



The Press and the Representation of the School Universe in the Interior of São Paulo (Franca: 1960s)¹

A Imprensa e a Representação do Universo Escolar no Interior Paulista (Franca: década de 1960)

La prensa y la representación del universo escolar en el interior de São Paulo (Franca: década de 1960)

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Abstract

The text proposes a reflection about the relation between press and education in the 1960s, marked by the implementation of the authoritarian regime in Brazil in 1964. The research takes place in the interior of *São Paulo* state, observing the similarities and distances between national and regional discourses relating to the school universe. The sources used were three newspapers from the city of *Franca*, in addition to official documents, prioritizing the analysis of representations related to education, illiteracy, teachers and students. The newspapers constituted important testimonies for understanding the game of interests, revealing aspirations and tensions arising from the popular classes, but acting as representatives of the hegemonic discourse in the national authoritarian context.

Keywords: Education; Written Press; 1960s; São Paulo State.

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Resumo

O texto propõe reflexão sobre a relação imprensa e educação na década de 1960, marcada pela implantação do regime autoritário no Brasil a partir de 1964. A pesquisa tem como cenário o interior paulista, observando-se as aproximações e distanciamentos entre os discursos nacional e regional relativos ao universo escolar. As fontes trabalhadas foram três jornais da cidade de Franca, além de documentos oficiais, priorizando-se a análise das representações relativas à educação, a analfabetismo, a professor e a estudante veiculadas por eles. Os jornais constituíram-se em importantes testemunhos para a compreensão do jogo de interesses, revelando aspirações e tensões advindas das classes populares, mas se portando como representantes do discurso hegemônico no contexto autoritário nacional.

Palavras-Chave: Educação; Imprensa Escrita; Década de 1960; Interior Paulista.

Resumen

El texto propone una reflexión sobre la relación entre prensa y educación en la década de 1960, marcada por la implementación del régimen autoritario en Brasil en 1964. La investigación se desarrolla en el interior de *São Paulo*, observando las similitudes y distancias entre los discursos nacionales y regionales relacionados con el universo escolar. Las fuentes utilizadas fueron tres periódicos de la ciudad de *Franca*, además de documentos oficiales, priorizando el análisis de las representaciones de la educación, del analfabetismo, de los docentes y estudiantes. Los periódicos constituyeron testimonios importantes para comprender el juego de intereses, revelando aspiraciones y tensiones surgidas de las clases populares, pero actuando como representantes del discurso hegemónico en el contexto autoritario nacional.

Palabras clave: Educación; Prensa Escrita; Años 1960; Estado de São Paulo.

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Introduction

Throughout the turbulent 1960s, even in remote corners of the country, such as Franca (inland São Paulo²), much debate arose about the educational landscape. One of the main channels of discussion was the written press, which developed and disseminated many and varied ideas about educational issues, constructing representations anchored in that context. This period was marked by significant growth in the education system, especially with the advent of the authoritarian government after 1964, which ended Jango's³ popular government. Thus, greater administrative commitment was required in this sector, aiming to control popular pressure for schooling, as there was great expectation of improved living conditions through access to schooling (Freitag, 1986).

First, we address the context of the period to encourage the exercise of deciphering the meaning contained in a representation that is only possible through the articulation of text and context. By analyzing press representations, it is possible to grasp aspects of the dominant discourse that underpinned the organization and rapid expansion of the public school system in the interior of São Paulo, revealing the implicit interests contained within them. In this study, we chose education, illiteracy, teachers, and students as categories of analysis. We believe, therefore, that we can understand the type of education conceived and "given to reading" (Chartier, 1990, p. 16) by certain social sectors, seeking to demonstrate how the specific conditions of the modernization process the country was undergoing were legitimized.

During this period, capitalist powers exerted significant influence on the education sector of peripheral countries, aiming primarily to expand the markets willing to consume their industrialized products. A prime example of this were the MEC/USAID agreements that guided all Brazilian educational reforms, such as Laws 5540/68 and 5692/71 (Cunha; Góes, 1985). The

² The settlement of northeastern São Paulo began in the 18th century, as a trade route connecting the Province of São Paulo to the region of the present-day states of Goiás and Mato Grosso, and also due to the decline of mining activities that drove miners to the limits of western São Paulo. According to Diniz and Souza (2020, p. 167): "What has been conventionally called northeastern São Paulo corresponds to the first pioneering zone of demographic expansion following the conquest of the 'west' along with the coffee and *Mogiana* railroad, involving important municipalities such as Ribeirão Preto, Franca, and Batatais." On August 29, 1805, the *Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Franca e do Rio Pardo* (simplified to Franca) was created, and at the end of the 19th century, coffee production would attract the railroad (1887), lifting the town out of its stagnation. From then on, the local economy began to develop, supported by coffee exports and the production of basic necessities such as food, shoes, and clothing. Until the 1960s, Franca's industry expanded, so much so that, during this period, leather-related industrial establishments represented almost 50% of the municipality's total industries (Ferreira, 1989).

³ According to Dreifuss (1987), the civil-military dictatorship stemmed not only from the economic stagnation that occurred between 1963 and 1966, but also from a political and cultural/ideological crisis. The state's inability to respond adequately to popular demands led to the erosion of its already fragile legitimacy in political and educational institutions, leading to the collapse of the populist regime, with urban classes and rural sectors escaping the control of the ruling classes. Industrial development and urbanization had transformed the psychology and collective consciousness of the working classes, weakening the ideological control exercised by the ruling classes. These changes in the morphology of Brazilian society, combined with the contradictions of national economic development, led to a radicalization of positions: either a left-led social revolution or Brazil would be definitively inserted into the sphere of international capital's control. Thus, the conspiratorial consortium was formed, which brought together, in addition to the military, bankers, businessmen, landowners, and foreign capital. (DREIFUSS, 1987)

basic idea of education was the direct link between educational attainment and income, which was the driving force behind the expansion of the education system.

Starting in the 1960s, basic education became widespread in Brazil's most developed regions, expanding the availability of schools to the majority of the school-age population, albeit precariously. In Franca, the official network grew from 10 schools in 1962 to 21 in 1970 (over 100%), and the number of colleges increased from two to four, while private schools decreased from five to three (Souza; Teixeira, 2015, p. 519).

All this movement of creating and eliminating institutions was viewed by the city's press in different and even conflicting ways, so that journalistic activity not only transmitted facts but also generated them, compounding them with a very particular view of events, resulting in a combination of subjectivity and interests to which the newspaper is linked. As Capelato (1988, p. 13) observed:

the press records, comments on, and participates in history. (...) Since its beginnings, the press has established itself as a political force. Governments and those in power have always used and feared it; therefore, they flatter, monitor, control, and punish newspapers.

