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History of the Concept of University Extension: Normative and Political Aspects of Brazilian University Action in Society

História do Conceito de Extensão Universitária: aspectos normativos e políticos da atuação universitária brasileira na sociedade

Wagner Feloniuk*

Abstract: The concept of Brazilian University Extension was introduced through international influences, but by breaking away from its initial assistentialist aspect, it became consolidated with local ideas as one of the three fundamental pillars of the Brazilian university, indissociably linked with teaching and research. Extension is defined as a dialogical process that aims to promote a transformative interaction between the university and society, with impact in society and in student education, preferably interdisciplinary and interprofessional. Since the Constitution of 1988, extension has been formally recognized and integrated into the curriculum of higher education institutions, culminating in the requirement that 10% of the course load be dedicated to extension activities. This trajectory reflects a continuous pursuit of connecting academic knowledge with social demands, democratizing access to knowledge, and contributing to the social and scientific development of the country. Despite the lack of financial resources and structuring, extension practice is the main means of contact between the university and the Brazilian society.

Keywords: Concept of University Extension; Indissociability between Teaching, Research, and Extension; Higher Education in the Constitution of 1988; Social Impact of the University.

* Tenured Professor of Constitutional Law in the International Relations Undergraduate Course (2019) and Permanent Professor in the Postgraduate Program in History at the Federal University of Rio Grande (FURG). Doctorate (2013-2016), master's (2012-2013), LLM (2011) and undergraduate (2006-2010) in Law at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Postdoctoral fellow at Mediterranea International Center for Human Rights Research, Università degli Studi Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria/Italy (2021). Research Project Coordinator: Observatory of the Brazilian Judiciary System. Researcher of Capes projects: The formation of normative orders at the international level, Nucleus of Studies in Public Policies and Opinion. Organizer of the Lecture Cycles on International Relations/FURG, Law/UFRGS, PPGH/FURG and History and Law/ANPUH, of the Law and Culture Congress (2014-2022) and coordinator of the series of scientific books Law, History & Philosophy. Editor of the Journal of the Historical and Geographical Institute of Rio Grande do Sul and of the Brazilian Journal of History & Social Sciences. Member of the National Association of History, National Council for Research and Graduate Studies in Law, Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors, Historical and Geographical Institute of Rio Grande do Sul, ST History and Law of ANPUH/RS.

Resumo: O conceito de Extensão Universitária Brasileira foi introduzido a partir de influências internacionais, mas rompendo com o caráter assistencialista inicial, consolidou-se com ideias locais como um dos três pilares fundamentais da universidade brasileira, articulando-se de maneira indissociável com o ensino e a pesquisa. A extensão é definida como um processo dialógico, que visa promover uma interação transformadora entre a universidade e a sociedade, com impacto social e na formação dos alunos, preferencialmente interdisciplinar e interprofissional. A partir da Constituição de 1988, a extensão foi formalmente reconhecida e integrada ao currículo das instituições de ensino superior, culminando na exigência de que 10% da carga horária dos cursos seja dedicada a atividades extensionistas. A trajetória reflete uma busca contínua por conectar o conhecimento acadêmico às demandas sociais, democratizando o acesso ao conhecimento e contribuindo para o desenvolvimento social e científico do país. Apesar da falta de recursos financeiros e de estruturação, a prática extensionista é o principal meio de contato da universidade com a sociedade brasileira.

Palavras-Chave: Conceito de Extensão Universitária; Indissociabilidade entre Ensino, Pesquisa e Extensão; Educação Superior na Constituição de 1988; Impacto Social da Universidade.

Introduction

University extension is the third avenue of action for universities in Brazil. For centuries, the university has had two main functions: to teach and to research. The Brazilian development of the concept of extension integrates the university into its social environment. Extension aims to address socially relevant issues, support public policies, and educate individuals external to the university. Extension constitutes the university's engagement with society.

The origins of Brazilian extensions are foreign, coming from the United States and Europe. However, this origin is essentially assistencialist, developed in the early 20th century with few theoretical definitions. Being assistencialist is not necessarily negative; there is significant importance in the establishment of university hospitals,

legal aid, and courses that disseminate scientific knowledge. The proposal from other countries has the potential to enhance living conditions, especially for economically vulnerable populations.

However, especially with the discussion of the university's role and under the influence of Paulo Freire, synthesized in the book "*Extention or Communication?*" ("*Extensão ou comunicação?*"), the concept of Brazilian university extension was expanded and considered within the context of the university itself. Moving away from initial experiences in which it was a one-way path, with knowledge flowing from the university to society, there was a shift towards a dialogical integration with those involved in extension but external to the university environment as a conception. This integration involves the knowledge at hand: it no longer remains solely created within the university but aims to address known social issues through dialogue and the existing knowledge on both sides, from the university and society.

With all the progress made since the 1970s, in a conceptualization that has been developed for over fifty years, extension in Brazil has been constructed as the main path of action outside the university walls. Its recognition, having the same hierarchy as teaching and research in higher education, as stipulated in the Constitution of 1988, further opened pathways and allowed for the structuring of comprehensive public policies aimed at this development. The participation is growing in Brazil, albeit suffering with a continuous lack of financial resources. By 2022, over 100 thousand projects were active. Today, 10% of the course load in all higher education courses in the country must be conducted in the form of extension.

This is the trajectory depicted in this article. It shows how the concept has evolved over time and, consequently, how extension has moved towards an increasingly solidified status as the primary means of university action in societal issues. It aims to incorporate all extension concepts established by law in Brazilian history, along with the key definitions provided in doctrinal production, particularly in the Forum of Pro-Rectors, creating a text that chronicles the normative and conceptual changes in extension over time.

