



Inviting movements in physiotherapy: An anthology of critical scholarship

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ISBN 978-1-987830-17-0 (ebook)

ISBN 978-1-987830-18-7 (PDF)

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Chapter 5

“The impact of the occupation remains with us”: Movements of minor education during political mobilisation of physiotherapy students at a federal university in southern Brazil

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To cite this chapter:

Lagranha, D. M, Vieira, A., & Fraga, A. B. (2025). “The impact of the occupation remains with us”: Movements of minor education during political mobilisation of physiotherapy students at a federal university in southern Brazil. In P. Thille, C. Hebron, R. Galvaan, & K. S. Groven (Eds.), *Inviting movements in physiotherapy: An anthology of critical scholarship* (pp. 114–135). Critical Physiotherapy Network and College of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Manitoba. <https://doi.org/10.82231/S8HA-YK54>

ABSTRACT:

In 2016, undergraduate students at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) occupied the premises of the Olympic Campus in protest to a constitutional amendment proposing a maximum spending limit on primary expenses for all government levels over the next twenty years. This movement, known as Ocupa ESEFID, prevented classes, research, and community service activities for forty-seven days. In this essay, drawing inspiration from the major and minor education concepts introduced by the Brazilian pedagogue Silvio Gallo, we examine a compilation of physiotherapy's student reports related to that historical context. Originally produced for the first author's doctoral thesis, these reports are complemented by recollections from the other two authors, who are also professors at the institution. To contextualize the physiotherapy programme at UFRGS and the tensions surrounding training in the field, we provide insights from the history of physiotherapy in Brazil. Finally, we underscore the outcome of the Ocupa ESEFID movement, coinciding with the approval of the controversial amendment to the Brazilian Constitution by the Federal Senate. This essay highlights the interplay between major and minor education, allowing us to comprehend, through contrast, the significant impact of this unique event on physiotherapy training at UFRGS.



CHAPTER 5

“The impact of the occupation remains with us”

MOVEMENTS OF MINOR EDUCATION DURING
POLITICAL MOBILISATION OF PHYSIOTHERAPY
STUDENTS AT A FEDERAL UNIVERSITY IN
SOUTHERN BRAZIL

DANIELA MEIRELLES LAGRANHA, ADRIANE VIEIRA,
AND ALEX BRANCO FRAGA

Para quem aprende a olhar de soslaio e deslizar, gingar pelas frestas de um pensamento que não se pretende grande, mas que reconhece que todo o pequeno é que arranca a unha colonial que endurece o nosso pensamento e a nossa maneira de buscar jeitos próprios de caminhar.

— Wanderson Flor do Nascimento

Introduction

On 26 October 2016, Physiotherapy, Physical Education and Dance undergraduate students at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) occupied the premises of the Olympic Campus, which houses the School of Physical Education, Physiotherapy and Dance (ESEFID). For forty-seven days, they prevented classes, research, and community service activities from taking place in a movement that came to be known as Ocupa ESEFID.¹ Like the Chilean Winter protests and the Fees Must Fall movement in South Africa,² the Brazilian movement was intended for a group of students to take a stance against budget constraints and inequities that would have

an impact on access to higher education. Ocupa ESEFID had its focus on the approval of a Proposed Amendment to the Brazilian Constitution by Brazil's Federal Senate (PEC).

The Ocupa ESEFID students not only used the facilities and the surrounding grounds for demonstrations but effectively began to run the campus activities for almost two months without any resistance from the faculty administration. They introduced a form of self-management on campus and remained camped during a period marked by mobilization that involved discussions about academic training and debates on political changes in Brazil's public education and health care. In addition to the debates, the students spent their days preparing meals and organising workshops, conversation circles, open classes, film debates, and cultural events. They held daily assemblies to decide on their actions as a student collective and held public demonstrations in the city together with other organizations.