In this work, we selected for our analysis three of the most representative newspapers from Franca, largely linked to the hegemonic discourse of the largest newspapers of the time. We also considered circulation, which expanded the scope of publication, and the peculiarities of worldview resulting from the ties of the directors and owners of these media outlets to specific local interests.⁴

The Newspaper *Comércio da Franca* was founded in 1915 and, until 1950, was a weekly publication. Beginning in the second half of the 20th century, members of the Freemasons (lawyers and industrialists) acquired it, giving it the format of a daily newspaper. In the 1960s, its editions varied between 2 and 8 pages, and by 1967, its circulation was approximately 6,000.

We highlight its progressive stance in the early 1960s, opposing the approval of *LDB No. 4024* and defending public schools. “*Mobilização dos estudantes francanos*” and “*Atentado à Escola Democrática*” are titles of articles that called on teachers and students to take a stand against the LDB, which was about to be approved. See below:

A wave of revulsion against Carlos Lacerda's nefarious amendment to the *'Diretrizes e bases da Educação'* project is rising throughout the country. (...) We are surprised that, to the detriment of public schools, so many privileges are granted to private educational institutions, which are now commercialized, as everyone knows. Many educational institutions, including numerous

⁴ We also highlight the functional aspect of research in these periodicals, since their collections were complete (with some exceptions) and available in the collection of the José Chiachiri Municipal Historical Museum.

religious establishments, have been providing education for purely profit purposes[sic] (Comércio da Franca, vol. 546, Feb/1960).⁵

Figure 01 – Newspaper *Comércio da Franca* (1964).



Source: Collection of the José Chiachiri Municipal Historical Museum, Franca, São Paulo.

The newspaper *O Francano* began in the 19th century, in 1888. With some interruptions in its printing over time, it circulated biweekly in two sheets (four pages) and, in 1966, ceased its activities, about a year after the death of its director, Taufick Jorge (of Syrian-Lebanese origin). In reading this periodical, we emphasize that, in the early 1960s, it served as a propaganda tool for the reelection of State Representative Onofre Gosuen, publishing several of his bills in the months leading up to the election that addressed the creation of educational institutions in Franca. He proposed, among other projects, the creation of the Schools of Architecture, Agronomy, Philosophy, and Industrial Engineering, as well as school groups and gymnasiums: "Schools, Industrial Chemistry, and Veterinary Medicine – Three other important bills, presented for consideration by the State Legislative Assembly by our fellow countryman, Representative Onofre Gosuen [sic] (*O Francano*, vols. nos. 34-38/181-182, 1960-66)."

⁵ Without a doubt, the newspaper *Comércio da Franca* was the city's most widely circulated and prestigious newspaper. In December 1965, a ceremony was held in the City Council chambers to commemorate its 50th anniversary. Present at the event were the mayor, the dean of the Law School, representatives from the School of Philosophy, the newspapers *O Francano*, *Nova Era*, and *Comércio* itself, as well as several council members. The commitment to bringing municipal power and the press closer together is quite clear in the mayor's speech: "Having given the floor, Dr. Hélio Palermo says (...) that the newspaper being honored has done a lot for the growth of Franca and that the Chamber is meeting on a memorable night to pay an unprecedented and very meritorious tribute, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of this magnificent newspaper, (...) because the newspaper is the people themselves [sic] (*Câmara Municipal de Franca, Plenário no.13, 4ª Ses.Esp., 20/dez/65, p. 07*)."

Figure 02 – Newspaper *O Francano* (1962).

O FRANCANO Porte Pago

DIRETOR: TUFFY JORGE

Ano XVI | Franca, 24 de Junho de 1962 | Núm. 1.135

Tornou-se em realidade a Faculdade de Filosofia em nossa cidade

Promulgada a lei pelo governador em exercício Gal. Portfírio da Paz

Como é do conhecimento de todos, o referido projeto de lei é de autoria do nosso conterrâneo Deputado ONOFRE GOSUEN, cujo trabalho, indiscutivelmente, vale por um mandato. Está pois, de parabéns o povo francano por esta magnífica realização que vem enriquecer o setor do nosso ensino. LEI N. 6814, DE 20 DE JUNHO DE 1962. Dispõe sobre criação e estabelecimento de ensino.

O VICE-GOVERNADOR DO ESTADO DE SÃO PAULO, EM EXERCÍCIO NO CARGO DE GOVERNADOR:

Fago saber que a Assembléia Legislativa de São Paulo e eu promulgo a seguinte lei:

Artigo 1.º — Fica criada como instituto isolado de ensino superior a Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Franca.

Artigo 2.º — A instalação do instituto de ensino que trata o artigo anterior, fica subordinada ao planejamento técnico do Conselho Estadual do Ensino Superior, ou de outro que venha a substituí-lo, cabendo ainda a tal órgão, para o mesmo fim, indicar o pessoal docente habilitado.

Artigo 3.º — A lei orçamentaria do exercício em que se der a instalação da Faculdade entrará em vigor na data de sua publicação.

Palácio do Governo do Estado de São Paulo, aos 20 de junho de 1962.

JOSE PORPHYRIO DA PAZ
Vice-Governador,

em exercício
Solon Borges dos Reis
Publicada na Diretoria Geral da Secretaria do Estado dos Negócios do Governo, aos 20 de junho de 1962.
João de Siqueira Campos
Diretor Geral Substituto

Escola Normal para o Distrito da Estação

Conforme noticiamos em nossa edição anterior, publicamos abaixo o projeto de lei de autoria do Deputado ONOFRE GOSUEN, que cria a Escola Normal do distrito da Estação junto ao Ginásio do Estado, já aprovado em 1.ª discussão pela Assembléia Legislativa do Estado.

PROJETO DE LEI N. 600, DE 1961

DISPÕE SOBRE CRIAÇÃO DE ESTABELECIMENTO DE ENSINO.

A Assembléia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo decreta:

Artigo 1.º — Fica criada uma escola normal junto ao ginásio estadual do subdistrito da Estação no município de Franca.

Artigo 2.º — A lei orçamentária do exercício em que se der a instalação do estabelecimento de ensino ora criado consignará recursos necessários para o funcionamento das respectivas despesas.

Artigo 3.º — Esta lei entrará em vigor na data de sua publicação.

JUSTIFICATIVA

O subdistrito da Estação, no município de Franca, é um povoado e prospero núcleo.



Dep. Onofre Gosuen

talação da Faculdade ora criada consignará dotações destinadas a atender às respectivas despesas.

Source: Collection of the José Chiachiri Municipal Historical Museum, Franca, São Paulo.