Concept of extension between the early 20th century and 1964

The history of Brazilian education has been concerned with student movements at least since their involvement against the French Invasion in 1710 and the actions of the Minas Gerais Conspiracy (*Inconfidência Mineira)* in 1788. Studies focus on the participation of students in political movements, assuming commitments to societal demands. Some authors associate these movements with an initial concept of extension specific to a period so distant, predating the first Brazilian universities. This is an exercise carried out by Sousa in his significant dissertation focusing on the history of Brazilian extension (Sousa, 1995, 41-44). However, there is a very tenuous connection to the term "extension", which was not used at that time. It is preferable to assert that the concept of extension begins its trajectory in Brazil from the late 19th century.

One can speak of extension, impacting the theme's development in the country, by connecting Brazil with external events from the late 19th century. In 1871, the University of Cambridge had activities to serve vulnerable communities and engage in assistentialist activities – courses in literature, sciences, economics, for those without access to higher education. Similarly, in 1890, universities in European countries mirrored the English model – Germany, Belgium, France, Italy. The same trend occurred in another location, the United States, at the University of Chicago, supported by the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, which since 1890 provided services mainly in agricultural areas, disseminating knowledge and bringing science to the wider public.

Brazilian literature sees a connection between these activities and the development of the Brazilian concept. It was the extension in an assistentialist-oriented sense being promoted outside of Brazil, in a manner that would soon be adopted here as well. Such activities took place in European universities long before, with examples dating back to their inception, but the ones mentioned above are typically narrated in Brazilian doctrine when discussing extension and its beginnings (Miguens Jr; Celesste).

Various examples of assistentialist-oriented actions in Brazil can be found from this point onward. In 1909, the People's University of Manaus (*Universidade*

Popular de Manaus) conducted courses and open conferences on social movements and agricultural development for the public. In 1911, the Free People's University of São Paulo (*Universidade Popular Livre de São Paulo)* also offered courses, in an initiative that would continue for several years. Similar initiatives took place in Rio de Janeiro and Lavras as well. Years later, but of significant importance, the Viçosa Higher School of Agriculture and Veterinary (*Escola Superior de Agricultura e Veterinária de Viçosa)*, starting in 1926, organized an extensive system of visits, bulletin publications, and support for farmers, even creating Farmer's Week (Kochhann, 2017, p. 547-548) (Miguens Jr; Celesste, p. 8-10).

In the context of Latin America, doctrine mentions, in another aspect of conceptual construction, the Manifesto of the Students of the University of Córdoba *(Universidade de Córdoba)* in 1918. This manifesto took place within the framework of a university reform. It involved a strong movement for student participation in university and social life, the alteration of faculty behavior, and the promotion of political engagement. A passage follows below, illustrating this connection between external social demands and internal student demands within the university:

> *La autoridad en un hogar de estudiantes, no se ejercita mandando, sino sugiriendo y amando: Enseñando. Si no existe una vinculación espiritual entre el que enseña y el que aprende, toda enseñanza es hostil y de consiguiente infecunda. Toda la educación es una larga obra de amor a los que aprenden. Fundar la garantía de una paz fecunda en el artículo conminatorio de un reglamento o de un estatuto es, en todo caso, amparar un régimen cuartelario, pero no a una labor de Ciencia. Mantener la actual relación de gobernantes a gobernados es agitar el fermento de futuros trastornos. Las almas de los jóvenes deben ser movidas por fuerzas espirituales. Los gastados resortes de la autoridad que emana de la fuerza no se avienen con lo que reclama el sentimiento y el concepto moderno de las universidades. El chasquido del látigo sólo puede rubricar el silencio de los inconscientes o de los cobardes. La única actitud silenciosa, que cabe en un instituto de Ciencia es la del que escucha una verdad o la del que experimenta para crearla o comprobarla* (Barros, 1918).

Therefore, external examples begin to impact Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century, both from Europe and the United States. In Latin America, there is a context of heightened politically engaged activity among university students in several countries, although it does not specifically address extension as an element, it would inevitably merge with extension: the university fostering social change.

Although these antecedents date back several decades, the formal use of the word "extension" in Brazilian university regulations occurred in 1931 under Getúlio Vargas. In that decade, the National Union of Students *(União Nacional dos Estudantes)* (UNE) also emerged, initially supporting the government at the time but playing a significant role in the politicization of student activities. The Statute of Brazilian Universities was promulgated during the Vargas era, and the concept of extension was explicitly developed in Article 42 for the first time in Brazil in 1931, in Decree 19,851/31:

> *Decree 19,851/31, Art. 42.* ***University extension shall be carried out through courses and conferences of an educational or utilitarian nature****, both organized by the various institutes of the University, with prior authorization from the University Council.*
> *§ 1. The courses and conferences referred to in this article are* ***mainly intended for the dissemination of knowledge useful for individual or collective life, for the solution of social problems, or for the propagation of ideas and principles that safeguard the nation's high interests****.*
> *§ 2. These courses and conferences may be held by any university institute at other technical or higher education institutions, secondary or primary education institutions, or in conditions that make them accessible to the general public (BRAZIL, 1931, emphasis added).*

There are even the establishment of its purposes in Article 109 of the same law:

> *Decree 19,851/31, Art. 109. University extension is intended for the* ***dissemination of philosophical, artistic, literary, and scientific knowledge, for the benefit of individual and collective improvement.***
> *§ 1. In accordance with the above-mentioned objectives, university extension will be carried out through intra and extra-university courses, propaganda conferences, and practical demonstrations as deemed appropriate.*
> *§ 2. It shall be the responsibility of the University Council, in consultation with the technical-administrative councils of the various institutes, to effectively carry out public university extension through appropriate means (BRAZIL, 1931, emphasis added).*

In the 1930s, extension was an activity aimed at bringing society closer through the dissemination of knowledge with courses, conferences, and practical demonstrations. In other words, knowledge was unilaterally taken to the community in the style of European and North American antecedents. The legislation did not foresee a political dimension, something that would occur decades later. There was also no provision for curricular integration or its use for student training.

