



# Among territories, curricula, and trajectories of working students in the Psychology course

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**ABSTRACT.** This study aims to analyze the historical-social conditions present in the territory, curriculum and life trajectories of students in a basic supervised internship in Critical School Psychology at a private college located in the interior of Rondônia state. To this end, we developed an exploratory-explanatory research anchored in the Historical-Cultural Method, whose data were collected through national and institutional documents on Educational Policies in Psychology and a questionnaire on the historical-social and formative profile, applied to 32 intern students. The data analysis was conducted based on the singular-particular-universal dialectic, through which we inferred 2 analytical axes and 6 units of analysis. We observed that training in School Psychology in the national territory of Rondônia and Vilhena takes place under a process of expansion, 'interiorization', 'commodification' and 'oligopolization' of Higher Education; with the opportunity for a curriculum that holds historical contradictions and the concomitance of clinical-traditional and critical assumptions; and the presence of a profile of 'popularization' and 'de-elitization' of the course through the prevalence of women, young adults, working-class students and those from popular classes. We point out the need to formulate Educational Policies aimed at territorial particularities, at the advancement of capital, at the 'popularization' of courses and at the preeminence of private and evening education in Psychology courses.

**Keywords:** educational psychology; academic training; internship; popularization of higher education; student-working women.

## Entre territórios, currículos e trajetórias de estudantes-trabalhadoras do curso de Psicologia

**RESUMO.** O presente trabalho objetiva analisar os condicionantes histórico-sociais presentes no território, currículo e trajetórias de vida das estudantes de um estágio supervisionado básico em Psicologia Escolar Crítica de uma faculdade privada situada no interior rondoniense. Para isso, desenvolvemos uma pesquisa exploratória-explicativa ancorada no Método Histórico-Cultural, cujos dados foram apreendidos através de documentos nacionais e institucionais sobre as Políticas Educacionais em Psicologia e de um questionário sobre o perfil histórico-social e formativo, aplicado com 32 estudantes-estagiárias. A análise dos dados ocorreu a partir da dialética singular-particular-universal, através da qual depreendemos 2 eixos analíticos e 6 unidades de análise. Constatamos que a formação em Psicologia Escolar no território nacional-rondoniense-vilhense acontece sob um processo de expansão, 'interiorização', 'mercantilização' e 'oligopolização' do Ensino Superior; com o ensejo de um currículo que guarda contradições históricas e a concomitância de pressupostos clínico-tradicionais e críticos; e a presença de um perfil de 'popularização' e 'deselitização' do curso através da prevalência de mulheres, jovens-adultas, trabalhadoras e de classes populares. Apontamos a necessidade de formulação de Políticas Educacionais voltadas às particularidades territoriais, ao avanço do capital, à 'popularização' dos cursos e a preeminência do ensino privado e noturno nos cursos de Psicologia.

**Palavras-chave:** psicologia educacional; formação acadêmica; estágio; popularização do ensino superior; estudantes-trabalhadoras.

## Entre territorios, currículos y trayectorias de estudiantes-trabajadores de la carrera de Psicología

**RESUMEN.** El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar los condicionantes histórico-sociales presentes en el territorio, currículo y trayectorias de vida de estudiantes de una pasantía básica supervisada en Psicología Crítica Escolar en una facultad privada ubicada en el interior de Rondônia. Para lograrlo,

desarrollamos una investigación exploratoria-explicativa anclada en el Método Histórico-Cultural, cuyos datos fueron obtenidos a través de documentos nacionales e institucionales sobre las Políticas Educativas Formativas em Psicologia y de uno cuestionario sobre el perfil histórico-social y formativo, aplicado con 32 estudiantes-pasantes. El análisis de los datos se realizó a partir de la dialéctica singular-particular-universal, a través del cual deducimos 2 ejes analíticos y 6 unidades de análisis. Encontramos que la formación en Psicología Escolar en territorio nacional de Rondônia y Vilhena ocurre bajo un proceso de expansión, 'interiorización', 'mercantilización' y formación de oligopolios de la Enseñanza Superior; con la oportunidad de un currículo que contiene contradicciones históricas y la concomitancia de presupuestos clínico-tradicionales y críticos; y la presencia de un perfil de 'popularización' y 'deselitización' del curso a través de la prevalencia de mujeres, jóvenes adultas, trabajadoras y de clases populares. Señala la necesidad de formulación de Políticas Educativas dirigidas a las particularidades territoriales, al avance del capital, a la 'popularización' de los cursos y la preeminencia de la enseñanza privada y nocturna en los cursos de Psicología.