Finally, we reviewed the collection of the newspaper *O Aviso de Franca*, which had ties to the Catholic Church and also to sectors of the city's working class. It began its activities in 1924 and by the 1960s was a weekly publication, printed on two sheets (four pages), and its circulation varied from 3,000 to 3,500 copies. One of its distinctive features was its defense of private education and Law 4024, engaging in intense debate with the newspaper *Comércio da Franca*, which opposed the law. He published highly reactionary articles about this issue: “*Diretrizes e Bases Repudiadas pelos comunistas*” or “*Public Schools versus Private Schools*”, arguing that private schools provided immense services to the country, casting doubt on the quality of public services:

Rio (CRF) – Communist agents are revolutionizing Rio's student population by inciting them against the National Education Guidelines and Bases Project, recently unanimously approved by the Chamber of Deputies. Posters with the puppet appear in various parts of the capital: "Guidelines and Bases Destroy Public Schools!" The democratic Education Project is completely out of sync with Soviet totalitarianism (*O Aviso da Franca*, vol. no. 363, March-April 1960).

Figure 03 – Newspaper *O Aviso de Franca* (1961).

O Aviso de Franca
Fundador: Frei Gregório Gil — Diretor Resp. Frei Agostinho Belmonte — Redator: Frei Tobias Faleiros
ANO XXVIII | FRANCA, 7 de outubro, de 1961 | NUM. 1468

Semanais... **Eleições Estudantis** ... A HISTÓRIA FRANCANA...

Estão se processando em Franca eleições diversas para as novas diretorias dos grêmios e associações estudantis das nossas escolas.

Tais movimentos, embora à primeira vista nos pareçam ser manifestações de pouca importância entre a mocidade, têm um sentido mais amplo e profundo, porque refletem no espírito dos jovens o desejo de realizarem algo que seja pelo menos um ensaio do que, num futuro próximo, irão proceder seriamente, pensando nos destinos de nossa Pátria, hoje tão sofredora pelas irresponsabilidades de políticos profissionais e carreiristas consumados. Os jovens de hoje serão os cidadãos de amanhã que, com o mesmo gesto e com o mesmo voto, darão ao Brasil o que ele merece, para, dentro de uma democracia sadia, torná-

lo grande e respeitado como Nação.

O mesmo ideal deve persistir hoje na mente dos jovens estudantes, elegendo para seus grêmios e associações, elementos capazes, empreendedores e, sobretudo, honestos e de consciência limpa e cristã, para que possam representá-los condignamente, elevando assim o nome da classe estudantil de Franca, fundindo-lhe prestígio, respeito e acatamento.

Os estudantes unidos e bem orientados, serão uma esperança por dias melhores para nossa Pátria, porque o que realizam hoje lhes servirá de guia para o cumprimento do dever cívico e democrático de amanhã. Desunidos e mal orientados serão méros jograis daqueles que se aproveitam da anarquia e da desordem para a vitória dos seus planos nefastos.

...em princípios do século o ordenado de um Prefeito em Franca era de 400\$000 (Quatrocentos cruzeiros). Assim ganhava o Cel. André Martins, o Cel. Martiniano de Andrade, o Dr. Gusmão e outros. O lezoureiro Ignácio Almeida, o Ignacinho, pai de Olímpio, percebia 200 cruzeiros, o Secretário Bráulio Fernandes, 200 cruzeiros, o auxiliar do tesoureiro, o Olímpio das valzas francanas, 120,00. O Tobias Vieira, fiscal urbano, 100 cruzeiros, e o inspetor escolar Alvaro Abranches 120 cruzeiros.

..Quando o Prefeito deixava de comparecer ao serviço lhe era descontado o dia.

...E tudo era "manso lago azul". Hoje, um funcionário categorizado municipal percebe 15 mil cruzeiros, sofre, chora, se desespera, se destitui de trabalhar porque toda essa "dinheirama" não vale os 200 bicos do Ignacinho.

Pê... Lourinho

..... CANDIDO.....

Source: Collection of the José Chiachiri Municipal Historical Museum, Franca, São Paulo.

We can see above that the city's newspapers took a stance on the debates of the period and clearly defended their interests, which were often conflicting. However, with the advent of the dictatorship, newspapers in the interior saw a reduction in debates on important national issues, a consequence of censorship.

While acknowledging that newspapers had different motivations regarding school education in Franca, it is a fact that they all reserved significant space in their editions for topics related to the school world. One similarity among these periodicals was the priority given to secondary and higher education, which were largely focused on educational-related articles, while basic education received little attention and was always linked to its difficulties, such as low teacher salaries, poor building conditions, lack of vacancies, etc.

The local press privileged the restricted world of the approximately 10% of Franca's school-age population who attended secondary and higher education in 1970. Education at these levels generated great prestige, thus continuing to be presented and celebrated as a class privilege. The concerns of the dominant groups assumed the proportions of general interest in the pages of newspapers, which aimed to reach the more educated, wealthy, and mobilizing public.⁶

It is impossible to know the extent of journalistic discourse's penetration, due to the large number of illiterate people and the poverty that prevented even the purchase of newspapers. However, it is certain that such discourse stemmed largely from a dominant worldview, disseminated with all diligence among the local privileged classes. Although Franca's newspapers adopted their own opinions, they all contributed to the consolidation of certain representations surrounding notions of education, illiteracy, and stereotypes of student and teacher. We believe that observing education as represented in the local written press reveals certain social thoughts and practices of the time, since the production of this type of document (journalism) presupposes an act of power.

Thus, the use of the concept of representation seems appropriate for this study. Chartier (1990) understands representations as elements of transformation of reality and that attribute meaning to the world. The construction of this meaning or social symbolism would not occur within absolute freedom, as representations necessarily have a foundation in their conception based on real conditions of existence. That is, the ideas-images would possess a minimum of concreteness drawn from everyday life to gain social acceptance, potentially becoming instruments for the constitution of power and transformation of reality.

School Education as a Sign of the *Modern*

Starting in 1964, the process of rationalization of society was intensified by the development of the productive forces of industry and urbanization, through massive state intervention in the expansion of monopoly capitalism. This is because the technocratic-military stratum that assumed power sought to prioritize private profit, a way to consolidate the power of the traditional ruling classes (both the industrial and financial bourgeoisie and the landowning sector), which then seemed threatened by Jango's populist government and its discourse based on income distribution. Under the military regime, the practice of mediating,

⁶ Between 1960 and 1971, the newspaper *O Aviso de Franca* published approximately 56 articles about secondary and higher education, while only 16 were devoted to primary education. Between 1960 and 1966, the newspaper *O Francano* published 66 news stories on those levels of education, while articles related to elementary education and illiteracy totaled approximately 18 articles. Meanwhile, the newspaper *Comércio da Franca* published approximately 689 articles on secondary, technical, and higher education, compared to 169 on primary education and literacy, between 1960 and 1971. News stories on secondary and higher education generally revolved around tributes, graduations, student sporting events, funding issues, lack of vacancies, etc. Source: Documentary Collection of the José Chiachiri Municipal Historical Museum. Collections of the newspapers *Comércio da Franca*, *O Francano* and *O Aviso de Franca*, 1960-1971.

filtering, selecting, and organizing dominant interests was exacerbated, blocking formal channels of social representation while simultaneously guaranteeing exclusive access to certain segments. (Coutinho, 1986).