The year 2016 was turbulent in Brazil and we underwent yet another major political crisis.³ One of the critical points of that crisis was the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, which removed the Workers' Party (PT) from the Federal Government. Rousseff was elected for a second term in 2014⁴ by a thin margin over the second most-voted candidate whose electoral platform was based on neoliberal premises. In 2015, the government had to tackle a severe economic crisis. On the political front, it faced a series of corruption charges linked to the state-owned oil company Petrobras. In this context, the impeachment process was triggered by charges of fiscal manoeuvres, which President Rousseff would have used to give a false sense of economic stability based on "creative accounting."⁵

After taking office in August 2016, Vice President Michel Temer introduced a series of neoliberal reforms, including changes to the Constitution. One of these changes aimed to limit government spending by proposing an amendment to the Constitution, allegedly to tackle the growing public debt relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The amendment, known as PEC 241, proposed a new tax system aimed at setting a maximum spending limit on primary expenses for all levels of government for the next twenty years (Marquetti et al., 2020).

The second-round vote for PEC 241 in the Chamber of Deputies on 25 September 2016 was the trigger for the Ocupa ESEFID movement. The academic community had been following the progress of those PEC

procedures and holding debates on the Olympic Campus, with the engagement of professors and students. These debates reflected on ways for the university to speak out against its approval. Sensitized by the debates circulating on campus, in a September 26 assembly, the students voted to occupy the Olympic Campus facilities against the will of a considerable number of professors and even some fellow students.

Ocupa ESEFID intended to join other movements underway in Brazil to express disagreement with the constitutional amendment approved in the Chamber of Deputies and pressure senators to vote against it—it was renamed PEC 55 in the Federal Senate—and thus prevent it from being signed into law by the President. It is important to highlight that the right to accessible healthcare and education, guaranteed in the 1988 Constitution, was won amid the transition from Brazil's military dictatorship to democracy, after years of struggle and political mobilization of social movements, labour unions, and ecclesiastical grassroots communities (Paim, 2013). Therefore, the approval of PEC 55 in the Federal Senate would be a setback to the achievements materialized in the 1988 Constitution, particularly concerning the constitutional article related to education and health as a right for all citizens and as a duty of the State (Vieira & Benevides, 2016; Mariano, 2017).

The collection of student reports and the consequences of their experiences in that historical context—originally produced for the first author's doctoral thesis (Lagranha, 2023)—together with the recollections of the other authors, who are ESEFID professors, led us to write about the power of the Ocupa ESEFID movement from the point of view of students and professors of the physiotherapy undergraduate programme. First, we introduce Silvio Gallo's (2008) notion of major and minor education to understand the emergence of the movement of deterritorialization of major education as well as collective practices, in this case, as an attempt to break with the potential consequences of PEC 55. Next, we provide elements from the history of physiotherapy in Brazil to contextualize our physiotherapy programme and the respective tensions regarding the views on training in the area. Then we highlight minor education essays produced by students and professors of the programme during that short period of occupation of the Olympic Campus. Finally, we emphasize the outcome of the Ocupa ESEFID movement in December 2016, when PEC 55 was approved by the Federal Senate, highlighting the dynamics between major and minor education that allowed

us, by contrast, to understand the power of that unique event on physiotherapy training at UFRGS.

Major and minor education in analytical structuring

In *Deleuze e a Educação*, Brazilian pedagogue and philosopher Silvio Gallo (2008) proposed the concepts of major and minor education to discuss the multiple dimensions involved in educational processes. Based on the view of major literature and minor literature put forward by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, drawing from the work of Franz Kafka, Gallo (2008) proposes to think about education in rhizomatic terms,⁶ as something that spreads in the depths of everyday life, reverberating a political activism that is not centred on a commanding voice (Gallo, 2002).

From this perspective, Gallo (2002; 2008) defines major education as the bits of knowledge that structure the educational system, which are consolidated in curriculum documents and embedded in the management of educational policies. Major education, therefore, guides the training process by pre-defining the paths that will lead each and every student to the profile intended for them and avoiding any deviations from the path paved by pedagogical laws, guidelines, norms, and models. As Gallo writes, “major education is that of the great maps and projects” (Gallo, 2002, p. 173).

The concept of major education in the work of Silvio Gallo (2002) gains more specific outlines and becomes clearer when compared to the concept of minor education. The latter is understood as a movement of subversion that seeks to move further away from the totalitarian prescription of major education, placing it under suspicion, resisting its norms, destabilising control mechanisms, and requesting other spaces and actions to exist. Minor education focuses on the student’s unique experiences, considering interrelations, reciprocity, and ruptures that emerge in the training process, without imposing a single model or form (Martins & Gallo, 2018). Gallo helps us understand that there are other realities and modes for becoming who we are that go beyond those established and advocated by major education. He describes “minor education” as “an act of rebellion and resistance. Rebellion against established flows, and resistance to imposed policies” (Gallo, 2002, p. 173).

