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THE DENYING OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: DOMINATION AND RESISTANCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the relations between the denial of the right to education and human rights violations. Taking Mozambique as case study, we point out the influences of the extractive industries over education policies and the social conflicts resulting from their activities. We address: the destruction and restructuring of educational institutions according to the interests of transnational corporations; the monopoly on generating knowledge about Africa; and the private appropriation of knowledge and information by corporations and governments. We emphasize that these issues hinder people's capacity of social control over the corporations that threaten their lives. We highlight the importance of the access to scientific knowledge and information in the struggles of the grassroot movements in the country.

The purpose of this work is to analyze the relations between the denial of the right to education and human rights violations. Taking Mozambique as case study, we point out the influences of the extractive industry over education policies and the social conflicts resulting from their

activities. The work highlights the importance of the access to scientific knowledge and information in the struggles of the grassroots movements in the country.

The research was based on the method of historical-dialectical materialism and the framework of critical pedagogy. We carried out bibliographical research and documental analyzes¹.

In Mozambique, the economy is based on extractive industry of mineral commodities, which is organized into megaprojects of development led by transnational corporations associated with local elites. Megaprojects cause numerous social and environmental damages: they operate with tax exemption²; they do not comply with regulations to hire local workers³; they promote deceleration of domestic production; prevent industrialization; cause large-scale environmental damage; promote land grabbing and removal of families from their traditional territory.

In addition, transnational corporations exert strong influence on the definition of education policies.

In Mozambique, 30% of the state budget comes from external resources of loans and grants⁴. The autonomy to formulate social policies is quite reduced, since public spending is guided according to donor agencies agenda, which largely follows corporate interests.

We argue that the educational agenda of transnational corporations in Mozambique promotes: the destruction and restructuring of educational institutions according to corporate interests; the monopoly in the generation of knowledge about the country; and private appropriation of knowledge and information.

The articulation of these strategies produces disastrous effects, since it removes from the population the right to access higher educational levels, above the rudimentary. By impeding the development of scientific knowledge and its appropriation by the people, it perpetuates

1 WB, IMF, OECD, UN, Mozambican government and NGOs.

2 C. N. Castel-Branco, *Refletindo Sobre Acumulação, Porosidade e Industrialização em Contexto de Economia Extrativa*, in “Desafios para Moçambique”, Maputo, IESE, 2013.

3 O. Mandlate *Capacitação das Empresas Nacionais e Conteúdo Local de Megaprojectos em Moçambique*. In: BRITO, L.; CASTEL-BRANCO, C.N.; CHICHAVA, S.; FORQUILHA, S.; FRANCISCO, A. (Orgs.). *Desafios para Moçambique 2015*. Maputo: IESE, 2015.

4 República de Moçambique, *Coordenação e Eficácia da Ajuda em Moçambique*. Ministério da Planificação e Desenvolvimento, 2013.

precarious conditions of life and impedes the sovereignty of peoples over their own destiny.

THE DESTRUCTION AND RESTRUCTURING OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Mozambique was a Portuguese colony until 1975, when Mozambicans won the fight for liberation and adopted a socialist regime.

In the early 1980s, the good quality of the public health system gained recognition from the World Health Organization (WHO), the access to school was expanded and new textbooks were produced locally. Despite all its problems and criticisms, the revolutionary government of FRELIMO achieved the goal of reducing illiteracy from 94% in 1975 to 72% in 1980⁵. However, the policies to destabilize the socialist government led to sixteen years of civil war resulting in one million deaths (in a population of thirteen million people) and eighteen billion dollars in economic losses⁶. The impacts were brutal: 45% of primary schools closed, 400 teachers dead or injured; 191 rural health posts destroyed and 687 closed, affecting 46% of the public health network⁷. Human and economic losses set the country in a condition of extreme poverty and dependence on external aid which was conditional on adherence to the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reform package.

During the 1980s, the WB and IMF imposed reduction of public investment in education, adoption of school fees, prioritization of primary education in relation to secondary, reduction of teachers' wages, increase in the number of students per teacher and narrowing teacher training curriculum⁹. The WB also recommended that educational spending must be conducted strictly in line with market demand.

Opposing the socialist policies, the WB discouraged investments in

5 Republic of Mozambique, Instituto Nacional de Estatística. Relatório Final Do Inquérito ao Orçamento Familiar – IOF2014/15. Maputo 2015.

6 J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: Who calls the shots?* Indiana University Press, Bloomington (Indiana) 1991.

7 *ibid.*

8 W. Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*, Zed Books, London 1994.

9 WORLD BANK 1981, 1987, 1989.

technological development in Africa arguing that free market would promote technology transfer.

