was also promoted through the implementation of racial and social quota policies in public universities, reserving spots for students from public schools, blacks, indigenous people, and people with disabilities. These policies aimed to promote inclusion and diversity in higher education, addressing inequality and racial and social discrimination in access to education.

The expansion of higher education after redemocratization was further driven by economic growth and increased public investment in education. With the strengthening of the Brazilian economy and the increase in resources available for the educational sector, it became possible to expand the number of places in universities and higher education institutions, as well as improve the infrastructure and quality of education provided.

However, despite the progress made in expanding higher education, challenges and inequalities in access to education persisted in Brazil. The quality of higher education continued to be a critical issue, with institutions varying widely in standards and levels of excellence. Additionally, inadequate funding and lack of financial resources compromised the infrastructure and operation of public universities, directly affecting the quality of teaching and scientific research in the country.

Castro (1999) and Schwartzman (1988) highlight the importance of higher education expansion policies for the human and social development of Brazil, promoting inclusion and democratization of access to education. However, they stress the need for continuous investment in improving the quality and infrastructure of higher education, as well as valuing teachers and researchers to ensure academic excellence and sustainable development of the country.

Thus, the redemocratization of Brazil and the expansion of higher education represented a period of significant advancements and transformations in Brazilian education, promoting social inclusion, diversity, and human and social development. Nonetheless, challenges and inequalities persisted, requiring ongoing policies and investments in improving the quality, infrastructure, and accessibility of higher education in Brazil.

In the context of globalization and the knowledge society, higher education in Brazil faces new challenges, such as internationalization, quality assessment, and the pursuit of academic excellence. Brazilian higher education institutions are seeking to adapt to labor market demands and new technologies, while grappling with issues like the precarization of teaching labor and the commercialization of education. José Dias Sobrinho (2002) and Cláudia Costin (2020) discuss these challenges and propose alternatives for the future of higher education in Brazil.

The history of higher education in Brazil is marked by a complex interplay of political, economic, and social contexts that have shaped its structure and institutional models over the centuries. From colonial times to the present day, higher education has been a key instrument of social transformation and national development, reflecting the challenges and aspirations of a nation in constant evolution.

3. CONCEPTS AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE CURRICULARIZATION OF EXTENSION

The interconnection between teaching, research, and extension is stipulated in Article 207 of the 1988 Constitution of the Republic. Despite the complexity of the principles outlined in the constitutional text, in practice, there is merely rhetorical appropriation of these ideals. This is due to the fact that the current conception of the “tripod” composed of the elements “teaching, research, and extension” does not meet the expectations of the pre-constitutional movements. Instead of representing a solid tripod characterized by mutual coexistence and collaboration among the three elements, the reality resembles a more imbalanced structure, where teaching predominates as the main axis, followed by research, while extension is relegated to a secondary and insignificant role. This is why the curricularization of extension is becoming a process aimed at integrating extension activities into the academic curriculum, recognizing extension as one of the essential functions of the university.

The university, as a social institution, has incorporated various functions overtime and in different contexts. The university is assigned the functions of transmitting, producing, and extending knowledge, with teaching being the most traditional function as it embodies the transmission of knowledge. Additionally, the university has the role of socializing the knowledge it produces and, in this way, is also responsible for the social integration of individuals. It is at this point that one can find signs of the existence of University Extension, as both the transmission and production of knowledge will always be a form of service provision to others. (Santos, 2000, p. 13)

In any case, it is important to highlight Paulo Freire’s critique of the term “extension.” The author, when analyzing Pierre de Guiraud’s studies, suggests that the word has a ‘basic meaning’ and a ‘contextual meaning,’ with the context in which a word is used defining its meaning. In the case of the term “extension,” its meaning can vary depending on the context. However, for the purposes of this research, the relevant meaning is that of “extend,” as a transitive verb that requires dual complementation: extending something to someone (Freire, 1983, p. 19-20).

Freire emphasizes the critique of using the term “extension,” noting that this issue goes beyond mere linguistic concern. He argues that the verb “extend” can be interpreted in various ways, including to transmit, deliver, or even manipulate, which, contrary to what might seem apparent, can lead to the objectification of the human being. Even if the true conception of extension activity is adopted, Freire highlights that a liberating education cannot be effectively achieved if transformative agents do not reflect on the use of the appropriate term (Freire, 1983, p. 22-23).