In 1938, the UNE issued the Declaration of Bahia during the I National Seminar on University Reform. The document explored deeply into themes of university revision and goals for the emerging university in Brazil. Among the most impactful proposals of the document (Sousa, 1995, p. 49) were: a) universities should be a means to improve the country's culture; b) education should be free, with selection based on non-economic criteria; c) the creation of popular universities was advocated; d) there should be integration with popular life; e) there should be greater university autonomy and organization.

The idea of disseminating culture and knowledge for social impact was prominent. The UNE's vision of the university's crucial role in Brazilian issues was clear. Although these positions had the potential to advance the concept of the university, it is notable that the concept of extension was not addressed in 1938, despite being present in legislation for a few years. It existed but was not yet connected to social change.

Over the next two decades, the idea of a university engaged in Brazilian social and political issues grows. This involves student movements, initiatives by universities, and their professors (Sousa, 1995, p. 57). Nevertheless, extension was not seen as a means for this by the mid-20th century. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, several initiatives occurred, mainly linking the concept of extension with assistance, particularly in the field of rural extension, but there was no noticeable shift in the definition of the concept of extension. Nor were there discussions about expanding its scope.

On the other hand, another interesting phenomenon occurs, which is the use of the word "extension" disconnected from the university, although in initiatives of broad impact. Kochhann (2017) recounts the creation of the Rural Credit and Assistance Association *(Associação de Crédito e Assistência Rural)* (ACAR) in Minas Gerais in 1948, and the Brazilian Rural Credit and Assistance Association (*Associação Brasileira de Crédito e Assistência Rural)* (ABCAR) the following year, later becoming EMATER. In addition, in 1952, Technical Assistance and Rural Extension *(Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural)* (ATER) was established, still maintained today by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock.

These are examples of rural extension, using the term to describe their activities. However, these organizations did not have a direct connection to universities. At this point in time, extension was a term used by other entities in Brazil. The word was already associated with teaching, bringing knowledge and assistance, but not necessarily originating from educational institutions.

The late 1950s were marked by movements related to education that would culminate in the first Law of National Education Guidelines and Bases (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional*) (LDB) of 1961. In 1957, citing the I National Seminar on Education Reform in Rio de Janeiro, Sousa describes this emerging new moment. There was engagement in defending public schools, advocating for university reforms, and drafting an education law - a provision that had been in place since the Constitution of 1934 but had never been enacted. However, concerning extension, little changed in this initial phase of the LDB. The law mentions extension once and does not alter the concept established in the Vargas era, nor does it enhance its importance. The following year, the first National Education Plan does not foresee the use of national funds for extensions (Sousa, 1995, p. 58 and 98):

> Law No. 4,024/61, Art. 69. In higher education institutions, the following courses may be offered: [...] c) specialization, improvement, and **extension** courses, or any others, as determined by the respective educational institute, **open to candidates with the necessary preparation and requirements that may be demanded** (BRAZIL, 1961, emphasis added).

Extension between the early 20th century and 1964: the Brazilian concept of extension can be observed initially between the early 20th century and 1964, initially emerging in legislation from 1931. This concept was primarily formed around assistance, addressing social needs through the provision of services, aid projects, lectures, and classes. The goal was to disseminate scientific knowledge to those without access to universities and to improve social conditions through the services provided. Extension was not part of the disputes over the conception and objectives of Brazilian universities. Even with a politicized student movement, the concept of extension was not central to the events involving society and the university.

Concept of Extension between 1964 and 1985

In 1960, important changes loomed ahead, as seen in the movements since 1957, increasingly connected to the political moment and the rise of Paulo Freire's influence. These movements were linked to the increasingly turbulent national political context, which would soon lead to the end of Brazilian democracy for two decades. Student movements, unlike many times since 1930, distanced themselves from the Government and became a significant opposition. At this moment, just before the end of the Democratic Regime, extension initiatives were created, such as the Service of Cultural Extension, the Popular Culture Movement, the Popular Culture Center, and the Traveling University, which were aligned with the new student movement, opposing the future authoritarian government (Sousa, 1995, p. 58-67).

However, there was a political regime change. The trajectory of extensions emerging from the university as a form of popular culture, engaging with popular demands and knowledge, was interrupted. Although they became significant for the third concept (post-1985), these initiatives did not evolve throughout that decade and the following one. On the contrary, starting in 1964, the concept underwent various developments, aligning with the public policies of the military government that took power.

In the field of public policies, the government aimed for development with security, national defense, and territorial integration. It established a development policy for the economy, including the development of remote regions. Expanding education to the interior of the country became a priority. Public universities were directed to provide services aligned with these goals. Political opposition was repressed, but participation in government objectives was encouraged. This period was characterized by the allocation of resources to universities and involvement in specific projects (Sousa, 1995, p. 107).

In this context, extension quickly gained importance. Structured, long-lasting health, education, and agriculture activities emerged, supported by the government. Although not numerous, two projects stood out in this scenario. The first was the Rondon Project (Sousa, 1995, p. 102-111), proposed in 1966 at the I Seminar on

Education and National Security, heavily supported by the Executive branch, aiming to integrate impoverished and isolated regions by sending students and teachers to these communities until 1989, with the participation of around 350,000 individuals (Folha de São Paulo, 2005).