In the 1990s, 'Education for All' (EFA) policies were criticized for draining all resources for rudimentary level of schooling promoting under-funding of higher education and research institutions. Brock-Utne¹⁰ points out that EFA led to the destruction of the Institute for Curriculum Development in Mozambique.

In 2004, the WB granted loans for the primary school reform. The main actions were: formal abolition of school fees, which were still informally charged to families because of low school funding; decentralization of financial management to the level of school; restructuring of curriculum, with automatic approval¹¹.

Problems in school infrastructure are one of the population biggest complaints. At national level, 44% of families pointed to the lack of school furniture and 29.4% complained of poor conditions of school facilities¹².

Despite the curriculum with automatic approval, few students enter the upper primary school. After ten years of education reform, Mozambique had 11,735 schools offering lower primary education and only 5,377 offering upper primary¹³. Enrollment in the upper primary did not reach 1 million students in a population of about 29 million people, where 12 million were school age children. By 2014, the country had only 762 schools offering lower secondary education and only 342 schools offered upper secondary¹⁴.

The school shortage is added to the control of the extractive industries over educational content. In vocational education, its influence is promoted by the WB agreements.

In 2004, the vocational education reform was established by a credit

10 B. Brock-Utne, *Whose Education for All? The Recolonization of the African Mind*, Falmer Press, New York 2000.

11 L. Fox, L. Santibañez L., V Nguyen and P. André, *Education Reform in Mozambique: Lessons and Challenges*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / THE WORLD BANK. Washington 2012.

12 Republic of Mozambique, *ibid*.

13 UNESCO, *Relatório Anual 2015 – Moçambique*, UNESCO, Paris 2015.

14 *ibid*.

agreement with the World Bank¹⁵. According to WB documents, vocational education offered in public institutions was inefficient because it was overloaded with academic subjects and had little connections with industry.

Thus, the vocational education reform was guided by the following principles¹⁶: active participation of industry and companies in the management of vocational education institutions; standardized and result-based training system; curriculum in modules, with external evaluation; student career plan.

The illiteracy rate is around 45%¹⁷. In rural areas, where extractive industries are established, illiteracy affects 59% of population¹⁸. Mozambique is a linguistically heterogeneous country, where there are at least twenty-three different languages¹⁹. Proficiency in the official language (Portuguese) is fundamental so that citizens can understand and fight for their rights.

The restructuring of the educational system had the purpose of increasing the number of certified workers, spreading the values and behaviors required by labor market and providing them with rudimentary skills. However, the expectation of employability generated in the students is not matched. Only 12% of the population is in a salaried situation and much of the population practices subsistence farming²⁰.

Since the land in Mozambique is state owned, subsistence farming is facing situations of great vulnerability and families are being threatened by extractive industries.

15 World Bank, Skills Development in Mozambique: Issues and Options. 2004.

16 WORLD BANK, Project Appraisal Document on A Proposed Credit in the Amount of Sdr 20.8 Million (Us\$30 Million Equivalent) to The Government of Mozambique for A Technical and Vocational Education And Training Project. February 21, 2006.

17 Republic of Mozambique, *ibid*.

18 REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE. Instituto Nacional de Estatística. Inquérito ao Orçamento Familiar-2014/15. Relatório do Módulo da Força de Trabalho. Maputo 2016.

19 Firmino, *A situação do português no contexto multilíngue de Moçambique*. Anais do II Simpósio Mundial de Estudos de Língua Portuguesa. A língua portuguesa: Ultrapassar fronteiras, juntar culturas. Universidade de Évora, 6 a 11 de Outubro de 2009.

20 L. Fox et al, *ibid*.

EFFECTS OF THE MONOPOLY OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

The barriers to school access impact national scientific production, which contributes to increase the situation of dependency. A dramatic consequence is the limited capacity of monitoring the environmental, economic and social impacts of the extractive industry.

As it can be identified, megaprojects of extractive industries do not contribute to the reduction of unemployment and poverty. Between 2003 and 2012, high GDP growth (7.5% per year) was accompanied by a reduction in per capita food production²¹; increased dependence on food imports; increase in the population classified below the poverty line (54.7% in 2009)²²; and high unemployment rate (22.6% in 2013). Despite the high unemployment rate, megaprojects are encouraged to invest in the hiring of foreign labor²³.

Marshall²⁴ states that the construction of the facilities of the Brazilian mining company Vale in Mozambique employed a large number of Philippine workers as cheap labor, as well as Brazilian workers. Thus, Mozambican workers do not benefit from the few employment opportunities and low wages granted by mining operations.