It is important to consider the historical moment when analysing the paths of undergraduate students, as this element allows them to envision unique paths that have not been taken before. For Gallo (2008), “today, it is more important

to focus on building the present every day rather than simply announcing the future” (p. 59), which leads to a less prophetic and more activist relationship with the collective educational process. In this process, the emphasis is not on achieving predetermined goals for a better future, but rather on a continuous project with no specific subject or endpoint (Gallo, 2002).

Finally, the rhizomatic model proposed by Gallo (2008) to reflect on education is centred on this conceptual pair that exposes these two dimensions, which intersect and clash all the time: (a) institutional training with its clues drawn in advance and (b) the routes produced by students who “insist” in opening alternative paths when moving between the cracks of that totalizing education model.

Physiotherapy on Brazil's major education map

Physiotherapy training in Brazil, more specifically its inclusion into the major education map, has some interesting peculiarities for the approach we propose in this chapter. One of them is that only in the 1950s did an educational proposal emerge to provide people who worked as physiotherapy technicians with vocational training. Those were times of economic growth and urban development as well as expanding industrialization. Concern about the increase in the number of people with sequelae from polio, work accidents, and World War II were arguments that, amid greater investment in the healthcare sector, contributed to the emergence of rehabilitation services in Brazil, which had not been highly valued in a very restricted healthcare network (Oliveira, 2002). Resident doctors working abroad brought positive experiences regarding the work of physiotherapists in hospitals and began to demand more inclusion of these professionals in healthcare services (Oliveira, 2002).

During that period, Universidade de São Paulo's National Rehabilitation Institute stood out for its coordinated work and partnership with the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, and the World Confederation for Physical Therapy. It was a pilot rehabilitation centre in Latin America and served as a reference for the first vocational school curricula and, later, for degrees in physiotherapy (Marques & Sanches, 1994).

Another institution that played a role in organizing the profession in Brazil was the Brazilian Charitable Rehabilitation Association in Rio de Janeiro, whose curriculum was based on the Physical Therapy Program of

Columbia University (Barros, 2008). In 1959, the Brazilian Physiotherapy Association emerged as a result of the interest in regulating the profession and in a better political organization of physiotherapy technicians working in healthcare services, as well as professionals involved in training courses (Barros, 2008; Marques & Sanches, 1994).

While the 1950s were dedicated to creating programmes to provide quality training for people to work as “physiotherapy technicians,” the 1960s saw an effort towards recognizing and expanding the profession. In 1964, a campaign carried out by the Brazilian Physiotherapy Association and doctors to expand the profession led to the approval of a minimum curriculum for physiotherapy vocational programmes by the Ministry of Education (Barros, 2008).

The 1964 basic curriculum was defined by a committee including five doctors and established the bases and guidelines for the operation of physiotherapy vocational programmes in Brazil as well as the process necessary for their official recognition (Oliveira, 2002; Barros, 2008). In October 1969, with five official programmes recognized in the country and pressure on the government from members of the Brazilian Physiotherapy Association, the profession was recognized by Executive Order 938 as a higher education activity (Oliveira, 2002; Teixeira et al., 2017). Therefore, the profession was organized amid a military coup that resulted in two decades of political turmoil and massive censorship in Brazil. Starting in 1964, the military dictatorship only began to lose strength in the early 1980s, in a period of redemocratization surrounded by an economic crisis and uncontrolled inflation (Kinzo, 2001).

Despite the official recognition of the profession in 1969, the Federal Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy was not created until 1978. After this process of organizing the profession, the Federal Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy,⁷ in collaboration with the Brazilian Physiotherapy Association, drafted a proposal expanding the minimum curriculum for the degree⁸ in physiotherapy and submitted it to the Federal Council of Education in 1982.

The new minimum curriculum proposed more robust training for physiotherapists, changing the duration of the course from three to four years and organizing the curriculum into four cycles: Biological, General Training, Pre-professional, and Professional (Resolução nº 4, 1983). In the face of curricular changes and the inclusion of sociology, anthropology, psychology, and ethics courses in the second cycle, aiming for a more comprehensive

education, the priority continued to be centred on technical subjects. Therefore, the discussions facilitated by the second cycle tended to have limited integration with the content and practices of the Pre-Professional and Professional cycles (Oliveira, 2002).