Initially, the Rondon Project had a certain degree of independence from universities, with students participating voluntarily during vacations. From 1969, universities were allowed to take on the responsibility for setting up advanced *campi*, in a new approach to the Rondon Project aimed at ensuring its continuity, internalizing, and integrating the university through these *campi* to bring higher education to rural areas and promote the country's development. The first advanced campus was established by the Federal University of Santa Maria (*Universidade Federal de Santa Maria*) in Boa Vista, Roraima.

The second project was a response from universities to the Rondon Project's actions, although it was carried out in collaboration with the government. It was the Rural University Center for Training and Community Action (*Centro Rural Universitário de Treinamento e Ação Comunitária*) (CRUTACS). Initiated in Rio Grande do Norte (1960) and later in Maranhão (1969), with expansion to other northeastern states, these projects focused on health and problem-solving in rural communities. There were eventually 22 active CRUTACS in Brazil, involving final-year students from various disciplines in community action. Inspired by American examples brought by their creator, Professor Onofre Lopes, the projects were designed to mirror structures found in the United States (Sousa, 1995). During the Military Regime, the provision of health services by university students became an official government policy (Almeida, 2011).

These projects were conceived on a national scale, aiming to train students, achieve territorial integration, access remote areas, and support rural populations (Miguens Jr; Celeste, 12-13). It is worth noting that these are projects with substantial financial resources and political support, encompassing broad public policies, illustrating university extension in a context different from the previous one.

In addition to these two major projects, a new university reform was underway during the regime. Shortly before its completion in 1967, Decree-Law 252/67 was published, introducing the concept of extension, still without innovations compared

to the 1930s[1], stating in Article 10 that the main activities of universities were teaching and research, but also allowing for extension. This legislation represented the final application of this old concept, as a second concept of extension was already becoming apparent.

In the year 1968, the university reform was enacted, introducing new elements to the concept of extension. The main addition was the idea of engagement and impact on society. This expansion was significant, broadening the notion of providing university knowledge to those without access and introducing a more comprehensive vision of social progress through the university.

The concept of extension in the University Reform of 1968, Law No. 5,540:

> *Law No. 5,540/68, Article 40: Higher education institutions shall: a) through their* ***extension activities****, provide student bodies with opportunities to* ***participate in programs to improve community living conditions and the overall development process*** *(BRAZIL, 1968, emphasis added).*

Another change draws near. Without mentioning extension, the reform establishes that teaching and research will be indissociable in the context of universities[2]. The introduction of "indissociability" in the legislation occurs during this period. Eventually, this notion would encompass extension and become fundamental for the development of extension activities in Brazil.

A third important element of the reform is the inclusion of extension activities as mandatory in universities, being classified as one of the four modalities of higher education[3] required and regulated by educational institutions. From that moment on,

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[1] "Article 10. The University, in its educational mission, shall **extend to the community, in the form of courses and services, the teaching and research activities that are inherent to it**. [...] Sole paragraph. University extension courses and services may have their own coordination and must be developed through the full utilization of the material and human resources of the University, as provided for in Article 1 of Decree-Law number 53, of November 18, 1966" (BRAZIL, 1967, emphasis added).

[2] "Article 2. **Higher education, inseparable from research**, shall be provided in universities and, exceptionally, in isolated establishments, organized as institutions of public or private law. [...] Article 32. For the purposes of this law, activities of higher education include: a) those that, relevant **to the indissociable system of teaching and research**, are carried out in universities and isolated establishments, at the undergraduate level or higher, for the purpose of transmitting and expanding knowledge" (BRAZIL, 1968, emphasis added).

[3] "Article 17. In universities and isolated institutions of higher education, the following types of courses may be offered: a) undergraduate, open to candidates who have completed secondary education or equivalent and have been classified in the entrance exam; b) postgraduate, open to candidates who have graduated from an undergraduate program and meet the conditions prescribed in each case; c) specialization and improvement, open to candidates who hold a degree in undergraduate programs or

extension work had to be carried out by legal imposition[4], with the provision that it would take place through courses and services[5].

The objectives outlined by the government through the university reform were diverse. Some of the main ones were: a) modernize and expand public universities; b) enhance stricto sensu graduate programs; c) replace chairs with departments; d) implement campi in the North American university style.

The reform faced criticism for attempting to turn the university into a center for knowledge production, aiming for efficiency and promoting economic and social development, while restricting access to a more privileged segment of society, those capable of attending university. This reform ended up further distancing universities from vulnerable people.

However, the policy of internalization and using universities to meet societal needs continued to be implemented. During the 1960s, isolated institutions and campi were established as part of a strategy to expand the presence of universities in rural areas.

From 1974 onwards, a significant change occurred. Extension-related policies, gaining prominence, became the direct focus of the Executive branch. The Ministry of Education and Culture was restructured to coordinate the development of extension activities for the first time in Brazilian education history. This was achieved through the creation of the Coordination of University Extension Activities (*Coordenação das Atividades da Extensão Universitária*) (CODAE), which expanded the notion of extension and replaced the Incentive Commission of the Rural University Centers for Training and Community Action (*Incentivadora dos Centros Rurais Universitários de Treinamento e Ação Comunitária*) (CINCRUTAC) from 1969. CODAE became a ministry agency with the purpose of promoting the development of university extension in Brazil, expanding university activities and coordinating the actions of the advanced campi established by the Rondon Project (Sousa, 1995, 120-122).

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equivalent titles; d) **extension and others, open to candidates who meet the required requirements**" (BRAZIL, 1968, emphasis added).