Instead of promoting development, these companies are accused of human rights violations. Some of the violations practiced by Vale are land grabbing without consulting communities, lack of transparency in actions, non-compliance with agreements such as providing access to water, fertile land, energy, compensation, transportation, health and education to resettled families²⁵.

Another example of violation of rights is the *PROSAVANA* project, which is the result of cooperation between Mozambique, Brazil and

21 C. N. Castel-Branco, *Refletindo Sobre Acumulação, Porosidade e Industrialização em Contexto de Economia Extrativa*, in “Desafios para Moçambique”, IESE, Maputo 2013.

22 IMF, Republic of Mozambique: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2011.

23 Banco Mundial, *Eliminando as Barreiras para o Desenvolvimento Inclusivo: Sumário do Relatório Econômico de Moçambique*, Banco Mundial, Washington 2010.

24 J. Marshall, *A gigante mineradora brasileira Vale: por trás da imagem de solidariedade Sul-Sul*. Tensões mundiais: Revista do Observatório das Nacionalidades, v. 10, n. 18 e 19, EdUE-CE, Fortaleza 2014.

25 Mutzenberg, *Protestos sociais em Moçambique: Uma agenda de pesquisa*. Civitas, n.1, v.14. Porto Alegre 2014.

Japan for the ‘agricultural development of Mozambique’²⁶. Despite the governments’ promises that it would promote technology transfer that would benefit local farmers, the farmers report lack of transparency, lack of community consultation, land grabbing, intimidation and co-optation of community leaderships²⁷.

The lack of access to information about the megaprojects is a problem largely denounced by communities. In addition, megaprojects are conducted by multinationals from different regions which imposes on the communities the need to know different languages in order to look for information.

Important documents of public interest, such as the World Bank and IMF reports, are available only in English. In a context of under-funding of universities and research institutions, the WB, IMF and OECD reports have become some of the scarce data sources on the country. They exercise, thus, monopoly on the production of knowledge.

During the ‘Permanent People’s Court’²⁸, civil society organizations denounced that information on megaprojects is kept confidential. In Mozambique, civil society took legal action against governments evolved in *PROSAVANA* because of reluctance to provide information about the project.

The private appropriation of knowledge articulates to violations of human rights that hinder community actions in defense of their ways of life. It is a strategy of coercion exercised since colonial times and is still being implemented.

CONCLUSION

The destruction of educational and research institutions, the private appropriation of knowledge and the monopoly over knowledge

26 Agência Brasileira De Cooperação (ABC); EMBRAPA. Documento JBPP/PCJ/008-JBM. ProSAVANA- TEC, 2011.

27 Classen, 2013; Unac and Grain, 2015; Aguiar and Pacheco, 2016.

28 Permanent Peoples’ Court. Transnational Corporations in Southern Africa. Document of the meeting of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal held in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 17 to 18 August 2017 to systematize community denunciations against transnational corporations in Southeast Africa. Available at: http://aidc.org.za/download/campaign_to_dismantle_corporate_power/PPT_JHB_August-2017-Final-Version-.pdf.

production have direct impacts on the capacity of prevention and control of diseases caused by industrial pollution of air, soil and water. The national ability to produce knowledge that contributes to improve the population quality of life becomes deeply undermined.

The lack of data on the impacts of megaprojects makes denunciations difficult and social control over public investments becomes unfeasible. In addition, the democratic possibilities of social participation in public sphere are reduced.

In Mozambique, some grassroots movements struggle against megaprojects and in defense of access to information and knowledge. Some examples are the 'International Articulation of the Affected by Vale' and the trinational articulation that generated the movement 'No to PROSAVANA'.

These resistance movements promote and share technical knowledges about the laws and the legal apparatus; they encourage systematization of traditional knowledge; they build and strength organizational strategies of struggle; and they advance in the internationalism of popular struggles. In this way, we argument that the struggles for the right to life are not dissociated from the struggles for the right to scientific knowledge and critical education.

According to critical pedagogy framework, knowledge is not neutral²⁹. Throughout the history of humanity, scientific knowledge has been developed from innumerable forms of exploitation of the people and the environment while traditional knowledges were usurped and annihilated.

The workers' alienation from scientific knowledge and the private appropriation of knowledge by the capitalist class constitute an important way of maintaining domination.

In this sense, we defend scientific knowledge as peoples' right in the construction of critical understanding about capitalism and strengthening of resistances to this system that threatens life.

29 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Continuum, New York, 2000.

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