The priority given to economic management in the post-1964 period also required the adoption of differentiated social policies, but these policies should also be synchronized with the reproduction of capital. It is from this perspective that national school education was guided. In terms of discourse, the ideal education should be one that promotes the professionalization of young people, preparing them for the job market. However, in practice, not even elementary education met the minimum objectives of the authoritarian government, which adopted measures aimed at consolidating the consumer society, in which education was supposed to play a fundamental role: "(...) this is the result of the bourgeois revolution that took place in Brazil. A revolution that achieved success in terms of the economy, the development of capital, and accumulation. (...) Democratic achievements, in political and cultural forms, are limited (Ianni, 1992, p. 150)."

Mass media outlets, in general, disseminated the representation of education as a mechanism for social advancement and civilization. This idea served both the interests of industrialized countries seeking to expand their consumer markets and the interests of the elite associated with external sectors, both of which relied on efficiency that school as a method of social control and the dissemination of new habits.

The newspapers in Franca contributed to the construction of this representation of education, and the significant emphasis given to news about the school world also reveals this trend at the regional level: "Professor Miguel Couto said that there is only one problem in Brazil – the education of the people. This axiom contains a harsh truth (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 546, February 10, 1960)."⁷

This representation of school education served, among other things, as a stabilizing mechanism, since the pressure for access to education actually revealed the desire for social mobility, representing the great expectations of migrants fleeing their appalling living conditions in the countryside. This representation only gained social acceptance due to the fact that a significant portion of the Brazilian population experienced, throughout the 1960s, some kind of improvement in quality of life, especially associated with the ability to consume durable and non-durable goods, which contributed to absorbing the revolutionary potential of the country's popular sectors.

In this sense, education (or its lack) served to legitimize social inequalities, leaving individuals in precarious conditions due to their lack of schooling. In this regard, the expectation of social mobility tied to access to education acted as an integrating social force, as it was widespread among the population and held great importance, as there was a certain degree of real mobility across all social strata. Thus, the rapid expansion of the school network, even while precariously serving its clientele, served to create a climate of "satisfaction of expectations," easing social pressures⁸. The predominant school education represented in the pages of newspaper *Comércio da Franca* was supposed to be a type that reinforced the tradition of the Catholic religion, with a modern curriculum that included subjects such as physical,

⁷ We can also observe such representation in another newspaper: "Education and Teaching – If a society does not educate, does not support, does not help the abandoned child, the young person, does not take care of their problems, how can it repress or prevent crimes! One of the greatest crimes committed in society is not murder, but the crime of abandoning children (*O Francano*, vol. no. 182, May 8, 1966)."

⁸ According to IBGE data, in 1970, approximately 75% of the population of Franca had some level of education and 25% had no education. These figures for the State of São Paulo were 70% and 30%, respectively. In the early 1960s, the number of illiterate people was approximately 20% higher. Source: *Fundação IBGE, Departamento de Censos – SP, VIII – Recenseamento Geral 1970 – Série Regional Vol I – Tomo XVIII – 2ª parte, pgs. 196-197*. See also Diniz, C.A; Souza, R.F. (2020).

moral, and civic education, and the English language. Developed countries provided the model for an ideal education system, especially the United States.

With the advent of the dictatorship, private schools, despite being a minority, established themselves as a model institution, with the *Instituto Francano de Ensino* (IFE) receiving significant attention from this media outlet. In technical education, the "*Júlio Cardoso*" Industrial School was the highlight; this level of education was always linked to the needs of industry. As for higher education, no program received as much attention as the *Faculdade de Direito*.⁹

The newspapers *O Aviso de Franca* and *O Francano*, in this regard, did not excel in their representation of the ideal education. They also promoted the idea of a renewing education that should prepare students for life, always in accordance with Christian and patriotic principles. Private education was also seen as efficient and of good quality, while the utilitarianism of technical education emerged as a priority. The city's intellectual elite emerged committed to the implementation of higher education, and the Schools of Law and Economics, recognized as municipal authorities, represented local modernization.¹⁰

The private sector, especially in secondary and higher education, would gain strength with the authoritarian government's public subsidies and insufficient state investment, becoming a model, operating like companies where profits should be prioritized. This also occurred in Franca:

A Model Institution - The *Instituto Francano de Ensino* (...) will receive numerous authorities, press, and radio stations today at 8 p.m. to present its *modern* facilities and current operations. Those who go there today will find a spacious, well-painted, well-lit building (almost all courses are held at night), equipped with comfortable, new desks, modern audiovisual equipment, and a young, dedicated faculty. (...) The IFE is on par with Franca's cultural *progress*. And it is also a just source of pride for our people. Its 1,200 students attest to the success of an educational project that is in tune with the vibrancy of Franca's culture [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 128, October 28, 1966, author's emphasis).¹¹

⁹ The articles cataloged in *Comércio da Franca* dealt with the following topics: 23 on the conflict between public and private sectors (early 1960s), 57 about the role of teachers, and 135 about students. 114 covered technical education, 264 about higher education, 311 about secondary education, 169 about literacy, and finally, 72 reports addressing celebrations, ceremonies, and tributes. The activities of the Education Department were also frequently discussed: public exams, specialization courses, teacher replacements, lack of vacancies, etc. We should note that brief notes in social or sports columns were not considered. Source: *Comércio da Franca* Newspaper Collection, 1960-1971.

¹⁰ The intellectual elite should be understood primarily as professors affiliated with local higher education institutions, newspaper editors, some political leaders, Freemasons, and a few businesspeople involved in the city's cultural and educational initiatives (Souza; Teixeira, 2015).

¹¹ Let's look at this other article that confirms this statement: "Franca will have, in 1965, a new and modern educational institution – Our city and this region will be able to count on another school, of state-of-the-art construction, starting in March of next year. The new school of the *Irmãos 'Jesus Maria José'*, in the *Estação* neighborhood, (...) Using modern and updated techniques, the following courses will be offered: Primary, Admissions, Secondary, and Normal. [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 556, October 31, 1964)." The construction of this school building was exempt from municipal taxes, as per bill no. 66/60, proposed by Councilman Delcídes Flaúsinio, which was approved in the first round of voting. Source: *Fundo Documental da Câmara Municipal. Livro de Atas do Plenário no.09, 12ª Ses.Extr., 23/dez/1960, p.277.*

We see that the standard of quality began to be linked to the technology of the school's facilities and the dedication and youth of its teachers. The "cultural progress of the city" was directly related to the model institution equipped with "modern facilities," meaning that the *new* and the *young* were presented as something strongly positive.

