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## **Exploring Impacts of Paulo Freire's Pedagogy on Brazilian Education**

Methods of education are one of the main ways that history has evolved. When Aristoteles walked around with his students and discussed subjects that encouraged them to think, he was developing one way of education. Or when the primitives learned practical skills, such as hunting and cooking, and taught each other by drawing on walls, another method of teaching was created. Education can have many forms, however, it does not always fulfill its purpose, which is to acquire general knowledge, develop the powers of reasoning and judgment, and prepare the student intellectually for a mature life.

Brazil, a Portuguese colonized country, discovered in 1500, belonged to the so-called “New World”. Because of its European roots, for a long time, Brazil copied Europe’s educational system and sent their young men to study in Universities abroad, hence bringing literature, art, music, and dance from other places. As time went by, the country started to build its own culture, becoming a very mixed country and creating individual intellectual material, but it was only in 1920 that the first Brazilian university was opened: the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).

In 1960, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, and philosopher, created a literacy method for adults. This method was expressed in his book “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, which created a base for a future Education Revolution because his ideas were contrary to everything else applied at the time. He used daily vocabulary and life experiences from the students; believed that education should be based on the student’s daily life. With this method, in 1963, in the

northeastern state of Rio Grande do Norte, Paulo was able to teach 300 people to read within 40 hours. From then on, he educated thousands of Brazilians and received recognition worldwide. The Brazilian educational system revolves around Freire's theory and is very discussed among educationalists whether it is good or not. There are many contradictions in Paulo's history, methods, and alliances and the consequences on the country's education are noticeable, such as the position in the PISA (The Program for International Student Assessment) nowadays: 52°. "The essence of Freire's work is political, in the noble sense of the term, not in the sense of partisan politics", said Abdeljalil Akkari, a sociologist from the University of Geneva. Therefore, with The Pedagogy of the Oppressed as an Educational base, Brazil is a great example of how Education and its didactics are a major factor in society's structure and the effects that a deficient methodology can have on students.

Although initially criticized, the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" still serves as a founding ideology in Brazilian Education. The ideas of Freire seemed adequate in the beginning, as he claimed they would foster a democratic education, but his tools and beliefs to do so have proven themselves to be unsuccessful and erroneous. The author claims that Education is not merely "passing on information" for a student, but a political tool. A professor is no longer a Master of a subject, but a politician in charge of reinforcing the dominant interests. This belief has weakened the formation of educators, as they don't need to care about being experts in their chosen field anymore. Educators are formed to bring conscientization to the students about the dichotomy: powerful/powerless; and oppressor/oppressed. "In Brazil, pedagogy was abandoned in favor of political discourse and training of militants" (Souza, 2021).

This generation of shallow and unprepared professors has formed, in the past 30 years, professionals with a great lack of technical and practical knowledge, who no longer seek

knowledge itself, but merely, permission to exercise the little that was learned at school, most commonly known as “degree”. A social proof of the inefficiency of Freire’s theory is how Brazil continues to fall behind in the scientific, research, and development areas. In 2019, “Brazil invested around 89.5 billion reais in the science and technology sector. A value that corresponded to just 1.21% of GDP. For comparison purposes, countries like Germany and the United States invested more than 3% of GDP in the same year.” (Dino, 2022). “According to the annual edition of the Global Innovation Index (GII), by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in partnership with business school Insead and Cornell University, Brazil ranks 66th on a list of 129 countries, behind all the BRIC nations and down two positions from 2018” (Forbes, 2019).

Another misconception caused by Paulo Freire’s ideas was that knowledge doesn’t come from the professors and it is their duty to communicate it, but the students' experiences should be the base of the teaching process. The focus has changed, the Master is no longer the center- as it was with classic education-, but the Learner is. This caused an inversion of values, students don’t respect teachers anymore. The democratic methodology of “educator, while teaches, also learns” (Freire, Paulo) that seemed good and fair at first sight, led students, from the last decades, to believe that the professor should serve them, not teach them, creating a chaotic and uncontrollable classroom, where the teacher has no authority. Because of the lack of respect fostered in the classroom, from the students and the devaluation of teachers by society, the number of teachers leaving the classroom due to mental health issues grows higher each year in Brazil. In the State of Sao Paulo alone, the most populous state of Brazil, more than 100 teachers ask to leave due to issues related to mental health per day.

The classic form of education has brought many benefits to the world and was one important source of good literature, philosophy, music, and other noble professions. A teacher is the most important part of the educational process because they hold the responsibility of educating others. With a known responsibility, life as an example, and a broad field of knowledge, teachers can notice every student's strong and weak assets, and help instill in their students the desire to learn. When someone is available to take time and correct the intentions of others and put them in the right direction, a fair and respectable society is created, with citizens who understand their duties and can live with others under any circumstances. Responsible professionals, caring parents, loving children, and honest politicians all stem from the right education.

Therefore, the education system in Brazil does not correspond with the aspects stated above, being the main reason why some students in Brazil tend to not prioritize learning, reading, or some form of education that requires time and effort. Equally concerning, the teacher does not hold responsibility for those who are under their care, reinforcing a greater belief that education is unimportant. Freire's ideas only make educators hold onto matters that do not integrate noble parts of knowledge, implanting political ideas and forming irresponsible citizens who do not know any values and are stuck in basic levels of formation. A country that understands the importance of forming good people is a nation that can effectively thrive.

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