

Rurbana Education: the place of the rural and the urban in the debates of CRPE-Recife under the administration of Gilberto Freyre (1957-1969)¹

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Abstract

This article approaches the importance of discussing the rural and the urban in the research and debates carried out at the Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife (CRPE-Recife) during Gilberto Freyre's tenure, which occurred in the period from 1957 to 1969. The study that resulted in this article aimed to understand how the concerns and visions of Latin America in Gilberto Freyre's intellectual production animated, or not, the political, interpretative or reflective actions at the Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife regarding Latin America. In this investigation, we are faced with an intense debate about the relationships between the regional, the rural and the urban within the scope of school policies and epistemologies of educational research. The documentation mobilized belongs to the Regional Center under the custody of Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, in Recife, and/or were made available by the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies, especially the *Cadernos Região e Educação*.

Keywords: Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife. Rural and Urban. Latin America. Gilberto Freyre.

Educação Rurbana: o lugar do rural e do urbano nos debates do CRPE-Recife sob a gestão de Gilberto Freyre (1957-1969)

Resumo

Este trabalho tematiza o lugar do rural e do urbano nas pesquisas e nos debates realizados no Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife

(CRPE-Recife) durante a gestão de Gilberto Freyre, ou seja, no período de 1957 a 1969. A pesquisa que resultou neste artigo teve por objetivo compreender como as visões da América Latina presentes na produção intelectual de Gilberto Freyre animaram, ou não, as ações políticas, interpretativas ou reflexivas do Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife. Em seu desenvolvimento, deparamo-nos com um intenso debate sobre as relações entre o regional, o rural e o urbano no âmbito das políticas escolares e das epistemologias da pesquisa educacional. A documentação mobilizada pertence ao Centro Regional sob a guarda da Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, do Recife, e/ou foi disponibilizada pelo Instituto Nacional do Estudos Pedagógicos, especialmente os *Cadernos Região e Educação*.

Palavras-chave: Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife. Rural e Urbano. América Latina. Gilberto Freyre.

La educación Rurbana: el lugar de lo rural y lo urbano en los debates de la CRPE-Recife bajo la dirección de Gilberto Freyre (1957-1969)

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Resumen

Este artículo tematiza el lugar de lo rural y lo urbano en las investigaciones y debates realizados en el Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife (CRPE-Recife) durante la administración de Gilberto Freyre, o sea, en el período de 1957 a 1969. La investigación que resultó en este texto tuvo como objetivo comprender cómo las preocupaciones e incluso las visiones de América Latina presentes en la producción intelectual de Gilberto Freyre animaron, o no, las acciones políticas, interpretativas o reflexivas del Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife acerca de la América Latina. En su desarrollo, nos encontramos ante un intenso debate sobre las relaciones entre lo regional, lo rural y lo urbano en el ámbito de las políticas escolares y las epistemologías de la investigación educativa. La documentación movilizada pertenece al Centro Regional bajo custodia de la Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, en Recife, y/o puesta a disposición por el Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos, especialmente los os *Cadernos Região e Educação*.

Palabras clave: Centro Regional Pesquisas Educacionais do Recife. Rural y urbano. América Latina. Gilberto Freyre.

Introduction

The theme of the rural and the urban, or, more specifically, the place of these territories, their customs, traditions, ways, and practices of doing and living, that is, their cultures, were objects of reflection of practically all the intellectuals who sought to understand Brazil in the mid-twentieth century. Antônio Cândido, Anísio Teixeira, Celso Furtado, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Thales Azevedo, Aparecida Joly Gouvêa, Luís Costa Pinto, Paul Singer, Darcy Ribeiro, Lourenço Filho, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, Luiz Pereira, Florestan Fernandes, Arthur Ramos and Fernando Azevedo, to name just a few of these intellectuals, when discussing the transformations that occurred in Brazil at that time, paid special attention to the changes in the countryside-city dyad.

Within Brazilian social thought from the 1930s to the 1970s, the remarkable presence of this theme in educational thinking and debates cannot be neglected. In this sense, it is important to remember that a good part of those thinkers listed above, and many others of the same caliber, also focused on the theme of education – which demonstrates the importance of the theme in Brazilian social thought prior to the organization of graduate studies in the country. But not only that.

As indicated by a large bibliography, the tensions brought to the universe of education and, more specifically, of the school, due to the phenomenon that was configured, in the specialized literature, as "rural exodus", were not few and, much less, small. The phenomenon, largely transnational – at least regarding Latin America – of migration from the countryside to the city, with the consequent expansion of the urban population and the growing demand for occupation, goods, and services, began to occupy not only specialists, but also educational policies, debates within schools and the concerns of education professionals (Chaloba; Celeste Filho; Mesquita, 2020; Pereira, 2022; Chaloba, 2023).