During the same period, the process of dismantling the military dictatorship opened space for Brazilian civil society to start debating points for a new Constitution. Among the historical facts relevant to proposing changes in the health sector on a national level, we highlight the creation of the Brazilian Public Health Association (Osmo & Schraiber, 2015) in 1979 and the Eighth National Health Conference in 1986 (Paim, 2013). It was a time when many leaders mobilized and several Brazilian intellectuals engaged in proposing a broad healthcare system that would guarantee access to services for the entire Brazilian population (Osmo & Schraiber, 2015).

Two years after the Eighth National Health Conference, the 1988 Constitution was promulgated and established access to education and healthcare as rights of all Brazilian citizens and a duty of the State. In 1990, the Sistema Único de Saúde⁹ was regulated and established Universalization, Equality, and Integrality as its basic guidelines¹⁰ (Lei nº 8.080, 1990; Paim, 2013).

As for health professionals, after Sistema Único de Saúde was regulated, the curriculum had to be updated to provide training under the new theoretical perspectives and discussions outlined in the 1980s. In the early 2000s, the Ministry of Education, working with the Ministry of Health and professional associations, set the National Curricular Guidelines for professional training in fourteen healthcare areas (Costa et al., 2018). The National Curricular Guidelines for the degree in physiotherapy were approved in 2002 (Resolução CNE/CES 4, 2002) and included demands from social movements that emerged during the country's redemocratization period, with support from the recently created Brazilian Association of Physiotherapy Education¹¹ in 1999 (Rocha, 2014).

In a sense, the discussions that led to the proposal of the National Curricular Guidelines for physiotherapy programmes focused on more flexible routes for training in the area. Activist professors and professionals engaged in the new discussions about healthcare in Brazil in the 1980s shared values that went beyond those traditionally recognized as defining physiotherapists' identity in the country (Rocha et al., 2010). Therefore,

they were involved in a movement consistent with the characteristics of “minor education.”

The National Curricular Guidelines advanced and started playing a role in major education, outlining a curricular organization based on an expanded health concept, setting the need for generalist, humanist, critical and reflexive training that would enable students to work at all levels of healthcare according to the bioethical, moral and cultural principles of individuals and communities. In addition to the already recognized work of physiotherapy in rehabilitation, training encouraged professionals to work in the prevention, promotion, and protection of health, both at an individual and collective level, as well as recognizing the interactions between health and political, social, economic, environmental and cultural issues (Bertoncello & Pivetta, 2015). The National Curricular Guidelines also established that the degree in physiotherapy should last at least five years. It should be active in the Sistema Único de Saúde management and services and focus on scientific development, in addition to investing in continued and permanent education (Resolução CNE/CES 4, 2002).

Despite all the briefly described achievements of these fifty years of physiotherapy professionalization in Brazil, with great progress in the offer of degrees, a national curriculum that proposed an expanded vision of health, and increasing demand for professionals in the health labour market, there has been no significant inclusion of physiotherapists in public primary care and outpatient services or in other sectors of the healthcare field that encouraged innovation in therapeutic approaches. The market kept absorbing only private services, focusing on areas of medical specialization and the hospital network. Consistent with this reality, training and professional work followed the rules of the private healthcare system and remained linked mainly to a neoliberal vision of healthcare, contributing to the maintenance of training centred on technical and mechanical competencies. Thus, despite the attempt to create change following the promulgation of the 2002 National Curricular Guidelines, they resulted in small curriculum adaptations rather than substantial changes in the vision of health and the training of new professionals (Oliveira, 2012; Rocha et al, 2010).

Professional policy forums promoted by the Federal Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy with the participation of Brazilian Association of Physiotherapy Education in 2005-2006 (Rocha, 2014)—when

the administration of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva of the Workers' Party (PT) was resuming social investment policies—questioned this reality and organized actions to create physiotherapy undergraduate programmes at public federal universities in the country, enabling greater critical and scientific development as well as free access to training in physiotherapy

The establishment of physiotherapy undergraduate programme at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, after a period marked by the undermining of public educational institutions in the 1990s, there was a resumption of government investment in Brazilian federal universities. At the beginning of the first term of President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (PT) in 2003, the federal government created the Programme to Support Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities.¹² The aim was to increase student's access to and retention in higher education. The programme envisaged the physical, academic, and pedagogical expansion of the federal network by 2012.