The term "*modern*," when applied to the pedagogical aspects and school facilities, was linked to the rationalizing tendencies of society, so that the emphasis fell on investment in technology to increase productivity and reduce costs. Let us see:

A new method of teaching modern mathematics, via television, is increasingly being used in primary education in the United States. (...) A test showed that children using PIA [*Progressive Iterative Approximation* – a method used in various fields of mathematics] learn mathematics three times faster than those using traditional methods. (Comércio da Franca, vol. no. 135, May 28, 1970)¹²

Therefore, *modern* education, as represented in local newspapers, should utilize advanced technology (television) and new facilities, seeking to achieve results in a shorter time and, therefore, more efficient results. Another prominent representation in local newspapers was the idea of industrial education associated with job security and guarantees. During this period, efforts were made to curb the surplus of higher education applicants by reducing the gaps between technical and postgraduate courses:

In two years, Industrial Education doubled the number of openings – (...) Students graduate with a mid-level technical diploma and are key players in industry. (...) By promoting the extraordinary increase in vocational courses, the government is collaborating with industry, providing it with the mid-level technicians it needs. (Comércio da Franca, vol. no. 126, June 16, 1965).

One of the priorities of *modern* education was industrial orientation, since in the modernization process of a society, industrialization represented an indicator of *progress*, in addition to being an essential factor in the process of capital accumulation. Thus, the valorization of this education aimed not only to curb the demand for higher education but also to provide a trained workforce for industrial work.

Another fact worth highlighting was the representation surrounding local higher education, especially municipal institutions that enjoyed great prestige in the city's newspapers, always having their activities well publicized. All print media presented this level of education as a symbol of civilization, capable of conferring the city the title of modern. This truly mobilized the intellectual, political, and financial elites of the period, creating a near-consensus around the idea that higher education would bring great benefits to the people of Franca:

¹² Source: Documentary Fund of the "José Chiachiri" Municipal Historical Museum. Collection of the newspaper *Comércio da Franca*, 1960-1971. English language teaching also gained momentum during this period, particularly due to the growth of North American influence in Brazil, which emphasized the utilitarianism surrounding language learning and its applicability in economic activities: "English Language Teaching – The success of the language courses run by the *Faculdade de Filosofia de Franca* by *Aliança Francesa* has led several students, apologists for the English language, to move toward establishing courses in our city in the language that immortalized Shakespeare. Indeed, English, being more applicable to economic activities, seems to be the preferred language among students. [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 127, April 14, 1966)."

Faculty Policies: 75% already subscribed! (...) Note: one million five hundred thousand cruzeiros in policies placed in three days is a truly spectacular result! The city is giving a magnificent demonstration of public spirit, collaborating with the Faculty Board and the Municipality in the work of consolidating our Law School. (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 551, May 24, 1961).

However, the benefits of higher education courses were limited to a small group, due to their cost, which burdened families' budgets with tuition payments. Even so, these courses yielded significant electoral dividends for city politicians who sought to defend the establishment and maintenance of these institutions:

Aid to the *Faculdade de Direito de Franca* – Article 1 - Aid of Cr\$3,000,000.00 is granted in the current fiscal year (...) This amendment (...) aims to grant aid to the Municipal Government of Franca for the maintenance of an educational institution that has provided such great benefits to the youth of my hometown. (...) Onofre Gosuen [sic] (*O Francano*, vol. no. 035, December 21, 1961).

The newspapers, therefore, primarily disseminated news about secondary and higher education, regardless of the government regime, catering to their readership. They also established a clientele relation with educational institutions, especially private ones, based on purchasing space in their newspapers to publicize their schools' activities, a trend accentuated by the authoritarian government. Let's look at the other end of the story: the representations of illiteracy in newspapers.

The Scourge of Illiteracy and the Relations of Dominance

The developmentalism, so prominent in the 1960s and 1970s with JK's "50 Years in 5" projects and the military's "Greater Brazil," was unable to reduce illiteracy rates at the same pace as economic expansion. In 1960, 39.05% of the Brazilian population had no schooling. Those who had completed some grade of primary school represented 51.71%, or over 90% of all school-age individuals. Ten years later, in 1970, the illiteracy rate had been reduced to 29.75%, but even so, approximately 85% of the population remained limited to elementary school.

The national paradox was reinforced: how could so many illiterate people be admitted into a nation that was rapidly industrializing? This question troubled sectors of the elite, who began to demand action regarding this evident "national shame." The main literacy campaigns took place at the extremes of the period analyzed: one of them in the early 1960s, One, developed with the "Paulo Freire" methodology, and the other, already in the early 1970s, during the military regime, was called MOBREAL (*Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização*).

The first movement's main focus was the fight for a truly popular and democratic public school system, harshly criticizing the conservative education system that maintained access to knowledge as a privilege in the country. MOBREAL, in turn, had the explicit objectives of increasing the number of voters (since illiterate people were barred from voting) and also training the workforce, aiming to regulate the labor market, keeping wages low with the large supply of minimally literate workers. Such measures met both the desires of the masses and the needs of industry, lending legitimacy to the State.

In Franca, these campaigns were promoted based on the same representation of illiteracy, which encompassed the idea of a repugnant *disease*, a *plague*, or a *social scourge*. Illiterates, generally rural migrants fleeing the hardships of the countryside, were portrayed as *useless* beings lacking the reading and writing skills necessary for the country's development. Let's see below:

Illiteracy, a National Scourge – As incredible as it may seem, the dramatic reality of the statistics: the population of Brazil between the ages of 7 and 14 amounts to ten million, in round numbers. This is the age, therefore, for primary school students. Well, only 5,500,000 are enrolled in the country's basic language courses, (...) In a country of illiterates (or a semi-literate minority), sumptuous buildings are built, large-scale industrialization is attempted, when we lack beans, rice, and meat... (...) There is no escaping this alternative: either we end illiteracy (as in the case of the leafcutter ant), or illiteracy will destroy Brazil, (...) [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 546, February 10, 1960).

Although the criticism of the national contrast was relevant, drawing parallels between the millions of illiterates and large industries, the representation constructed around illiteracy became a considerable burden placed on uneducated individuals, as we see above, compared to the leafcutter ant, a small and seemingly harmless insect, but which, in large numbers, caused significant losses in the country's production.