It is in this context that Gilberto Freyre, at the same time one of the greatest exponents of the Brazilian and Latin American intellectuality and director

of the Regional Center for Educational Research of Recife (CRPE-Recife, the acronym in Portuguese)² (1957 to 1969), an agency linked to the Brazilian Center for Educational Research (CBPE, the acronym in Portuguese) and INEP (National Institute of Pedagogical Studies) (Xavier, 1999), turns himself to understanding the phenomenon of countryside-city relations in its implications for education.

Although Gilberto Freyre does not have a broad production on education in its school form, it is present in the set of his work. More than that, much of his sociology and anthropology of a “new type,” as he himself emphasized (Faria Filho, 2021, p. 243), constituted the search for understanding the formation of Brazilian society, within which the educational dimensions of human relations are clearly understood (Oliveira, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to consider that he did not have to wait for Anísio Teixeira’s invitation to direct the CRPE-Recife (Souza, 2013) to dedicate himself to thinking specifically about the subjects and even about educational policies (Silva; Lima, 2012).³

The assumption of the position of director of the Regional Center would allow Gilberto Freyre, however, not only to approach the theme of the school and, in a systematic way, its discussion, but also to disseminate his ideas about the formation of Brazil with the team of the Center and, above all, with the teachers and technical personnel of education in the region.

This text was prepared within an investigation that aimed to understand how the concerns and visions of Latin America present in Gilberto Freyre’s intellectual production animated, or not, the political, interpretative, or reflective actions of the Regional Center for Educational Research of Recife about Latin America. In the investigation and dialogue established with the intellectual, the Brazilian social thought and the educational policies history of the period, mobilizing the documentation on the Regional Center under the custody of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, of Recife, and/or made available by INEP, especially the *Region and Education Journals*, we noticed that there was an intense appropriation and mobilization of the concept of *rurban*, coined and disclosed by Gilberto Freyre, for the understanding of school education. It is, therefore, part of this debate that we deal with in this article.

The rurban and education: a new schooling policy?

In a book published in the 1980s, Gilberto Freyre (1982)⁴ goes back to the publication of *Nordeste*, in 1937, and his concern with a certain “social ecology” (Freyre, 1982; Froehlich, 2000) that would largely cross his work and would have in the notion of *rurbano*/*rurbanity* one of its high points. In this book, according to Beatriz C. Duqueviz,

Freyre resumes concepts latent throughout his work, such as the balance of antagonisms, which reconciles the modern with the traditional, finding a genuinely Brazilian solution to the national problems arising from the problematic urban-industrial progress (Duqueviz, 2006, p. 9).

In the book in question, *Rurbanização: que é?* (Rurbanization: what is?), the sociologist from Pernambuco brings together a set of texts on the subject and, among them, the oldest is a speech by the author to rural teachers from Pernambuco, dated 1956⁵. This is, therefore, its seminal text on rurbanization and, given the fact that it directly involves education in its schooled form, here it interests us in a particular way.

In 1956, invited to give a conference at the installation of a training course for rural teachers in Pernambuco, he dealt with the relations between school education and the urban and rural environment, a theme, as already mentioned, fundamental in the social thought and educational policies of the period. The text of this conference was later published in the *Brazilian Journal of Pedagogical Studies* (RBEP, the acronym in Portuguese) (Freyre, 1957a).

The text published in the RBEP refers us to a fourfold articulation within the work of Gilberto Freyre: first, to the entire work of the Pernambuco intellectual so far in his attempt to reconcile the constitutive opposites, according to him, of Brazilian society – blacks/whites, big house/slaves' quarters, traditional/modern, among others –, that is, to his effort to “[...] seek to transform from antagonistic to complementary” (Freyre, 1957a, p. 66).

Next, it articulates its political and intellectual clash in Recife (and in the rest of Brazil) within the social sciences⁶. His text, he says, is rightly uttered:

At a time when false sociologists and political improvisers are considering, with messianic pretensions, making Recife what they call "the great Recife", by adding, to today's already overloaded Recife, populations and sub-areas of neighboring municipalities, with perhaps electoral purposes, dangerously political and all disastrous from a social point of view, it is good to say, in a loud voice, if not of alarm, of warning, that one intends to practice against Pernambuco state, next to a true political crime, an immense sociological error (Freyre, 1957a, p. 66).

In this perspective, the text is, thirdly, a more detailed, updated, and refined elaboration of a problem that, as already mentioned, appears systematically in his books: the relationship between the rural and the urban, as we will see later. Fourthly, although in the text this appears first, it is about its articulation with the specific problem of education within the transformations that Pernambuco and, especially, Recife, had been going through:

What is suggested is that the rural teaching problem in Pernambuco, as in other areas of Brazil, should not be considered as independent of the urban; nor should the urban solved — scenographically solved, it is well to see — as if deep roots did not bind it to the rural; or as if the most intimate of regional interdependencies did not, in several essential points, make two contradictory problems a regional problem only, although complex (Freyre, 1957a, p. 65).