4 "Article 25. Specialization, improvement, **extension, and other courses shall be taught according to the plans drawn** up and approved by universities and isolated establishments" (BRAZIL, 1968, emphasis added).

5 "Article 20. Universities and isolated institutions of higher education **shall extend to the community, in the form of special courses and services, the teaching activities and research results inherent to them**" (BRAZIL, 1968, emphasis added).

The CODAE elaborated the University Extension Work Plan in 1975. It provides for a national extension plan and a survey of ongoing extensions. It is within this document that the idea of indissociability starts to involve extension and the term "dialogical interaction with society" emerges. At this juncture, the existing extension activities were not numerous: apart from the Rondon Project and CRUTACs, they included projects integrating universities with communities and the School-Business-Government integration projects (Sousa, 1995, p. 123). Extension in the definition of the University Extension Work Plan of 1975:

> [...] a subsystem component of the University System, through which the Higher Education Institution extends its scope of service to organizations, other institutions, and populations in general, receiving input from them for the feedback of the other components, namely, teaching and research. University extension takes the form of courses, services, dissemination of research results, and other forms of action required by the context in which the Institution is located or by strategic necessity (SOUSA, 1995, p. 124 apud Brazil. MEC/DAU, 1975).

Following resistance to the authoritarian regime and movements towards political openness, the CODAE Work Plan and extension policy began to lose funding. In 1979, CODAE was dissolved – with no formal legislation establishing its competencies before its dissolution. During its existence, there were no significant impactful results from its operation. From the dissolution of CODAE until the Constitution of 1988, there was no other relevant agency or significant centralized extension activity in Brazil (Sousa, 1995, p. 123-126).

Extension between 1964 and 1985: In the second period, from 1964 to 1985, the concept was characterized by a continuation of assistentialist-oriented approaches, as well as significant integration with developmental public policies. There was the emergence of a small number of extensions carried out with substantial support and resources. Extensions now became part of public policy aimed at government objectives, national development, security, and territorial integration. Their importance in student education was acknowledged, as well as their potential to impact society, particularly vulnerable populations in remote areas of the country. This occurred in a political context marked by the interruption of democracy and repression of university activities opposing the government.

Concept of Extension between 1985 and the 2020s

In the doctrinal field, in 1969, Paulo Freire published the work "*Extension or Communication?*", in which he made an effort to understand extension. The educator led the University Extension Service at the University of Recife (PAULA, 2013). Freire believes that the practice of extending knowledge is not transformative; he criticizes the role of a assistentialist-oriented educator who imparts finished knowledge. He proposes communication as a means to teach individuals to take ownership of the problem and knowledge to solve it, and to be able to use it in the world and criticize it. A pathway where the learner is also capable of teaching, and what is learned is a problem to be solved by all involved, drawing on their varied knowledge.

Despite the criticisms of this notion of extension as an act of extending knowledge and, consequently, the use of the term "extension" as it was being employed, he exemplifies in the ideas of communication and education various characteristics that would be sought in university extensions when they start to be seen as a transformative practice, which happens from this moment of doctrinal reopening and in the norms issued by the Brazilian State. Here is an excerpt from Freire, showcasing his critique and his proposal:

> *This is why, for us, "education as the practice of freedom" is not the transfer or transmission of knowledge or culture; it is not the extension of technical knowledge; it is not the act of depositing information or facts into learners; it is not the "perpetuation of the values of a given culture"; it is not the "effort to adapt the learner to their environment".*
> *For us, "education as the practice of freedom" is, above all and before all, truly a gnosiological situation. One in which the act of knowing does not end in the object to be known, as it is communicated to other subjects equally able of knowledge (FREIRE, 1983).*

In the same year as the dissolution of CODAE, in 1979, the Plenary Meeting of the Council of Rectors of Brazilian Universities (a collegiate body created during the University Reform in 1966) drafts a document on the university's participation in Brazilian social development. Extension plays a prominent role. This is a significant moment as the text, even more than the CODAE Work Plan, further directs the current development of the concept. It is also notable for marking a new era that would persist to this day: the leadership of Brazilian university professors in shaping extension from then on. The most relevant excerpt states:

> *3. One of the main instruments for participating in political and social issues is extension activities, which allow for greater integration with the community.*
> *3.1. Extension activities should primarily focus on addressing local, regional, and national problems, in that order.*
> *3.2. University human resources should be motivated and mobilized to engage in extension activities.*
> *3.3. Through extension activities comes the understanding of reality, the development of critical awareness, and enrichment of the curriculum, benefiting faculty, students, and administrators.*
> *3.4. Whenever possible, interdisciplinarity should be the preferred methodology for extension activities.*
> *3.5. Extension efforts should reflect scientific knowledge, the prevailing ideas within the university, and draw on input from the community (CRUB, 1979).*

The document presents several proposals for Brazilian universities. Extension is conceived within the axis of political-social development, as a central instrument of university action, dialogue with society, a means of acquiring external knowledge, and a way to give tangible aspects to student knowledge and education. In other words, in the final years of the democratic reopening, the concept of extension begins to take on the characteristics that we are familiar with from the Constitution of 1988.

The goals set for extension demonstrate an initial stage of development that the democratic period would refine. Starting from 1985, with the democratic reopening and the election of university leaders by the university communities themselves, the existing thoughts on extension continued to progress along those lines. The beginning of the democratic period was a time when discussions about the university were amidst a variety of similar discussions in other spheres and regarding different institutions. It was a period combating poverty and inequality, aiming to eradicate hunger, develop disadvantaged regions, and strengthen institutions established by the Constitution. The concept of citizenship, to be fully exercised by Brazilians, had effects on the direction of public policies.