According to Targino (2016), this integration allows for a more complete and contextualized education that links theory and practice, contributing to civic formation and the development of socio-emotional skills in students.

As outlined in the National Extension Plan, developed by the Forum of Extension Pro-Rectors of Brazilian Public Universities in conjunction with the Secretariat of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Sports, university extension is an educational, cultural, and scientific

process that inseparably integrates teaching and research, facilitating the transformative relationship between the university and society.

The National University Extension Policy is based on this essential premise: extension as a vehicle for disseminating academic knowledge to the community and addressing the community's demands through the institutions. The following paragraphs will examine aspects of the National University Extension Policy, starting with the definition of extension:

University Extension is the educational, cultural, and scientific process that integrates Teaching and Research in an inseparable manner and facilitates the transformative relationship between the university and society. Extension is a two-way street, with assured access for the academic community, which will find in society the opportunity to develop and practice academic knowledge (Forproex, 2012, p. 08).

The document was developed based on the National Extension Plan, which began in 1999 and was reviewed in 2009 in Rio de Janeiro. There was a dialogue process involving FORPROEX and the universities themselves. In 2010, the policy was discussed again, this time in Fortaleza, Ceará, and finally, in 2012, it was approved during a meeting in Manaus at the XXXI National Meeting of FORPROEX. The policy resulted in a set of objectives, some of which are new, while others are derived from the plan developed in 1999 (FORPROEX, 2012, p. 07).

This process aims to systematically and obligatorily integrate extension activities into undergraduate curricula. The primary objective of this movement is to strengthen the relationship between the university and society, thereby expanding the social impact of higher education institutions and promoting the training of professionals who are more committed to the problems and challenges faced by the community. To understand the concepts and foundations behind this process, it is necessary to explore some relevant perspectives and studies.

Firstly, it is important to understand university extension as one of the three fundamental functions of the university, alongside teaching and research. According to Freire, in his work *Extension or Communication?* (1983), extension is understood as a dialogue between the university and society, where the knowledge produced in academia is shared and applied to promote social transformation. From this perspective, university extension is seen as a tool for democratizing knowledge and promoting citizenship.

Prioritizing the strengthening of the relationship between the university and society primarily aims to overcome conditions of inequality and exclusion. Through social projects, the university shares its knowledge and provides its services, thus fulfilling its social responsibility and, consequently, its mission to contribute to improving the quality of life for citizens.

Curricularization of extension thus emerges as a way to institutionalize and value this function of the university, incorporating it effectively into undergraduate curricula. According to Freire (1983), curricularization of extension seeks to break the dichotomy between teaching, research, and extension by promoting the integration of these activities in an articulated and interdisciplinary manner. This allows students to apply the knowledge acquired in the classroom to solve real community problems while contributing to the production of new knowledge through research.

The inclusion of extension in undergraduate curricula is also aligned with the principles of transformative and emancipatory education. Delors et al. (1998) argue that education should promote the integral development of individuals, preparing them not only for the labor market but also for full citizenship and the building of a more just and supportive society. In this sense, curricularization of extension contributes to the formation of ethical, critical professionals committed to social transformation.

Besides, curricularization of extension is closely linked to valuing diversity and various forms of knowledge. According to Santos (2009), university extension fosters encounters and dialogue between different forms of knowledge, including scientific, popular, and traditional knowledge. By incorporating extension into undergraduate curricula, universities recognize and legitimize these various forms of knowledge, contributing to the promotion of interculturality and strengthening the cultural and social identity of peoples.

Though, regardless of the benefits and potential of curricularization of extension, this process also faces challenges and limitations. One major challenge is resistance from some faculty and students, who may perceive extension as a secondary activity compared to teaching and research. In this regard, it is crucial to promote awareness and training among faculty and students about the importance of extension as an integral part of the educational process.

Another challenge concerns the articulation between the university and other societal actors. According to Jantsch and Shaeffer (1995), university extension should be guided by horizontality and collaboration among different social agents, including governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and social movements. Therefore, curricularization of extension requires establishing partnerships and cooperation networks that enable effective and sustainable extension projects.