It is, therefore, from this fourfold articulation that the sociologist addresses the "rural problem of teaching" — mind you, it is not a matter of addressing the problem of rural education in an inversion of terms that is not at all unwise — and proposes that educational policies, as part of "a new policy in Brazil", be considered in their fundamentally rurban aspect. But what would this rurban politics be for Freyre?

What is needed in Pernambuco state — I now suggest since these studies — is a social policy that is not based on either the urbanization or ruralization of the Pernambuco state community, but strives for its rurbanization. That is: in balance, within this complex and already ancient and ecologically and sociologically diverse community due to its various natural and cultural spaces that we must seek to transform from antagonistic to complementary — agrarian, pastoral, industrial — urban values and styles with rural values and

styles. More than balance: interpretation. Concentration. We need to form and develop here a rurban mentality, in the conjugal sense of rurba-nity, so to speak. Therefore, rurban not only in the sense that is commonly attributed to the word created by Galpin to define intermediate situations between the purely urban and the purely rural, but in what, expanding the idea of Prof. Cole, I have been in Brazil seeking to develop to characterize a mixed, dynamic and, I repeat, conjugal, fruitfully conjugal situation: a third situation developed by the combination of values of the two original and sometimes contrary or disharmonious situations, when pure (Freyre, 1957a, p. 66).

From this perspective, throughout the text, the sociologist regrets the logic that has been presiding over the transformations of Brazilian society - and, of course, the sociological errors related to it - of a primacy of the urban, its values, customs, and practices, that is, its culture, over those of the rural world. He does not, however, on the other hand, propose a naive defense of the second over the first, but the articulation of the two towards a rur-ban culture. For this, it is necessary to recognize urban values and transfer them to the rural world. But also, on the other hand, to recognize the tradition, importance, and qualities of rural culture in the constitution of Pernambuco state, Brazil and Latin America and transmit them to the new generations, often, against what radio, cinema and other cultural productions have been doing throughout the country⁷. For this, a broad cultural educational project would be necessary, "a new social policy" that would traffic, in a two-way street, the best of both worlds. And certainly, the school would not be the only institution to be mobilized. Cinema, theater, radio, books, municipal centers of culture and recreation, all should contribute to the cultural education of the population.

Gilberto Freyre did not lose sight of the auditorium in front of him. Therefore, it does not refuse to think about education in its school form and even in teaching. While teasing the young sectarian supporters of a certain "pan-industrialism", among whom certainly lined up a significant part of the "young sociologists" with whom he laid down arms within the Brazilian academic field (Meucci, 2006), Gilberto Freyre claimed to place great hope and responsibility on the elementary school female teacher:

For the formation of this new civilization, dynamically rur-ban, deliberately rurban and not rurban by imposition of circumstances and

that, resisting the Sebastianism of the old people still nostalgic for the Brazilian agrarian past, resists above all the sectarianism of the supporters not all young people of a pan-industrialism until recently so powerful among us that the still recent and somewhat bloody history of its power, sometimes contrary to the best national interest, could already be a matter of police romance, much can compete, in fact, the primary female teacher (Freyre, 1957a, p. 73).

Female missionaries of a progress that comes hand in hand with the qualities of the founding culture of Brazil, the culture of rural populations, it would be up to the female teachers a heroic role in the direction to be taken by the transformations that were going through, at that time, the societies of Pernambuco state, Brazil, and all of America:

Hence so much depend on rural female teachers not only Pernambuco state, the Northeast, but all of Brazil, all of America. The world that is reorganizing itself today. I am not caressing your ears with honeyed praise from the female teachers who listen to me at this inauguration of a course chaired by a governor and decorated with official flowers. It is the reality that I am recalling to your modesty of unpretentious female missionaries: Franciscans in skirts, blouses, and high-heeled shoes. There is something heroic about your task, when performed in its fullness of missionary task. Something that makes your youth dedicated to childhood and to the populations of the countryside a youth so much higher than that of elegant girls who do not work for the needy of their work and do not even leave the capitals, except for an equally elegant tourist trip, that, without this dedication, this work, this effort, this life apparently spent among rude young men, but in fact enriched by contact with the rustic and genuinely Brazilian people of the countryside, there would be no Pernambuco state nor would there be Brazil. Nor would a new civilization be forming in America (Freyre, 1957a, p. 82).

Also in the same year, in a text published soon after in RBEP n. 68, of 1957, also from a conference for rural teachers, Gilberto Freyre, despite not using the term rurban, invites the auditorium to think in the same direction. Rural female teachers are assigned the task of mediating between "rural values" and "urban values", taking care that progress and life in the city did not cover the "rural brio". Defending the importance of rural primary school teachers and

their so-called responsibility beyond the teaching of subjects related to the school curriculum (using the denomination in a restricted way) was not exclusive to Gilberto Freyre's productions, but an idea present in the educational debate of the period. With some nuances and points of distancing, productions linked to Inep and/or CBPE dealt with rural education as an issue in Brazilian education, as an agenda to be solved – and its teachers as central to this. To this end, formation, selection, and performance of rural teachers were seen, at the same time, as a problem and solution of education and, consequently, objects of projects and actions (Pereira, 2014).