One of the most important steps was the creation of the Forum of Pro-Rectors of Extension of Brazilian Public Universities (*Fórum de Pró-Reitores de Extensão das Universidades Públicas Brasileiras*) (FORPROEX) in 1987. It was a time when several similar forums were being established. In that year, at UnB, the I National Meeting of Pro-Rectors of Extension took place, with the representation of 33 public universities, during which a charter was approved. The document reaffirms the 1979 initiative with a concept of university extension that still guides practical applications

of the concept today. Although it has been articulated differently over the past four decades, this document outlines the current features of the concept:

> *University extension is the educational, cultural, and scientific process that articulates teaching and research in an indissociable manner, enabling a transformative relationship between the university and society.*
> *Extension is a two-way path, ensuring passage for the academic community, who will find in society an opportunity to develop the praxis of academic knowledge. Upon returning to the university, faculty and students will bring back learning that, when subjected to theoretical reflection, enriches that knowledge. This flow, which establishes the exchange of systematized/academic and popular knowledge, results in: the production of knowledge stemming from engagement with Brazilian and regional realities; and the democratization of academic knowledge and active community participation in university activities.*
> *In addition to facilitating this dialectical process of theory/practice, extension is an interdisciplinary endeavor that promotes an integrated view of society (FORPROEX, 1987).*

In addition to this definition, the document expresses its concerns: to promote the institutionalization of extension, the establishment of bureaucratic structures to support it in universities, the creation of coordination agencies within the Ministry of Education. It puts forward proposals for the allocation of public resources for extension in the federal budget and encourages funding agencies. From the perspective of courses and the university community, there is a demand for the inclusion of extensions in both curricular and extracurricular internships, consideration of extension hours in the workload and career progression of faculty members.

The term "indissociability" is used. There is a proposal to create procedures that involve the external community, prioritize addressing social issues, and establish integration with research and teaching (FORPROEX, 1987, p. 12-15). In essence, the document approved at the FORPROEX plenary session is a central framework for shaping a modern concept of extension in Brazil.

Just a year later, these demands are taken up again in the Constitution of 1988, whose text would be fundamental for the entire period. The constitutional text, in art. 207, regulates:

> *CRFB, Article 207. The universities shall have didactic, scientific, administrative, financial and property management autonomy and shall comply with the principle of* ***indissociability of teaching, research and extension*** (BRAZIL, 1988, emphasis added).

Without delving into or providing a definition, the article asserts the indissociability and places extension alongside teaching and research activities, without establishing a hierarchy, setting up a threefold actuation for public universities. It is from this equality and the need for indissociability that numerous public policies have been guided since then. The Constitution also states that extension activities can be carried out by professional and technological education institutions, and can receive financial support from the Public Authority (arts. 213 and 218), allowing for broad public policies to encourage such endeavors.

In 1996, another important step was taken. The second Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education in Brazil (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação no Brasil*) was approved, which is still in force today. The chapter on Higher Education addresses extension, reiterating its connection with teaching and research, and the possibility of funding (art. 77, §2). Despite being concise, it sets forth the objectives of extension:

> Law 9,394/96, Art. 43. [...] VII - promote extension activities, open to participation by the population, aiming to **disseminate the achievements and benefits resulting from cultural creation and scientific and technological research generated within the institution** (BRAZIL, 1996, emphasis added).

Few projects were being developed at that time in Brazilian universities. It is from the turn of the century that a greater number of projects will be initiated.

The FORPROEX meetings began to take place regularly from that period onwards, with support from the Ministry of Education and a significant impact on the Brazilian extension scenario. Among the various public policies emerging from these meetings, a notable one is the University Extension Promotion Program (PROEXT) in 2003, which aims to support extension projects implementing public policies and continues to this day. Another important creation was the National Extension Network (RENEX) and the Extension Data and Information System (SiEX), which maintain communication between universities, register extension actions, and aim to develop a national system to organize data on these initiatives, as well as to systematize publications and initiatives in the field.

Finally, and being created since the late 1990s, the National Plan for University Extension (*Plano Nacional de Extensão Universitária*) (PNEU) was approved by FORPROEX in 2001. The points developed in 1987 at the first meeting (and ultimately since 1979) are reaffirmed and updated, without a profound alteration of

their content. The actions of FORPROEX are increasingly influential in Brazilian public policies for extension.

The concept of extension is even praised and repeated in its entirety in 2001, without changes compared to that of 1987. Extension is reaffirmed as an indissociable part of teaching and research, and as a means for the university to meet social demands. The document emphasizes its role in student development and enabling bidirectional exchanges between the university and society. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity are mentioned, as well as advancements in the use of new technologies and dialogue between various institutions (FORPROEX, 2001).

In that same year, 2001, another defining document of Brazil's current extension context was approved. Law 10,172 established the National Education Plan (in force between 2001-2010), the first in Brazilian history, and in the Higher Education chapter, for the first time, set the goal of 10% extension activities out of the total load required for graduation, in all higher education courses in Brazil. This goal was supposed to be achieved by 2004, which did not happen but was accomplished in the following years:

> *Law 10,172/01, 23. Implement the University Extension Development Program in all Federal Higher Education Institutions in the quadrennium 2001-2004 and ensure that, at least,* ***10% of the total credits required for undergraduate education*** *in the country will be reserved for student participation in extension activities (BRAZIL, 2001, emphasis added).*

In 2012, FORPROEX publishes an update to the National University Extension Policy, which is still in effect today. This document, serving as the primary influence for extension, did not change the content established in 1979 but provided a more concise definition developed in the Forums of 2009 and 2010, summarizing the advancements in the concept of extension:

> University Extension, under the constitutional principle of indissociability between teaching, research, and extension, is an interdisciplinary, educational, cultural, scientific, and political process that promotes transformative interaction between the University and other sectors of society (BRAZIL, 2012).