The fight against illiteracy was primarily driven by the idea that the higher the level of education, the higher an individual's income would be. Even though this idea was proven to be a fallacy, given that what we saw in Brazil was an inversion between income and education in the 1960s. While education levels rose, income declined (despite the significant *PIB* expansion), this idea was actually quite important during this period. Even the dissemination of the "Paulo Freire" method in Franca was motivated by this representation of the education/income relationship and the stereotype of the illiterate:

Literacy – Method: Paulo Freire – (...) About 40 million Brazilians in the darkness of ignorance, and what's worse, unable to solve their own problem, since they are marginalized from political life, prevented from expressing themselves at the polls. (...) The humiliation of illiteracy is no comfort for Brazil. It urgently needs to be eradicated. This is the method: Paulo Freire. (...) Euphoria in the neighborhoods: literacy students aged 20 to 78 at the Paulo Freire Course: (...) This visit provides motivation, that is, enlightens the illiterate about their improved social status once they have learned to read. (...) One woman (...) responded that she "wants to learn to read because not knowing how to read costs a lot of money." (...) Another said she wants to learn to read so she can learn to sew, since she is unable to pick a costume. [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 554, Jan. 28–Mar. 8, 1964).

The concept of education they promoted was quite utilitarian, associating years of study with a progressive increase in income: "learn to read so you can learn to sew..." The literacy of the younger generations was also presented as being of great benefit to the country:

School Funds – (...) The Elementary Education Department intends to launch a campaign, along the lines of the one launched last year, to raise funds for feeding poor students. And to this end, it hopes for the cooperation of all the good people of Franca, because contributing to the School Funds helps combat illiteracy, lifting hundreds of Brazilians from the darkness of ignorance who, in the future, will swell the ranks of citizens useful to our country (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 554, March 4, 1964).

The representation of illiteracy served dominant interests focused on maintaining existing social relations. The association of illiterate with *sick, useless, uneducated, uncivilized* and, above all, unfit for consumption, ended up contributing to causing embarrassment and a certain degree of demobilization of these individuals in the social environment (even in the fight for basic rights such as health and education), since this representation contained a strong discriminatory tone. The main target of this social discrimination, without a doubt, was the rural migrant, who, in Franca, was predominantly of Minas Gerais origin and expected to adapt to the *civilized* urban space reserved for citizens.¹³

Thus, the illiterate ended up being forced to work for low wages and live in precarious conditions, as society viewed them as inferior beings. This reinforced the notion that they should be treated as disabled and suffering from a terrible *disease*. However, little was done to help them escape this condition. Literacy figures from the 1960s and the MOBREAL campaign in the 1970s show that illiteracy was not eradicated among Brazilians, as the country's economic and political situation was ignored (Paiva, 2015).

In Franca, MOBREAL was widely celebrated by local newspapers, but literacy campaigns reportedly had different results depending on the region in which they were implemented:

Literacy in Franca: (...) The first meeting to discuss the installation of MOBREAL in Franca was held yesterday morning (...) Literacy will enjoy the enthusiasm of the population – Continuing its activities in this city, the MOBREAL Publicity Committee met yesterday afternoon at City Hall to prepare publicity to generate greater interest among the population, encouraging them to view the movement with optimism in the campaign to eradicate illiteracy in the city and rural areas. [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 137, August 8-15, 1970).

In the early 1970s, the same discourse about eradicating the “scourge of illiteracy” persisted. This time, it was no longer the left that was singing the chorus, but rather the military government, which saw the campaign as an excellent opportunity to legitimize itself among diverse social sectors and also in the face of pressure from developed countries. There is no doubt that the arbitrary repression of the military led, in various situations, to align the discourse of the national elites with that of the regime. This can be evidenced by this excerpt from an article:

¹³ According to Garcia (1996), the personal tragedies of migrants were sensationalized by newspapers to increase their circulation. He believes that they contributed to the formation of the stereotype of the Minas Gerais migrant, representing them as a risk to the city and therefore as a threat to society. Migrants were often associated with urban violence in newspapers, being treated as police cases.

MOBRAL – The important efforts of the Government of the Republic in all administrative areas, in the financial restructuring, (...) Now, with the laudable goal of ending illiteracy within ten years in Brazil, the Ministry of Education is laying the foundations of MOBRAL, (...) So, in light of this, we think with more sincerity and honesty, without the irony of other times, without the laughter of disbelief and disappointment: there is something great germinating under the blue sky of our homeland. There is something noble, which our enemies will never be able to destroy: true nationalism. (...) because true Brazilians are directing the destiny of this Nation. [sic] (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 370, 15/Aug/1970).

The study of this representation reveals one of the mechanisms used by the ruling classes to maintain inequalities in the country, through the massive dissemination of their discourse, which was based on framing their concerns as general issues. Thus, we can affirm that the representation of the fight against illiteracy, conveyed by Franca's newspapers, was part of the local modernization process, also characterized by the preservation of archaic structures of domination, since such campaigns were ways to consolidate the *progress* of the city, which had become industrialized (primarily through the footwear industry) on the shoulders of thousands of illiterate workers. For the dictatorship, MOBRAL served more as a legitimizing discourse of state power than as an effective process of literacy for the masses (Paiva, 2015).

The Construction of Stereotypes: Master and Disciples

We have seen that the development of representations must be anchored in everyday events and facts for them to gain social acceptance. In Franca, newspaper representations of the school world were drawn from the rapid expansion of the local education system. Thus, the stereotype of the teacher was shaped by the diverse values expected of this class of professionals, leading to debates about their role in society throughout the 1960s.

Let us remember that, during this period in Brazil's recent history, the primacy of technical and economic rationality established new relation of dependence and subordination, articulated through social practices of an industrial psychology and ideology, which profoundly affected the cultural industry and other spheres of social life, such as education. Thus, a separation between conception and execution and the standardization of knowledge emerged, devaluing critical intellectual work. From this point on, teachers were expected to become obedient civil servants, carrying out the orders of those, generally technocrats, considered creative and imaginative. Teachers' behavior should be controlled, made consistent and predictable, so that they would no longer be seen as intellectuals, just as their work would no longer be seen as such, generating demotivation within the profession (GIROUX, 1987).

The newspapers, in general, did not portray teachers as critical, reflective, and creative individuals for the development of a democratic society. Instead, they portrayed teachers as missionaries of Christian values serving the renewal of the world while preserving tradition. Thus, this social task, due to its importance, should be controlled to maintain order and hierarchy among classes; only then would be promoted social well-being. The article below well represents the concern with the teaching posture:

Teachers – A most noble mission is to transmit the truth to the minds. Professors, masters, and professors have this as their specific function. (...) The future responsibility of young people weighs heavily on what they receive in class. (...) From classes can emerge thieves, revolutionaries, atheists, vicious people of all kinds, or, on the contrary, men conscious of their duties, men of character, good, authentic Christian patriots. (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 368, December 7, 1968).