Adaptation to the rural social environment was seen as decisive. One of the ways to guarantee such adaptation would be the presence, in elementary schools, of teachers from the locality itself, an idea defended by others who circulated at Inep and/or CBPE. This is the case of João Roberto Moreira who, in an article entitled "Rural Education and Basic Education", published in 1957 in RBEP (and later in the book *Theory and Practice of Elementary School*, released in 1960 by CBPE), defends the importance of the school institution and its performance in the rural social environment, in an integrated way with the community.⁸ To exercise the function of local leader, the teacher would need to have good formation and be adapted to reality: once "[...] prepared to educate his own people, in view of the development of the area in which he was born and lived his childhood, he will have an easier time exercising educational and leadership functions" (Moreira, 1957, p. 122).

These broad and complex "educational and leadership functions" appear in the discourses, linked to a representation of teaching as a mission, in which teachers, and especially female teachers, would have, in an almost heroic way, reach beyond the school space. In contradiction, these leaders in their respective communities probably did not access a career and salaries consistent with such a role.⁹

In the years following the "Conference for Rural Teachers" (Freyre, 1957b), in texts published when already director of CRPE-Recife, Freyre returns to the theme of education, maintaining the positions initially exposed, although dealing with various topics (Freyre, 1958a; 1958b; 1960). It will, however, be in the debate with Levy Cruz¹⁰, on the occasion of a conference pronounced on November 7, 1959, in the Course on Problems of School Policy and

Administration in the Northeast of Brazil, promoted by the Center and subordinated to the general theme "Education and Region", that the sociologist from Pernambuco will argue strongly in defense of rural education as one of the solutions to national problems.

The Regional Center for Educational Research of Recife (CRPE-Recife) and the issue of rural, urban and rural education

Levy Cruz's lecture, under the title "Space, time, region and education", was published in the initial number of the *Region and Education Notebooks*, of 1961, preceded by the following observation:

In it, the author brought to the discussion the problem of regionalization and municipalization of education, seeking to show the educators present the implications of this approach to education, especially with regard to issues of change versus persistence. According to the author, the most isolated areas of the world until recently are currently undergoing social and cultural changes, sometimes radical, and education that remains "localized", ignoring these changes, will soon be dysfunctional for the populations involved. It concludes by emphasizing that it is necessary to take into account local cultures in the planning of education systems, but also adapting them to the time, present and future factor, since the changes under consideration will soon reach these regions and municipalities (Cruz, 1961, n. p.).

At the opening of his conference, Levy Cruz attributes to Gilberto Freyre a "happy idea" of "[...] addressing, in this course, educational subjects related to the region. I have participated in some of these lectures, and I am convinced of one thing: that there is an element missing here – the very important element – the time factor" (Cruz, 1961, p. 5). He also observes that the title, despite having been chosen by himself, "[...] is unfortunate. It is too abstract, and despite containing the elements I want to talk about, it says nothing" (Cruz, 1961, p. 5). He recalls, however, that it is a topic for debate and cites Antônio Cândido de Mello e Souza, from the University of São Paulo, for whom "it is up to the sociologist... to raise questions" (Cruz, 1961, p. 5).

He argues that the Brazilian countryside is marked by behaviors and customs, such as: individualism, attachment to routine techniques, diverse beliefs "[...] or, as people not initiated in science would say, social: beliefs and superstitions [...]", political conflicts (including armed struggle and deaths), violent reactions to behaviors considered inappropriate (taking the bride from another to dance, for example), acceptance of a profound difference in social position between the sexes, existence of a double standard of sexual morality with the concomitant inferior position of women, male bigamy (Cruz, 1961, p. 8-9). It concludes:

Therefore, we have a series of customs that are found in rural areas. Not all of them are of this type, of course. But these exist. They are part of the customs with which teachers would have to 'identify' and contribute to maintain. Because this is the idea of the proponents of the municipalization of education. For it would not justify an "identification" without any purpose (Cruz, 1961, p. 9).

Identifying regionalization with municipalization and this with the adaptation of the school to its environment, he argues: "To agree with this type of approach would therefore be to agree with the maintenance of the status quo, of the existing situation" (Cruz, 1961, p. 9, underlined in the original). If we agreed that "the school, therefore, must act – in my view, and, I believe, in the view of teachers – as a factor for change", it is necessary to ask: "But change in which direction? Change to which new customs and for which new behaviors?" (Cruz, 1961, p. 9).