The National University Extension Policy incorporates the language established in the Constitution of 1988 and maintains the priorities that have been established

for several decades. Its deepening into the concept of extension occurs through five objectives titled guidelines, individually explained in the document, laying the foundation for the strengthening of extension and the pursuit of resources for its development. The document also addresses the universalization of Brazilian university extension in courses (FORPROEX, 2012). The current Brazilian extension guidelines are: a) Dialogical Interaction; b) Interdisciplinarity and Interprofessionality; c) Indissociability of Teaching-Research-Extension; d) Impact on Student Formation; and e) Social Impact and Transformation.

Soon after, another significant development regarding mandatory extension hours emerged. Law 13,005, in 2014, established the second National Education Plan in Brazilian history, outlining goals from 2014 to 2024. Its Goal 12 addresses Higher Education in Brazil. Within it, the seventh strategy reiterated the established course load from the first plan:

> Law 13,005/14, 12.7) ensure, at least, **10% (ten percent) of the total required curricular credits for undergraduate** programs in university extension programs and projects, prioritizing their activities primarily in areas of significant social relevance (BRAZIL, 2014, emphasis added).

It is within this context that universities throughout Brazil will finally implement this level of extension load[6]. The National Council of Education began working in 2017 on the integration of extension activities into all higher education courses, a process entitled "curricularization of extension," envisioning the 10% load. Opinion CNE/CES No. 608/2018, from the Higher Education Chamber of the National Council of Education, was approved in 2018 (BRAZIL, 2018), proposing implementation within three years. The plan was endorsed by the Ministry of Education (BRAZIL, 2018), which issued Resolution No. 7 (BRAZIL, 2018b). In this resolution, a new normative concept of extension is also defined:

> Opinion CNE/CES No. 608/2018, Art. 3: Extension in Brazilian Higher Education is an activity integrated into the curriculum and research organization, constituting an interdisciplinary, educational, cultural,

[6] In the current context, private universities are also affected by Decree 9,235, which stipulates that new private higher education institutions must initially register as colleges and to be recognized in the next stage, as university centers, one of the requirements is to have an institutionalized extension program. BRAZIL. Decree 9,235, dated December 15, 2017, Art. 16. Private Higher Education Institutions may apply for reaccreditation as university centers, provided that, in addition to meeting general requirements, they comply with the following requirements: [...] IV - they must have an institutionalized extension program in the knowledge areas covered by their undergraduate courses.

> scientific, and technological political process that promotes transformative interaction between higher education institutions and other sectors of society through the production and application of knowledge, in continuous coordination with teaching and research (Brazil, 2018b).

The Opinion CNE/CES No. 608/2018 is important as it provides doctrinal foundation for the norms being created. In its rationale, it presents the extensionist view based on three conceptions of the university, demonstrating the theoretical field involved and the connection with Paulo Freire. These are the three conceptions: assistentialist, mercantilist, and academic/transformative. This division is also used in the work of Edineide Jezine, which discusses a theoretical view of extension and its role in the Constitution of 1988 (JEZINE, 2004).

The assistentialist conception incorporates extension as a formative university practice addressing social needs. It is seen as a result of late 19th-century North American and European extensions, shaping Brazilian extensions and constituting the primary role of early experiences in this aspect. Extension is materialized in the form of courses, events, technical services, assistance, and health care. There is a diversity of actions integrated into student education, and the services provided can be significant for the community. The university's impact has the potential to help address social issues through these means.

The main criticisms of the assistentialist model are that universities begin to implement public policies that should be governmental, lacking an educational character aimed at empowering the target audience to address their needs independently, without resolving social issues. These criticisms align with Freirian critiques of a university that delivers finished knowledge. Furthermore, there is criticism regarding the lack of dialogue, where the university presents and applies its knowledge to the community without fostering a two-way path, lacking the influence of society and popular knowledge on the university and education.

Finally, from a structural perspective, this is a model where there may only be sporadic and unsystematic actions, disconnected from the university structure (REIS, 1996), without being linked to continuous teaching and research activities, student development, thus lacking indissociability (JEZINE, 2004).

The second view, equally criticized by Jezine and briefly discussed in Opinion CNE/CES No. 608/2018 from the Ministry of Education, is the mercantilist

perspective – a term not explicitly used in the opinion, although it examines the view of the university as a "producer of goods and services" (BRAZIL, 2018b).

In this perspective, the university provides educational services according to societal demand, targeting individuals as consumers of their services. In such a logic, financial capacity to afford the service becomes the main determinant for access to higher education. Under this framework, private universities are incentivized, sparking discussions about the public university model, its cost to society, and economic possibilities in its operation.

In the field of extension, there is a potential incompatibility between this conception and activities aimed at social impact and solving social issues, unless they can provide some return – either financially or because they are desirable in the education of those who utilize the service (such as a university hospital). The university should have an economic purpose.

The third view, named academic by Jezine and transformative in Opinion CNE/CES No. 608/2018, entails a dialogical relationship between society and the university, seeking organized and planned intervention in social reality. Society ceases to be a passive recipient of knowledge. A dual-sided construction approach is developed. The university plays a social role and fosters civic education among students, with a political dimension and a conscious mode of operation, integrating with society and its needs, aiming to instill autonomy and awareness in participants of the extension activities. Definitions are established for indissociability as the integration with research and teaching is crucial to extension.