In 2008, as a part of national inclusion policies, UFRGS implemented admission quotas for public school students and self-declared black students. This played a significant role in shaping the profile of the University's students. In the following years, these quotas were expanded to include Indigenous groups and people with disabilities. This achievement was the result of social struggles in Brazil and the left-wing government of that period.¹³

The Pedagogical Project for the Physiotherapy Bachelor's Degree at UFRGS was also developed during the resumption of large-scale public investments in federal universities in Brazil. It drew inspiration from the discussions in the professional policy forums promoted by Brazilian Association of Physiotherapy Education, the leading educational association in the area. The project was designed based on the 2002 National Curricular Guidelines and the doctrinal principles of the Sistema Único de Saúde. It was approved in 2008 and implemented the following year, as well as a curriculum structure that emphasized public policies, education and health promotion, and dialogue with the area of Collective Health. The idea was to strengthen the work of physiotherapists in public health services.

The physiotherapy programme at UFRGS has undergone two changes to its pedagogical project since its establishment in 2009. These changes

included adjustments to the workload, nature, and prerequisites of the subjects offered, alongside other modifications. Compared to faculties linked to private institutions, the pedagogical project developed at UFRGS was considered innovative and unique by most faculty members. However, some professors were not entirely convinced of the effectiveness of the new curriculum due to their preference for traditional teaching methods. Disagreements among faculty grew over time and led to further changes in the curriculum, favouring a more conservative approach.

Ocupa ESEFID: A collective political body beyond the conventional space of university classes

The Ocupa ESEFID movement changed the daily life of the campus as it shifted the traditional focus on major education to the trial of a minor education that materialized in student mobilization against the approval of a Proposed Amendment to the Constitution that would reduce investment in public policies related to healthcare and education. Students engaged in this movement were fully aware that reducing investments in such important areas would later result in their loss of other rights already achieved, such as the quota system for admission to free-of-fee public universities for historically excluded students—a system responsible for the access of many who were participating in Ocupa ESEFID. Therefore, those students had the exact understanding of the economic and social value of educational and healthcare policies that were threatened by lack of public funding (Lagranha, 2023).

In addition to this specific dimension, the students were engaged in an educational proposal that focused on the collective, because, despite all internal resistance, the physiotherapy programme at UFRGS had been created based on the assumptions of Collective Health, which presupposed training more focused on defending the principles of the Sistema Único de Saúde, including universalization of access to healthcare with heavy government investment in its maintenance and expansion. This would be strongly affected if PEC 55 were to be approved.

The context of occupation—and it could not be otherwise—not only mobilized emerging spaces for learning beyond the classroom but also reversed the campus' operating logic, with students taking over institutional decisions during that period. This new configuration of space during the occupation caused other types of knowledge to circulate inside and outside

classrooms, allowing students to establish some form of rhizomatic activism without a single commanding voice and involving all participants in decision-making from the simplest everyday aspects of the occupation to the most complex ones related to the direction to be taken by the movement. At the end of each day, students would sit in a circle to discuss several issues: what had to be purchased for the next day's meals; who would respond to professors' demands for access to their rooms to get materials; an agenda of activities to add knowledge during their time commanding the campus; making banners for the following day's demonstrations in the city centre.

Negotiating with campus management, suspending classes, and obstructing research and community activities resulted in several difficult situations to be managed by the group of students responsible for the occupation. The subversion of ESEFID's control, even for a good cause and during a brief period, generated a strong counter-resistance movement, as it inverted the logic of decision-making hierarchies in that academic unit. The professors were divided between those who supported and collaborated with the movement, even holding activities with students, helping to purchase supplies and calling for respect for the students' struggle at professors' meetings during the occupation, and those who considered the initiative ineffective—or unreasonable—as it affected their work routines in their offices and classrooms. Students' views were also not unanimous. Some were supportive but did not want to get involved; others opposed it categorically and were outraged by the movement led by their colleagues; and, finally, some—certainly a minority—dedicated themselves body and soul to the activities of the occupation in the hope of reversing a harmful situation for the entire Brazilian population.