Cruz (1961), in his conference, argues that urbanization is a process that is both demographic (change of rural populations towards cities) – demonstrated by statistical data on several countries in the world and on some Brazilian states – and sociological (change in rural cultures towards urban culture) –, demonstrated by relevant bibliography. Thus, after presenting data on the states of the South and Southeast, in which 50% or more of the population, in 1950, were already in the cities, he warns that, although the states of the Northeast are fundamentally rural, the most urbanized, according to the data presented, is Pernambuco state, with 14.7% of the urban population.

Using the support of Antônio Cândido (1957), Anísio Teixeira (1938), Darcy Ribeiro - ACRES, Emílio Willens (1944) and others, he argues that the

city-countryside contradiction will be resolved in the sense of "total urbanization". Appropriating the works of Antônio Cândido, he states: "Contemporary civilization is (theoretically) equipped to solve the countryside-city contradiction in the sense of total urbanization", and continues:

[...] the sense of contemporary civilization is that of irreversible urbanization, with the suppression of the rural as a dimension of life. Be very clear, one last time, the urban does not mean in this case identification necessary for urban agglomeration... It essentially means a type of culture that can manifest itself in the most diverse varieties of demographic concentration and technical specialization and, therefore, can be placed within the reach of rural man (Mello and Souza, 1957 apud Cruz, 1961, p. 64-65).

The lecturer's conclusion could not be other than the emphatic defense that the school must educate according to a city style or an urban culture. Before, however, finishing his intervention in the course organized by CRPE-Recife, and to make his position more eloquent, Cruz uses the arguments of Mário Wagner Vieira da Cunha¹¹, who states, according to the lecturer, that

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If rural problems are, therefore, roughly, problems of urbanization of the countryside, the reorganization of rural society must be discussed without losing sight of the fact that it is not a matter of reorganizing the countryside, purely and simply, but of reorganizing it in the sense of bringing it closer to the cities. Thus, sociologists rule out those attempts to reorganize the countryside, such as those inspired by Le Play, which seek to reinforce precisely the characteristics of rural society through which they most distance themselves from an urban society. (Cunha, s/d apud Cruz, 1961, p. 16, underlined in the original).

Of remarkable courage and availability for intellectual debate, when defending theses in almost everything opposite, or, at least, divergent from those other members of the CRPE-Recife and, above all, its director defended¹², Levy Cruz ends up also teasing the "educators" who did not seem to read what social scientists had been producing on the subject. Using a rhetoric of apparent humility, but being sure to update a conflict between "educators" and "social scientists" that had long crossed the CBPE (Xavier, 1999), he apologizes

[...] to the auditorium, composed mostly of teachers, for having presented ideas perhaps so opposed to those of educators. The reason I see for this is that the sociologist has a broader view than the educator: while the educator is concerned with teaching, the social scientist aims at the study of society, in which education is only one of the aspects to be considered, and closely related to the others. Social scientists are saying of the changes towards an urbanization of the countryside, and it is necessary for educators to consider this. Rural or agricultural vocation is a fallacy (Cruz, 1961, p. 17).

Levy Cruz's lecture is long and was published in full in the *Region and Education Journals*. It is not appropriate here to resume it completely, but only to situate ourselves in the context in which Gilberto Freyre and, as we will see, some of the people who worked at CRPE-Recife debated the issue of rural education. At the end of the exhibition, according to what was published in the *Region and Education Journals*, the director of the Center, Gilberto Freyre, opens by saying that "Conferences such as the one Professor Levy Cruz has just pronounced, attest well to one of our Center's efforts towards an articulation of educational and social research [...]. All our desire, at the Center, is in this sense" (Cruz, 1961, p. 20).

There are several people who intervene in the debate; hardly anyone agrees with Levy Cruz. Gilberto Freyre enters the discussion by asking about the statistical data used. He says: "I would like to ask Professor Levy Cruz what are the dates of his international statistics on the increase in urban populations" (Cruz, 1961, p. 20). After being answered by the lecturer that the statistics ranged from 1880 to 1947, depending on the country, Freyre states:

This point seems important to me because of the following: since [19]45 there has been a clear tendency in overindustrialized European countries to react to urbanization. It is not exactly a purely anti-urban attitude, although it has something of this character, but it is above all what some sociologists (I regret that this group was totally despised by Professor Levy Cruz) call rural, that is, the interpenetration of the rural and the urban (Cruz, 1961, p. 20, underlined in the original).

He argues that in the cities under construction in "Britain and Germany devastated by the war and in the parts conquered by the Netherlands from the

sea [...] the dwellings themselves are built in such a way as to allow rurban, and even, clearly agrarian activities" (Cruz, 1961, p. 24, underlined in the original). And explaining a very optimistic perspective on the impact of automation on the liberation of working-class time and a very uncritical perception of Fordism, he argues that a rurban way of life is not only possible, but desirable for workers.