The teacher's role as a missionary committed to patriotic and Christian values was reinforced, especially in moments of critical social turmoil, with the growing organization of intellectual, proletarian, and student sectors who made demands and demanded immediate changes. It is important to understand that the patriotism demanded of teachers, also in Franca, by the authoritarian regime and which received significant support from various sectors of the ruling classes was as follows:

Civic Spirit - When the country needs it, the benefactor appears. (...) In this historic moment, the Brazilian nation needs us. The President of the Republic, Marshal Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, appealed to all Brazilians, especially the wealthy, to collaborate with the Federal Government in the work of Brazil's economic and financial salvation. (...) We, the financially disadvantaged, cannot stand idly by and watch events unfold. We need to act too. That's why the teachers at the *Instituto de Educação Torquato Caleiro* decided to offer the Federal Government a day's work to help the nation. (...) After all, let's honor the plate we eat from. (...) (*O Francano*, vol. no. 181, April 23, 1964).

We see that the representation of the teacher can also be observed when this category was called upon to give their testimony of support for the March 1964 movement. The offer to the State of a day's work by these teachers was loaded with great symbolic value, since it was the most prestigious category in the city (educators) of the IETC, the first public secondary school), declaring their support for the new regime. Military coercion aimed to maintain the established social order, imposing a "civic spirit," which represented the abdication of the right to participate, total submission. This was what was expected of teachers; their actions in the classroom were to be monitored. Even before the military regime, this representation was already widespread in local newspapers. Once again, the image of sacrifice is associated with teaching:

Nonsense (...) I cannot understand why a soldier in the Public Force understands more than a primary school teacher. (...) Only out of love for the profession can a primary school teacher carry their cross. The sacrifice, struggle, and detachment of this noble class would be incomprehensible if it were not endowed with resignation and strong will. (sic) (*O Francano*, vol. no. 181, June 28, 1964).¹⁴

¹⁴ “*O Professor 'Herói Anônimo'* - (...) The Teaching Profession: the noblest of classes does not make a 'profession of poverty', although its mission truly has something priestly. (*O Francano*, vol. no. 037, May 30, 1963)”. And further: “A sacrificed class, that of teachers is one of the worst paid. Our teachers, in general, should take a vow of poverty. (sic) (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 546, February 10, 1960)”.

As we can see, the representation of the teacher remained associated with the image of the priest willing to sacrifice ("carry his cross"), all in the name of his important mission, despite having no material means to fulfill it. Thus, this representation presupposed a straightforward and socially immobilizing behavior, since the teaching task was greater, for example, than the need to fight for better wages.

The image of the teacher carried contradictions: despite his sacrifice, he enjoyed great social prestige, which was embodied in elected public office, generating social and economic power when articulated in administrative bodies geared towards the interests of specific local groups. The celebration of teachers was present in all the written press, with prominent coverage on their pages: "Celebrations on Teacher's Day (...) At 7:30 a.m. Mass for the souls of deceased teachers; (...) [sic]" (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 128, July 14, 1966).

It is important to emphasize that by the late 1960s and early 1970s, this image of teachers, presented as masters and missionaries, was no longer unanimous. The first representations were emerging that linked them to the failure of the education system, blaming them for the low results and inefficiency revealed by educational statistics:

Outdated teachers (...) The news about the test given to primary school teachers for admission to the municipal education service is frightening. Only 30% of applicants passed. (...) This is not to say that all primary school teachers are ignorant or lazy. But the truth is that a large majority have fallen into a rut. And it's very difficult to escape. Furthermore, it's also known that the cultural level of primary school teachers is quite low. (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 369, March 1, 1969).

It's possible to perceive the highly discriminatory nature surrounding the role of primary school teachers in particular, who were considered *ignorant* and *lazy*, even if the text stated otherwise. The country's current era of major structural changes demanded that teaching contribute its share to the modernization process, but this was based on the maintenance of privileges. Thus, control over teachers should be expanded, with the bureaucratization of the educational administrative structure, which would further disqualify the teaching profession, with the insertion of many professionals without adequate training into the job market, stifling the most critical functions of teaching, especially after the 1964 (Silva, 1996). Thus, it became quite convenient for the State to blame teachers for the failure of its own educational policy, while simultaneously avoiding investment in education, therefore, it would be necessary to closely monitor the *subversion* of the category.

But let's leave aside the figure of the teacher and investigate the representation of the student stereotype. The entire 1960s was marked by the political maturation of students. The year 1968 can be understood as the timeframe for the brutal emergence of a set of social phenomena, when culture and politics were strongly linked. In 1968, Brazilian universities had 278,000 students, representing only 0.3% of the country's population. However, these students were able to catalyze popular discontent against the dictatorship (after several years of repression). This sentiment was growing among sectors of the middle class (where most of these students originated), and the student movement ended up becoming a channel for the underground left (*PCB*, *PC do B*, *AP*, etc.) that questioned the 1964 institutional model. The protests were always repressed, even when the central theme dealt with issues internal to universities, such as education reform (Poerner, 1995).

The dictatorial policy that aimed to curb the demand for higher education did not prevent the growth of expectations for schooling among young people (especially those from the middle class), causing significant and rapid expansion in the number of students in various educational institutions, especially in academic/humanistic secondary schools and traditional faculties, such as those in the humanities (law, philosophy, etc.). Government officials' attempts to direct them toward a more technical-professional education ended up being unsuccessful, as they were unable to maintain effective student control. In the context of Franca, Silva (2020, p. 67) researched the student movement:

During the 1960s, the city's students were organized into student unions, the UESF, an Academic Choir, three Academic Centers, four Literary Academies, a Center for Geographic Studies, two Science Clubs, a Chemistry Club, a History and Geography Club, two Academic Athletic Associations, two Alumni Associations, a Scientific Center, a Journalism Department, a Film Department, a Theater Group, a University Theater, and a unit of the CPC (Popular Culture Center). (...) Franca's students were, for the most part, part of the middle classes.

Local newspapers adopted an ambiguous stance toward the student world, publishing representations of students that linked them to both the idea of dynamism and subversion. The newspaper *Comércio da Franca* was the print media outlet that most championed student activities, giving its columns space to various groups of young people mobilized in the city's high school and higher education institutions. Between 1960 and 1971, this newspaper dedicated 135 articles to the student world, while 57 articles focused on issues related to teachers.¹⁵

In all three periodicals, the ideal student was portrayed as a dynamic individual, to whom the future would belong. However, this quality was emphasized when applied to school activities, becoming a desired behavior within the walls of the school: "Students – The student's strict duty is to study. Precious hours of his life are dedicated to his education at school. If he spends them in idleness and disorder, he will never be a good student." (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 369, February 8, 1969).