It is evident that the universalization of university extension is another aspect considered by the National Policy, which acknowledges the challenges in ensuring the constitutional precept linking it inseparably to research and teaching. One suggested means for the success of extension activities is related to its curricular integration. In other words, it is essential that curricula offer flexibility for students to engage in activities beyond conventional classroom settings, exploring opportunities that go beyond merely earning credits for extracurricular activities or creating new courses. However, this alone is not sufficient, as a paradigm shift in the pedagogical project is essential for promoting civic education and adequate professional training (FORPROEX, 2012, p. 53-55).

It is important to highlight that the curricularization of extension in higher education in Brazil is an ongoing process that requires the engagement and commitment of the entire academic community. It is necessary to promote broad and democratic discussions about the objectives, strategies, and challenges of curricularization of extension, always striving to strengthen the role of the university as an agent of social transformation and promoter of human and sustainable development.

4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULARIZATION OF EXTENSION

The implementation of the curricularization of extension faces several challenges, including institutional resistance, lack of resources, and structural limitations. However, successful experiences in various institutions demonstrate the benefits of this practice, such as strengthening the bond between university and community, producing relevant knowledge, and promoting local development (Freire, 2017).

Resolution No. 7/2018 by the National Council of Education (CNE) represents a significant milestone in advancing the curricularization of extension in Brazilian higher education. This measure sets guidelines for incorporating extension activities into undergraduate curricula, aiming to promote the integration of teaching, research, and extension and to strengthen universities' commitment to social and regional development. However, the implementation of this resolution comes with a series of challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed and explored by the academic community.

Article 3 establishes that such activities are part of the curriculum and are integrated with research activities, designed as a process that “stimulates the transformative interaction between higher education institutions and other sectors of society through the production and application of knowledge in continuous articulation with teaching and research” (Brazil, 2018). Article 4 stipulates that extension activities should account for 10% of the total workload of undergraduate courses, being integrated into their curricula. This provision is innovative as it creates a dedicated space for extension, aligning it with other educational modalities like research and teaching.

It is important to note that Article 8 lists various forms of extension activities, such as programs, projects, courses, workshops, events, and service provision (Brazil, 2018). In this sense, the institutionalization of extension becomes clear, demanding a prominence that may be separate from teaching and research, depending on interpretation and, above all, implementation in each educational institution.

One of the main challenges in implementing the curricularization of extension is overcoming a traditionally teaching- and research-focused academic culture, which often views extension activities as secondary. This perception can lead to resistance from some faculty members and students. Therefore, it is crucial to promote a shift in mindset and to value extension as an essential part of students' educational process and knowledge production.

As well, the implementation of the curricularization of extension also faces challenges related to the coordination between the university and the external community. Universities often struggle to establish partnerships and extension projects that meet societal demands and needs. It is necessary, therefore, to foster closer relationships between academia and various sectors of society, aiming to identify and address real community problems and promote social and regional development.

Another significant challenge is ensuring the quality and relevance of extension activities integrated into undergraduate curricula. It is essential that these activities be planned and developed

in an integrated and interdisciplinary manner, involving students, faculty, and community members in projects that effectively contribute to citizenship, social inclusion, and sustainable development. Furthermore, constant evaluation and monitoring of these activities are necessary to ensure their effectiveness and positive impact on the community.

Even with the challenges, the implementation of the curricularization of extension also presents a range of opportunities for higher education institutions and society as a whole. One key opportunity is the strengthening of the relationship between universities and society, promoting more effective and collaborative dialogue among different social actors. The curricularization of extension allows universities to engage more closely with the community, contributing to the creation of a more just and democratic society.

Besides, the curricularization of extension offers broader and enriching learning opportunities for students, allowing them to develop essential skills and competencies for their professional and civic roles. Extension activities provide students with the chance to apply classroom knowledge to real-world problems while developing teamwork, leadership, and entrepreneurship skills.

Another opportunity presented by the curricularization of extension is the reinforcement of universities' identity and mission as agents of social transformation and promoters of human and regional development. By incorporating extension into undergraduate curricula, universities reaffirm their commitment to producing and disseminating knowledge for the benefit of society, contributing to the formation of more ethical, critical professionals committed to collective well-being.

To fully leverage the opportunities offered by the curricularization of extension, it is necessary to invest in the training and awareness of faculty, students, and other members of the academic community. Promoting reflection and discussion on the goals, strategies, and challenges of curricularizing extension is crucial, ensuring active participation from all involved in the process. Only then can the transformative potential of the curricularization of extension in Brazilian higher education be fully realized.

5. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The future of the curricularization of extension in Brazil depends not only on the commitment of higher education institutions but also on government support and the coordination among different social actors. It is necessary to ensure adequate resources, incentives, and evaluation policies that recognize extension as an integral part of academic training. Furthermore, it is important to promote active community involvement in defining priorities and implementing extension actions.

This topic is relevant and generates various reflections and debates among academics, managers, and other stakeholders in the field of education. To understand the perspectives and challenges that arise, it is essential to consider different viewpoints and contributions from various authors.

Firstly, it is important to highlight the transformative potential of curricularization in the Brazilian context. According to Paulo Freire, a renowned Brazilian educator, university extension should be understood as a dialogue between the university and society, capable of promoting social transformation and the building of a more just and equitable society. From this perspective, curricularization represents an opportunity to strengthen the ties between universities and communities, increasing the social impact of higher education institutions.

On the other hand, realizing this transformation requires overcoming several challenges. One major challenge is ensuring the quality and relevance of extension activities incorporated into undergraduate curricula. These activities must be planned and developed in an integrated and interdisciplinary manner, involving students, faculty, and community members in projects that effectively contribute to citizenship, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

Another important challenge is promoting a shift in mindset and valuing extension as an essential part of the students' educational process and knowledge production. According to Santos (2009), university extension provides a platform for the meeting and dialogue between different forms of knowledge, including scientific, popular, and traditional knowledge. In this sense, it is necessary to foster an academic culture that values extension as a fundamental activity for the holistic education of students and for societal development.

Moreover, it is crucial to ensure the institutional and financial support necessary for the effective implementation of curricularization. This involves establishing partnerships and cooperation networks that enable effective and sustainable extension projects. As Freire (2018) emphasizes, building bridges between the university and the community involves a process of mutual dialogue and collaboration, where the diversity of knowledge and experiences enriches teaching, research, and extension. Therefore, investing in resources and strategies that strengthen these partnerships is essential to ensure the positive impact of university extension on society and to promote a more inclusive and responsive education system.

Given these challenges, the future of curricularization in Brazil depends on the engagement and mobilization of the entire academic community. It is necessary to foster a broad and democratic debate about the objectives, strategies, and challenges of curricularization, continually striving to enhance the role of the university as an agent of social transformation and promoter of human and sustainable development. Only then can the full potential of curricularization be realized to promote quality education and contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Public policies in higher education in Brazil have undergone continuous evolution, seeking to adapt to the challenges and demands of a constantly changing society. In this context, the curricularization of university extension emerges as a significant advancement, recognizing the importance of integrating the university with society to build a more inclusive education system committed to human and social development.

The implementation of curricularization represents a paradigm shift in Brazilian higher

education, which has historically favored teaching and research over extension. By systematically and obligatorily integrating extension activities into undergraduate curricula, higher education institutions acknowledge the importance of extension as an essential part of students' educational processes and as a powerful tool for social transformation.

In this sense, curricularization aims to promote greater articulation between the university and society, expanding dialogue and collaboration among different social actors. Through extension projects, students have the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to real-world problems while contributing to the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Including extension in undergraduate curricula also contributes to the development of more ethical, critical professionals committed to collective well-being. By participating in extension activities, students develop skills such as teamwork, leadership, and entrepreneurship, which are essential for their professional and civic roles.

However, despite the evident benefits of curricularization, its implementation faces several challenges and obstacles. One of the main challenges is ensuring the quality and relevance of extension activities integrated into undergraduate curricula. These activities must be planned and developed in an integrated and interdisciplinary way to effectively contribute to citizenship, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

Another significant challenge is promoting a cultural shift and valuing extension as an integral part of students' educational processes. Overcoming a traditionally teaching- and research-focused academic culture, which often relegates extension to a secondary role, is crucial. Promoting awareness and training for faculty and other academic community members about the importance of extension as an essential activity for holistic student development and societal advancement is essential.

Additionally, it is necessary to secure institutional and financial support for the effective implementation of curricularization. This includes establishing partnerships and cooperation networks with governments, businesses, civil society organizations, and social movements to ensure effective and sustainable extension projects.

Curricularization represents a significant advancement in promoting more inclusive higher education committed to human and social development in Brazil. However, its implementation requires addressing numerous challenges and mobilizing all involved in the academic community. Only then can the transformative potential of curricularization be fully realized to promote quality education and contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

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