He goes on now to argue that the interpenetration between the urban and the rural is a phenomenon that appears in almost all industrialized countries, and that the rural-urban contradiction seems to make sense. He emphasizes: "I believe that the countryside-city opposition is only noticeable today in countries of large extensions, in an accelerated process of industrialization" (Cruz, 1961, p. 24). Despite his disagreement with the lecturer's views, he recognizes his contribution to the complex understanding of the issues faced by the Regional Center.

Geraldo Costa enters the debate on the relationship between region, education, and time:

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Since the emphasis in this debate was on time, I believe that when Dr. Gilberto Freyre spoke about the situation of ruralism in certain European countries, we should consider first of all the Brazilian time. Currently – given the economic possibilities, possibilities of industrialization – I believe that we are facing a fact, which will last for some time, in which industrialization will have urbanization as a corollary. In these countries that Dr. Gilberto Freyre recalled, the corollary of industrialization is no longer urbanization, but rurbanization. [...] I believe that, currently in Brazil, we must think about this problem. Neither culture nor the economy can make leaps. They must evolve over time. Currently, I think the corollary of industrialization in Brazil is urbanization. This we discussed as a fact. It would be ideal – then, there is another problem – for us to reach more quickly than other countries, using their experience, that phase in which the corollary of industrialization, or one of them, is rurbanization. In the particular Brazilian case, when establishing the objective or end of education, one has to be aware of this. Under such guidance, the conceptualization of programs, installation, location, teacher formation, etc., should be considered. (Cruz, 1961, p. 33-34, underlined in the original).

Gilberto Freyre challenges him stating that "As a trend, but in reality – you said, of the present time, of the actuality – this is it. In this case, educators should still be thinking in predominantly rural terms, albeit admitting an urban-industrial future." And he asks: "But there is another thing: does it not seem to you that automation, developing in Europe and the United States, will soon reach Brazil? Doesn't it seem to you that you can get from the ox car to the airplane, without going through this step?" (Cruz, 1961, p. 33-34), to which his interlocutor, Geraldo Costa, answers "This is a problem to be discussed":

Of time. It is entirely within the question of time. And I am very glad that we are discussing this time factor today, because it seems to me that it has really been neglected by us and it is very important. And again, I say, it was a valuable contribution from Professor Levy Cruz. and Dr. Geraldo Costa touched on an aspect that is really interesting, for a Brazilian time, which is not German time, which is not Danish time, which is not the time of these super-civilizations from the urban and industrial point of view, which are already in a period of rurbanization. Yes, there is no doubt. Now, we cannot think in orthodox evolutionary terms, that Brazil must go through the entire industrial phase, as if automation will not touch us – and very quickly. We lived, almost by exception, in a slave regime. But we could not resist, because free labor was invading everything. Automated work will catch up with us quickly. We will not need to go through the whole orthodox phase of industrialization before we get to automation. Don't you think? (Cruz, 1961, p. 34).

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In summary, Gilberto Freyre's position is to "[...] think about industrialization, think about urbanization, rurbanization, and post-industrialization through automation. The educator, and the Brazilian social scientist, must be thinking about it as perspectives" (Cruz, 1961, p. 35).

Another person who intervenes in the debate is Carlos F. Maciel, then director of Educational Research at the Center. He defends that the "[...] statistics are not as objective as they seem [...]", he questions Levy Cruz about the fact that he considers as cities villages of more than 2500 inhabitants (Cruz, 1961, p. 36), questioning the criteria to establish what would be an urban zone and, on the other hand, what would be a rural zone. In this regard, Cruz tends to agree with his interlocutor, considering that the criteria are really changing. But, above all, it argues that there is no "urban" or "rural" in a pure state,

especially the urban, since a large part of the population that lives in the cities originates from the rural world:

But it is possible that something remains rural, in this part of the population that lives in the cities. After all, they are people who came as adults, were socialized in rural areas and who, at least for some time, maintain some rural characteristics. So that there is no such pure urban and I believe that I did not give the impression of it, but it is always good to make this observation – since this issue of size was remembered (Cruz, 1961, p. 37).

Finally, we would like to bring here the position of Professor Maria Elisa Viegas¹³ in the debate. Reacting to the lecturer's provocation that educators do not read sociologists and therefore have ingrained positions on these matters, she begins by returning the provocation to her interlocutor, Levy Cruz, saying:

I would like to ask Professor Levy Cruz: Could we really consider an educator, one who gave himself the task of demanding from the researcher an accommodation, outside the reality of his research, to the systematic theories of this educator? This would not be an educator. It would just be an individual who taught... (Cruz, 1961, p. 25).

To which he replies, also provocatively: "I agree. It would be a way of failing in one's own ideals of education and even honesty. But I suspect that some educators would like this statement to come from researchers" (Cruz, 1961, p. 25).