This representation of the student was reinforced, above all, in times of crisis when the legitimacy of government authorities was questioned or during the intensification of military repression, beginning in 1964:

Students and the Revolution – In Brazil, as in other countries, there was a major communist infiltration in all sectors, especially education. (...) In the student sector, in recent years, there has been a total infiltration of communists into unions, student associations, associations, and other student organizations, all under the complacent eyes of certain federal authorities. They provoked strikes, riots, indiscipline, all with the aim of creating a climate of hostility and unrest, which hindered the country's progress and was leading us toward anarchy. (...) And just as the government fell, so did the assumptions that students should interfere in the nation's political life. (sic) (*O Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 555, May 1964).

¹⁵ This relation can also be seen in the city's other two newspapers, but to a lesser extent than in *Comércio da Franca*. In *O Aviso de Franca* devoted 10 articles to teacher issues and 18 to student issues, while *O Francano* devoted 14 articles to teachers and 15 to students. Source: *Fundo Documental do Museu Histórico Municipal "José Chiachiri". Coleção dos jornais Comércio da Franca, O Aviso de Franca e O Francano, 1960-1971.*

Another factor highlighted in the idealized student profile portrayed by local newspapers was linked to the Christian traditions of the Brazilian people, an explicit way of combating the spread of communist ideas among young people:

Student Elections – (...) The same ideal must persist in the minds of young students today, electing to their unions and associations capable, enterprising, and, above all, honest individuals with a clear and Christian conscience, so that they can represent them with dignity, thus elevating the name of Franca's student body, bringing it prestige, respect, and respect. (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. 193, October 7, 1961).

However, newspapers referred to student affairs ambiguously, and even when they gained significant media attention, they were always approached with some trepidation. The periodicals sought to intervene in their issues in a balanced manner, that is, distancing themselves from the chaos that, in other words, posed a threat to social order, and thus serving as an example to other social sectors. The demonstration would be fair if it were conducted in an orderly and peaceful manner: "Peaceful general strike launched at the *Inst. Francano de Ensino* – About eight hundred students (...) launched a general strike yesterday at 6 p.m. to protest the increase in tuition fees at that school... [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. 546, March 17, 1960)."

However, the main target of the newspapers' criticism was student organizations, whether local or national: "*UNE* needs to prove its sincerity (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 195, May 25, 1963)." And also:

Student Unrest – Young people from Franca have never stopped attending classes to carry out public agitation. (...) It seems that now this tranquility will be disturbed by emissaries of the former UEE, (...) This is a threat that cannot be underestimated. For the most part, Philosophy students do not wish to participate in the UEE movements (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 131, November 9, 1968).

We see that student organization was quite uncomfortable for the dictatorship and its allies, despite being limited to a small segment of society. The city's local student representative bodies were closely *monitored*, as student mobilization was a concern, even in areas far from the centers of power. Thus, they sometimes flattered these organizations, sometimes punished them:

Franca students unhappy with school fees – an increase of approximately 40% from 1960 to 1961 – will demand a reduction in college tuition (...) The student associations, we were informed, are seeking to join forces to present themselves, before local institutions, as a true expression of the thinking of the entire class (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. No. 551, January 18, 1961). (...) "The *UESF* will only have a reason to exist if it uses the money it receives wisely" [sic] (*O Aviso de Franca*, vol. no. 133, October 24, 1969).

The above shows that the press sought to introduce elements of doubt about the representativeness of local student organizations. Other organizations, such as Student Unions, Centers, and Academic Directories, also had significant coverage in the newspapers. The *Gazeta Estudantil* was a supplementary supplement to the newspaper *Comércio da Franca*, which for some time circulated monthly under the responsibility of the “Castro Alves” Student Union, covering a variety of topics related to the city's secondary and higher education institutions.

The activities of the Academic Directories were also closely monitored by the press, which closely participated in their affairs. See the article below:

University status does not mean an ‘institutional act’ – The ‘notice’ from the President of the *DA* does not manages to hide an inquisitorial scent, so much so that it prescribes: all those approved in the entrance exams ‘will be subject to hazing’ and ‘must obey the following prescriptions’... And there they come: direct participation in the hazing, mandatory haircut ‘in the style indicated by the Directory’ (sic), use of berets provided by the *D.A.*, participation in the public parade, in addition to a fine of ten thousand *cruzeiros* in case of refusing the haircut... This newspaper has given all possible cooperation to local student bodies, whatever their level, whenever they need publicity. (...) Academics should think more about studies, expanding libraries, producing handouts, encouraging a true ‘university spirit’, demanding that professors prepare prior programs and provide bibliographic sources, and think less about ‘hazing’, dances, and banalities. [sic] (*Comércio da Franca*, vol. no. 127, February 3, 1966).

We see that the expected behavior of students should be restricted to academics, while student participation outside the classroom could not be tolerated unless it followed the rules of the political game controlled by the privileged classes. Therefore, with the advent of the civil-military dictatorship, the “witch hunt” intensified among students. The unrest within the student community, with state interventions, revealed the entire dispute centered on cultural domination.

Final Considerations

It is possible to conclude that the construction undertaken by the city's newspapers around the representation of the categories of education, illiteracy, teachers, and students aimed to contribute to the establishment of cultural domination at the local level, but also expressed the hegemonic proposal adopted by the military regime, supported by significant sectors of privileged groups who, above all, expected the maintenance of the social order. Thus, much of the news published by the Franca press reproduced the discourse of the mainstream national press, as Capelato (1988) revealed when studying its *modus operandi*.

We emphasize, however, that the ideas disseminated around this local educational universe acquired different meanings amid the accelerated expansion and organization of the education system in Franca, so that the constructions undertaken by the Franca press underwent diverse reworking. In the symbolism conveyed by the written press to Franca society, we enumerate the following:

1.) schooling was presented as an essential condition for social modernization; however, the ideal education conveyed should be one committed to professionalization, focused on the imperatives of capital reproduction, and faithful to the democratic and Christian traditions of the Brazilian people;

2.) illiteracy was elevated to the status of a repugnant *disease*, reinforcing the social exclusion of the illiterate, especially rural migrants who became cheap labor in shoe factories. These migrants were also attracted by the expectation of access to education in urban centers, which rarely fully materialized;

3.) the teacher was seen as a missionary *priest* in the service of "human salvation"; However, by the end of the 1960s, it began to be blamed for the failure of education, while students were portrayed as dynamic but should be concerned with school and the classroom, not with matters outside the institution.

The newspapers served as important testimonies for understanding the interplay of dominant interests during the period analyzed here, as they revealed aspirations and tensions stemming from the working classes, present between the lines and in the silences of these same newspapers, which, for the most part, acted as representatives of the hegemonic discourse aligned with the national authoritarian landscape.

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