Jezine presents the third view as the most influential in the organization of Brazilian extension, used in shaping the concept of extension by FORPROEX, which eventually became law. In fact, by 1979, with the publications from the Plenary Meeting of the Council of Rectors of Brazilian Universities, this view was already in development. With the process of redemocratization, this view became predominant in public universities and guides the regulations in the field. This is particularly true as this vision is adopted[7] in Opinion CNE/CES No. 608/2018 from the Ministry of

[7] It is particularly clear in this aspect the passage: "This Opinion conceives Extension in Brazilian Higher Education as an action integrated into the curriculum and research organization, constituting an interdisciplinary, educational, cultural, scientific, and technological political process uniquely. The interdisciplinary process referred to should, therefore, promote transformative interaction between

Education, which, once approved, was applied to all Brazilian higher education, significantly impacting the curricular structure of all courses.

Prior to the requirement of having 10% of the undergraduate course load in extension, public universities had established mechanisms to receive extension projects from faculty and other staff members. Starting from the 1990s and 2000s, this system enabled the existence of thousands of extension projects in institutions and the development of a growing culture of extension. At the end of this process, the outcomes have become pervasive in the Brazilian public university experience. In 2022, FORPROEX (2022) conducted the first Extension Census in public universities: the responses indicated the participation of 184,319 faculty members, 2,135,317 students in a total of 111,143 extension activities. In 48% of universities, at least half of the programs had already incorporated the curricularization of extension into their curricula.

Projects with a predominantly assistentialist nature continued to exist and be created, including successful models for student development, public policy impact, and essential community services such as university hospitals, legal aid clinics, veterinary clinics, lecture series, and pre-university courses for underprivileged individuals. Despite their initial connection to assistentialist extension models, these projects have integrated current discussions in the field. Other projects, which are connected to society and students from the conceptual stage, are what Jezine would name as academic extensions. These include activities in schools involving university and school students, cultural and artistic displays with active community participation, and memory centers organized with individuals advocating for particular causes.

Another impactful characteristic has been the inclusion of students in the organization of extensions. Increasingly, participation in projects has been surrounded by the notion that students should not be mere listeners in activities (passive extension). Instead, they should be project organizers, involved in creating structures and actively participating in them (active extension). In various settings over the last twenty years, discussions have even arisen around what should be considered as extension activity for students, with the argument that mere passive

higher education institutions and other sectors of society through the production and application of knowledge, in continuous coordination with teaching and research" (BRAZIL, 2018b).

involvement in projects would not suffice to qualify as extension activity in terms of course load for their education. In this light, attending a lecture might not qualify as extension, but participating in organizing one would. These discussions highlight the importance of the topic.

Following the three-year period given to universities to reach a 10% extension course load, a new movement ensued. Starting in the early 2020s and extending into the mid-decade, there was a significant wave of curricular reforms. Universities already had Pro-Rectorates of Extension, which emerged in the 1990s when, by constitutional force, they attained the same hierarchy as teaching and research. However, a more intricate bureaucratic framework seems to be emerging in courses, with new regulations created and numerous new projects implemented. There was a concerted effort to enable students to access these activities at substantially higher levels than previously offered.

Extension is increasingly being theorized. Its application was already extensive and is being solidified, especially with this important percentage of education being structured this way. There are challenges, such as more theoretical courses that struggle to implement extension. Difficulties in its implementation in private universities, which have more pronounced economic aspects in their structure, exist. There is also a profound lack of funding for project implementation in public universities. Nevertheless, extension is universalized, albeit with shortcomings, and is an essential part of student education and the role of Brazilian universities in addressing social demands.

Extension between 1985 and the 2020s: Between 1985 and the present day, university extension is characterized by three elements: universalization, social impact, and the indissociability of teaching, research, and extension. It has been universalized and is now mandatory in higher education courses, fostering an extension culture in universities, especially public ones, and constituting 10% of the course load in higher education. Social impact is evident as there is a dialogical relationship with society and involvement in socially relevant issues. Encouraged extension models link student education with societal demands, aiming to transcend university boundaries and create an impact on all involved. Indissociability is highlighted due to the union of extension with research and teaching, placed on equal

hierarchy by the Constitution of 1988, striving for more impactful student education, technological advancements, and scientific knowledge production. This concept is primarily developed by professors, led by Pro-Rectos of Extension, with support from the Ministry of Education, based on theories discussing the university's role. This development stems from university autonomy.

Final Remarks

Historically, universities have focused on teaching and research. The development of extension in Brazil followed the trend of many other ideas: an initial connection to foreign experiences and a subsequent development tailored to the Brazilian society. This local development was sophisticated and adapted to our culture, permeated by a broader discussion, which is the role of universities in society. Like many other ideas from abroad, extension took its own path in Brazil, as it was conceived by Brazilians.

Brazil has a university model, especially in public institutions, that consciously seeks to impact society. The paths shown in this work, especially since the democratic reopening, demonstrate an organization that steadily progresses in this direction. Extension is not merely a series of acts with social impact, it is a proposal to alter what a university means in Brazil and has been developed in this direction for about a century.

Universities as institutions engaged in social issues, discussing them through their academic production, but also addressing them through their actions. In this role, university extension assumes a particularly important position it is the central instrument for social engagement. It is the tool envisaged in the Constitution of 1988 for this purpose. Over time, this engagement has transcended merely offering the university's knowledge to an audience detached from it, evolving into a two-way path of knowledge and positive impact. The doctrinal and normative development of extension in Brazil is crucial, providing a solid foundation for societal engagement and further underscore the university's relevance in society.

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