Arguing that educators are also researchers and that since the 1930s – "times of Carneiro Leão" – they demand the presence of social scientists in education, she also defends her positions in relation to rural education. Levy Cruz argues that social science, since Carneiro Leão, has changed, noting that

I myself, until a certain time, was favorable and sympathetic to this idea [of regionalization] [...] simultaneously with this development of science, there was also an intensification of changes. Social change and cultural change, increasingly rapid today, more intense than thirty or forty years ago. So that the idea of

regionalizing, of locating education, is less valid today. At that time things were slower. Locating the teaching was actually giving an education that was not only appropriate to that time, but also to the following years. But this intensification of the pace of social and cultural change must be considered today more than at that time (Cruz, 1961, p. 27).

Maria Elisa, based on her research and experience, asserts:

The elementary female teacher's action is in the present tense, although what the child receives as a basis in elementary school will only apply remotely. But the child is systematic in liking what he is touching and seeing now. The education of the child is different from the adolescent who already has the possibility of generalization. [...] By planting sugarcane in the forest area, cotton in the wild or handling with ox in the hinterland, through the emotions of these three things, the female teacher of each of these regions can give the boy the notion that it will really be tomorrow, when in the hinterland, we have the "refrigerated ox". It can, today, leave in the student's soul the conception of progress, without escaping, now, his interest, which is, in reality, the rural area he is living in (Cruz, 1961, p. 27).

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Levy Cruz, however, asks about "what is of interest to the child at the moment", and argues: "[...] you see, for example, the sugarcane, the ox, etc. I also see other things: the truck, the train... And this is the kind of things that, in my view, are interesting the child now" (Cruz, 1961, p. 27). To which she replies:

And currently I consider, in our rural environment, that the spiritual umbanda entity of the truck is the most important factor... We teachers know this... And I have always warned them: beware of the truck spiritual umbanda entity, because he leads a truncated civilization. It is necessary, precisely, that she has a very high conception of what it is to educate, so as not to consent to the danger of the truck going without the boy being prepared to understand the truncated civilization that the spiritual umbanda entity of the truck takes (Cruz, 1961, p. 28).

Harassed by an audience that, considering the interventions in the debate, was very unfavorable, Levy Cruz, who had maintained a position

of scientific sociologist, while being a polemicist, and sought to keep at a distance the elaborations of the other members of the CRPE-Recife group – including Gilberto Freyre –, could not, however, fail to bow to the circumstances. And he does so through “an explanation to Dr. Gilberto Freyre”. At a certain point in the debate, when he returns to the floor, he states:

First of all, I owe an explanation to Dr. Gilberto Freyre: I didn't really talk about the rurban, in my work. On one occasion I thought to include something about it, but I thought the lecture was already quite long and avoided talking about this issue of the rurban. It was the same, in fact, with the question of concepts, which Professor Silvio Loreto began raising. I had even thought about starting my work by clarifying some concepts: regionalization, municipalization of teaching, what is rural, what is urban, etc., but I thought it would take the place of other things that I thought were more important (Cruz, 1961, p. 31).

Although it cannot be known, in fact, whether the option not to start with the “concepts” was really to focus on “more important” things or whether it would have been to not directly clash with theoretical positions cultivated by the Recife group, the truth is that the conference caused controversy and, considering the record of the debate, unease among those present. This, however, did not prevent Gilberto Freyre from ending the debates by reinforcing, once again, the perspective of “balance” and “integration” between the opposing parties, which was so dear to him:

As you can see, in this Center, in relation to the subject that was discussed here today, in such an interesting way, we are in an ideal situation of balance: Professor Levy Cruz is an urbanist, Professor Moreira de Sousa¹⁴ is a ruralist and I am a rurbanist. So that we are here perfectly balanced (Cruz, 1961, p. 37).

In fact, this synthesis is a little simplistic and does not do justice to the profound divergences made explicit throughout the debates. In this sense, it seems best to agree with Meucci (2015) when she states that Cruz and Freyre's positions are “radically different”.

The conclusion that the positions or that the relations of force within the Center would be in balance can thus be interpreted as a way of producing

a “balanced” closure to the elongated debate, explaining, once again, as already mentioned above, the Freyrean perspective that the opposites can, and should, remain and be confused in the manner of their rur-bano proposal.

Final considerations

In the 1950s, when he elaborated more systematically the ideas discussed here, Gilberto Freyre was already a national and international reference when it came to thinking about Brazil. In the wake of his “sociology and anthropology of a new type”, which proposed to analyze the formation of the country through the balance and interpenetration of opposites and, in this perspective, his controversial defense of Brazilian racial democracy, mobilized both the Brazilian political and intellectual debate.

This, however, did not prevent Anísio Teixeira from making an effort for the renowned sociologist from Pernambuco state to take over the direction of the Regional Center for Educational Research of Recife, which, in fact, happens in 1956. Anchored in this new position, which less than earned him prestige provided him with the opportunity to intervene in a wide range of social and educational research, Gilberto Freyre began to participate more actively in discussions about the direction of Brazilian education.