In this context of political division, an opportunity opened for the latter group of students to move through the space of full-time activism. They became a collective political body, a brave, resistant minority that gained ground, within its limits, as a driving force for change. The emergence of that student activism expanded an understanding, until then little discussed in the physiotherapy programme, that preparing for healthcare work takes more than teaching and learning the therapeutic act. Through their movement, students learned that quality action demands engagement with public spheres where institutional and governmental policy disputes take place (Nicholls & Vieira, 2023). Ocupa ESEFID enabled encounters between students that allowed them to discuss professional choices, career paths in physiotherapy,

and possibilities for expanding the field of activity. Ocupa ESEFID, therefore, ended up constituting a space for change and challenge, facilitating the emergence of bodies that had not felt represented in major education so far.

It is interesting to note that even the professors who defended the assumptions on which the Pedagogical Project for the Physiotherapy Bachelor's Degree was based—not by chance the same ones who supported the students' political struggle during Ocupa ESEFID—had not realized the absence of an extremely relevant debate for education in a profession that deals with bodies in movement: identity issues. Somewhat disappointed, these professors began to realize that the questions raised by the occupation movement had not been incorporated into classroom debates—an indication that the body-as-a-machine perspective (Nicholls & Gibson, 2010) still prevailed in the curriculum.

The trials at minor education produced by some students during the occupation gave visibility to bodies so far invisible within the conventional space of university classes. Given the context of the demands, some students reported that the movement had been very welcoming towards those who wanted to address issues related to the low representation of Black, transgender, gay, and feminist bodies so far virtually invisible to major education. Providing opportunities for debate on these topics, allowing ways of existing so far uncommon in that training space, and especially welcoming reports of experiences from students directly affected by the corresponding prejudices made some of those students feel acknowledged and valued as persons and as professionals in training changed the daily life of the campus (Lagranha, 2023).

On 13 December 2016, contrary to the wishes of students and professors engaged in Ocupa ESEFID as well as many other resistance struggles in Brazilian territory, Proposed Amendment to the Constitution 55/2016 (PEC 55), which conditioned the increase in public spending on variations in inflation, was approved by the Senate on a 53 to 16 second-round vote. After the vote, which enabled the promulgation of Constitutional Amendment 95 on December 15 of the same year, it was no longer possible to sustain the space of resistance and creativity that had occupied the Olympic Campus for almost fifty days. After many changes, uncommon constructions and the establishment of something new in the university's daily life, it was time to negotiate a return to the routine of classes and other academic activities.

A feeling of failure was mixed with relief at the end of the process. Despite all the positive experiences of that period, there was also exhaustion after

so many days spent away from home and sustaining resilience under pressure from professors, fellow students, and the community that opposed the Occupation. However, it is important to highlight the power of a new type of experience at the University, particularly in the ‘publish-or-perish’ era¹⁴ where knowledge is often reduced to its economic functions and education is treated as a commodity. Along with posting a video on Facebook, on December 22, 2016, the students demonstrated some of this power when they wrote:

This video features some of the best moments from the 47 days of our occupation. Despite facing daily struggles and working tirelessly, there were times when we felt hopeless in the face of the challenges. However, the moments of unity and companionship stood out. In a society that often promotes disunity and lack of self-awareness, we learned to observe, listen, and connect with one another. Our bodies and our most sensitive parts became instruments for fighting and struggling. Today, we are stronger because we are more united! The impact of the occupation remains with us (Resiste ESEFID, 2016).

As a result of negotiations to end Ocupa ESEFID, the students won a place to be used as headquarters for student unions at the physiotherapy and dance programmes, so they could meet and manage their activities within the Olympic Campus. The negotiations also included non-criminalization—whether civil, administrative, or academic—of all UFRGS’s students who participated in the occupation movement, a new academic calendar resuming in-person activities immediately after the end of the 2017 entrance exam, and the possibility to cancel enrolments again without any harm to students.