As mentioned above, although Gilberto Freyre's intervention in the educational debate related to elementary and secondary education was not so lavish, his production played a relevant role for educational research and for the proposals for teacher formation, especially in the states of the Northeast of Brazil, through the performance of the Regional Center for Educational Research of Recife.

His notion of the rurban world, or of rurban culture, brings new elements to the debate that was taking place at that time. Appropriated by the Regional Center team, the notion will be mobilized to support their understanding of the transformations that Brazilian society and, therefore, education were going through, as seen in the debates presented here. But not only that. This appropriation is visible in the propositions for the formation of teachers who would work in rural areas, as well as, under certain circumstances, in urban areas.

It is evident today that Gilberto Freyre's proposal for rurbanity was not carried out in the country. Even in cities like Curitiba, which the author pontificated as an example of the rurban organization among us, his optimistic and/or uncritical perspectives on the development of capitalism, with its harmful consequences on the working population of the countryside and the city, as expected, failed. But who said that the history of historical and theoretical failures should not interest a history of education, thought and social movement?

Notes

1. The investigations that resulted in the preparation of this article had the support of CNPq and FAPEMIG, institutions to which we thank.
2. Despite being created as a Regional Center for Educational Research of Pernambuco, in almost all documentation, including the *Region and Education Journals* used here, the Center is identified as being "from Recife." In a few times it was also identified as "from the Northeast". We chose the title actually used and not the one formalised in its creation.
3. In addition to his short experience as a teacher at the Teacher's School of Pernambuco, in the late 1920s, and at the University of the Federal District, in the following decade, Freyre wrote the text "Around the situation of the teacher in Brazil", published in 1953 in the Yearbook of Education of the University of London, and in 1956 by the Department of Education and Culture of the State of Pernambuco (Freyre, 2003).
4. The book *Rurbanisation: what is it?* according to Freyre, would result from a demand to update his ideas on the subject made by the president of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation, Fernando Freyre, considering that it was being "put into practice" in Curitiba by Mayor Jaime Lerner (Freyre, 1982, p. 35).
5. In UNESCO's manual *La sociedad e la Educación en America Latina*, this same lecture is cited as a reference in chapter 13, which deals with the school and the community. In this book, authored by Havighurst and other collaborators, the discussion appears with the title "Suggestions for a new policy in Brazil: the Rurban" (Daniel, 2023).
6. Since the 1940s, sociology in Latin America had been undergoing a growing process of institutionalization, which gained greater contours with the expansion of Latin American intellectual socialization spaces, constituting a scientific sociology, from, for example, the creation of associations, holding meetings, etc. (Daniel, 2019).
7. The author recalls, in the text, that Prof. John M. Gillet stated "[...] that in the literature of the United States, as still today in Brazil, the woodsman was almost always caricatured: they rarely presented him in its exact human relevance. In the theater, it was the same thing" (Freyre, 1957a, p. 68).
8. The *Education and Social Sciences Bulletin No. 1* indicates the intention to study the "Educational Situation in Pernambuco". The study would be developed by João Roberto Moreira, aiming to "[...] carry out a survey of the educational situation in Pernambuco in all its basic aspects, appreciating it in its relations with social and cultural economic conditions" (Situação..., 1956, p. 65).

9. The representation of teaching as a mission, articulating roles socially attributed to women and teaching, has been discussed for some time, as can be seen in Louro (1997), Campos; Silva (2002), Bruschini; Amado (1988), among others.
10. Levy Cruz, member of CRPE-Recife, presents himself in the *Region and Education Journals*: "[...] the author, with graduate studies in Sociology at the School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo and at the University of Chicago, in the United States, is a professor of Social Research at the School of Social Work of Pernambuco and Director of the Center's Division of Social Studies and Research" (v. 1, n. 1, jun. 1961, n. p.).
11. The text cited is entitled "The contribution of Rural Sociology to the solution of the problems of rural life." Mimeographed, s/d.
12. The disagreements between Cruz and his colleagues, especially the director Gilberto Freyre, may be one of the possible explanations for his departure from the Center soon after. According to Meucci (2015, p. 141) "[...] Cruz's opinions are very different from the ideas of the director of the Center and this is another possible reason for his departure in 1962".
13. Professor, state deputy in Pernambuco (1955-1958) and one of the founders of the Center for Elementary Teachers of Pernambuco and the Confederation of Elementary Teachers of Brazil.
14. In the debate, Moreira de Souza says: "I could not fail to speak today, at this meeting, when Professor Levy Cruz appears bringing a work that is antithetical to the one I produced here on August 21. I am a ruralist, I make a point of proclaiming it. Professor Levy Cruz did not say, but it is clear that he is an urbanist" (Cruz, 1961, p. 29).

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