As for the physiotherapy programme, there was greater engagement from students and professors who followed the movement to reinforce the relevance of education and Collective Health as a reference, and the need to promote discussions on sexual orientation, gender identity, racism, and diversity in the classroom, as well as actions to combat violence, harassment, and discrimination that affect students, especially those who enter the university under the quota system. We also witnessed the emergence of coursework topics that were unusual in the physiotherapy programme such as access to physiotherapy services in Brazil, the health of the black population, the health of systematically oppressed people, experiences of transgender people in an academic environment, emotional suffering among physiotherapy students, and health of outsourced workers. In the professional trajectory

of the students who experienced that period, we also saw increased interest in working in public health departments in retirement homes and primary healthcare services.

Conclusions

In the wake of the Ocupa ESEFID movement, an ultraconservative wave against which students had rebelled gained ground in Brazil. There was an escalation of successive movements that led to the expansion and strengthening of a neoliberal necropolitical vision,¹⁵ culminating in the election of President Jair Messias Bolsonaro at the end of 2018. Added to this, we had the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic amid an already weakened economy led by a government that deliberately denied science, spread disinformation, and dismantled public policies in all sectors, especially in the areas of education and health. More specifically, the strengthening of a more technical training project centred on individual entrepreneurship of health professionals frustrated expectations of greater inclusion of physiotherapists at different levels and sectors of the Sistema Único de Saúde, as proposed by the 2002 National Curricular Guidelines. In the face of so many adverse developments, we could think that the occupation movement would have been in vain, a collective effort that came to succumb to, or even encourage, a counter-resistance movement that gained even more momentum in the period immediately after Ocupa ESEFID.

Yet in 2023, seven years after the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (PT) surprisingly became President of Brazil for the third time. One of his first measures, approved by Congress still during the transition period, was the end of the Spending Cap established by Constitutional Amendment 95 of 2016. That led to a new framework of fiscal rules with greater flexibility for investments in healthcare and education.

In a more promising macropolitical scenario, the tendency is to think that a physiotherapy training project based on the assumptions of humanization in healthcare, and comprehensive attention to people, aligned with the defence of the principles of the Sistema Único de Saúde, would naturally return to the route of major education and include more space for engaged students and professors to try their paths. However, within the dynamics of contrasts generated by the subversive movement characteristic of minor education, there is no way to establish a direct causal relationship between

micro and macro events, no matter how aligned—or misaligned—one and the other seem to be within a certain political spectrum. There is no possible control over how collectives interconnect in the process of resistance and counter-resistance to a given event. Therefore, there is no way to guarantee the future. As Gallo and Monteiro (2020) point out:

The current political situation in Brazil—and many other parts of the planet—places us before a chaotic world that tends to defeat us and make us depressed in the face of the future, which seems fleeting to us but aimed at strengthening a more multiple and democratic society (Gallo & Monteiro, 2020, p. 188).

When the students decided to start the occupation movement in October 2016, their aim was not to secure their future, but rather to resist the erosion of collective values in the present. Despite simultaneous solidarity events organized by other groups in different parts of the country,¹⁶ they took risks in the form of creative activism, explored the potential of the moment, and produced a unique collective event at the Olympic Campus of UFRGS. However, as powerful as that event was, there is no way to measure the effects of Ocupa ESEFID on the professional training of the students involved. Processes of such nature analysed from the perspective of minor education do not claim to function as a model of resistance for the students' movement nor to leave any type of material legacy, since their power lies, as Gallo (2002) states, in maintaining its minority character and its ability to sustain a movement of resistance to the policies imposed.

While the subversive and creative energy that “occupied” ESEFID in 2016 no longer shines as brightly, we notice that it has not entirely dissipated. Despite the prevailing political scenario, it is crucial to reflect on how open and attentive we still are to the sparks that have the potential to rekindle the flame of change and once again “occupy” the Olympic Campus.

Notes

- 1 The English translation would be Occupy ESEFID.
- 2 Student mobilizations that have become emblematic in the 21st century occurred in different parts of the world in schools and universities. Notable instances include the High School Penguin Revolution in Chile in May 2006, the Chilean Winter in August 2011 (Caliban, 2012), the Fees Must Fall

movement in South Africa in October 2015 (Hodes, 2016), and the Primavera Secundarista in Brazil in November 2015 (Groppa et al., 2023; Miller, 2023). Despite variations in the specific demands of secondary and university students in these protests, a common thread among them was the shared discontent and opposition among young citizens to conforming to neoliberal measures. These measures were observed to generate inequalities in access to and financing of quality education in countries historically marked by social disparities.

- 3 It's crucial to note that the crisis began during President Dilma Rousseff's first term with the 2013 protests, which showed dissatisfaction with the Federal Government from several groups (Moraes et al., 2015; Snider, 2017; Purdy, 2019).
- 4 Dilma Rousseff's re-election, in addition to the two terms of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in office, kept the Workers' Party (PT) in power for 14 years—a unique event in Brazil's political history.
- 5 In August 2023, Brazilian Justice acquitted former President Rousseff and ended the case of the alleged 'creative accounting' (<https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/cn37z5v89d4o>).
- 6 Gallo (2008) refers to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of rhizome to reflect on the issues of curriculum and educational organization as production of multiplicities in educational processes, opposing the arboreal, Cartesian and hierarchical perspective that sees education with a single axis when organizing knowledge.
- 7 The Federal Council of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy (COFFITO) plays the constitutional role of standardizing and exercising ethical, scientific, and social control over the professions of physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The institutional website is available at <https://www.coffito.gov.br/nsite/?page_id=9>.
- 8 Since the official recognition of Physiotherapy as a profession in 1969, Brazil has seen a significant increase in undergraduate programmes: from 48 in 1991 to 632 in 2017 (Rocha et al., 2010; Matsumura et al, 2020).
- 9 The Sistema Único de Saúde, translated as Unified Health System in English, ensures free healthcare at all levels for the entire Brazilian population. It was regulated in 1990, following the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution (Paim et al, 2011).
- 10 It is worth noting that in 1985, after the end of the military regime, left wing political forces mobilized to ensure rights in the 1988 Constituent Assembly and to regulate the Sistema Único de Saúde in 1990. However, Brazil found itself under neoliberal governments during the Fernando Collor de Mello (1990-1994) and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) administrations. Their policies slowed down the necessary process of change and investment to expand healthcare and education for the population (Sallum Jr., 2003).

- 11 The Brazilian Association of Physiotherapy Education (ABENFISIO) gathers professors, students, professionals as well as other organizations and people interested in creating policies and guidelines for Physiotherapy training in Brazil (Rocha et al., 2010). The institutional website is available at <<https://www.abenfisio.com.br/>>
- 12 Despite the need to expand free-of-fee public universities to promote social justice, the program was highly criticized due to the lack of budgetary compensation, which compromised the quality of the infrastructure and the functions to be performed by the institutions and made teaching precarious (Léda & Mancebo, 2009).
- 13 The first programme was implemented in the 2008 university admission test when 30% of places in each school were reserved for two types of candidates: public school students and self-declared black students. Schooling was the basis, and from then on there was also the possibility of declaring oneself black, with 15% of places reserved for students who combined both factors. When Federal Law 2711—the so-called Quota Act—was signed into law in 2012, it established that all federal universities should have admission quotas. At UFRGS, the percentage of those places was 50% and there was an increase in criteria to include self-declared mixed-race and indigenous students, totalling eight criteria, with some combined factors. From 2018 on, something new emerged: quotas for people with disabilities, according to the law signed in December 2016 (Law 13409). See it at <https://www.ufrgs.br/humanista/2018/10/20/10-anos-cotas-universidade/>
- 14 To learn more about the implication of the publish-or-perish era in Brazil, see ‘For a Public Sociology of Sport in the Americas: An Editorial Call on Behalf of a Socially Engaged Scholarship on Sport and Physical Education’ (Donnelly et al., 2014).
- 15 The idea is based on two interconnected concepts, namely necropolitics and necrocapitalism. Necropolitics, introduced by Achille Mbembe in 2003, refers to a type of political violence that is based on State racism and the power to determine who deserves to live and who deserves to die. Necrocapitalism is a term coined by James Tyner (2019) drawing from Mbembe’s work, where capitalism determines one’s susceptibility to death based on social status and vulnerability. It turns the premature death of vulnerable bodies into a means of generating profits for the wealthy (Jesus, 2020).
- 16 For more information on other student movements during that period, you can refer to the article #OcupaEscola: Media Activism and the Movement for Public Education in Brazil (Sousa & Canavarro, 2018). This article analyses the presence of these movements on Facebook and YouTube between 2015 and 2016 using a cross-method approach that correlates video-activism narratives with network analysis.

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