**Palavras-clave:** psicología educacional; formación académica; pasantía; popularización de la enseñanza superior; estudiantes-trabajadoras.

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## Introduction

Historically, training in School Psychology (PE) has been the target of criticism and reformulations since the 1980s, when an epistemological movement of criticism and search for overcoming individualizing, pathologizing and psychometric conceptions and practices in relation to educational processes began, aiming at a training and performance guided by the perspective of social justice and human emancipation (Patto, 1997, 2022; Antunes et al., 2021). The demand has shifted to a training grounded in critical thinking and practices, enabling the analysis of transformations in educational reality and collective, ethical-political action, in which educational phenomena are understood in their complexity and multi-determinations—social, political, and historical (Brasileiro & Souza, 2020; Conselho Federal de Psicologia, 2019).

In times of implementation of Law No. 13935 (2019), which provides for the presence of Psychology and Social Work professionals in Basic Education, and the recent publication of the *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais* - National Curriculum Guidelines (DCNs) for undergraduate courses in Psychology through Resolution CNE/CES No. 1 (2023), we are asked to provide training that increasingly demonstrates the social commitment of our profession. As Guzzo et al. (2022) rightly point out in the recent Census of Brazilian Psychology<sup>1</sup>, a training focused on social practice and based on decolonized theoretical foundations, capable of responding to the demands of the Brazilian people, constitutes a major challenge.

Therefore, studies on Educational Policies for teacher training in PE are urgently needed in order to guarantee the promotion of quality education that seeks to overcome social inequalities (Negreiros et al., 2020; Santos & Toassa, 2015). According to Cruces et al. (2020a), research on Educational Policies in PE is incipient, representing only 9% of the productions in stricto sensu postgraduate programs in Brazil between 1998 and 2014. In the case of the North region of the country, research is even scarcer, as demonstrated by the systematic review by Souza Filho et al. (2023), in which, of the 25 published works on PE training, only two came from that region.

For this purpose, we need to consider the current educational landscape of Psychology, a course widely sought after by the Brazilian population, occupying the 6th position among the most sought-after courses, according to data from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), whose student profile is predominantly female<sup>2</sup>, young adult, white, from public schools and with a family income of up to three minimum wages (Ministry of Education, 2018). Regarding Higher Education Institutions (IES) that offer this training, the national panorama shows a prevalence of private IES in providing this education, and that most courses are located in inland cities. Therefore, we need to analyze this scenario as an extensive process of 'commodification' and 'interiorization' of Higher Education (ES) (Macedo et al., 2018b; Dantas et al., 2019; Branco et al., 2022).

<sup>1</sup> The last Census of Brazilian Psychology was carried out in 2022 by the Federal Council of Psychology (2022) under the title Who Makes Brazilian Psychology?: a look at the present to build the future.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this text, we will use the feminine gender to refer both to female Psychology professionals, who represent the majority of professionals (79.2%) in Brazil, and to female Psychology students, who make up 82.7% of the student population and, as in this research, also 81.3% of the group studied. We do this with the aim of exposing the historical silencing of women and granting them their rightful place.

The expansion of courses in inland cities, in this sense, presents challenges but can also contribute to new questions for the dual movement of attention to global but at the same time localized processes of knowledge production and subjectivation (Guzzo et al., 2022, p. 97).

Thus, this work, originating from part of a master's dissertation focused on investigating training in Critical School Psychology (PEC)<sup>3</sup>, aims to analyze the historical and social conditions present in the territory, curriculum, and life trajectories of students in a basic supervised internship (ESB) in PEC developed in the interior of Rondônia. To this end, we have organized the article as follows: 1) Theoretical-historical foundations of the PEC, its formative-curricular aspects and supervised internships; 2) Methodological approach; 3) Exploration of the Brazil-Rondonia-Vilhena territories and curricula and how Psychology has established itself within these spaces, especially in its educational dimension; 4) Analytical-critical analysis of the life trajectories of the student-interns; and 6) Final considerations.

## Fundamentals of training in Critical School Psychology

To understand the formative process in Psychology and, specifically, in its educational dimension, it is necessary to seek the historical and epistemological roots, which show that the relationship between Psychology and Education has been constituted by moments of encounters and disagreements, marked by the presence of an ideological complicity (Antunes et al., 2021; Jacó-Vilela et al., 2023). According to Patto (1997, 2018, 2022), the development of Psychology itself occurred on the basis of 19th-century capitalist-liberal ideals and a process of alienation from the human and social sciences, whose theories and practices were geared towards the socioeconomic demands of selecting, adapting, and controlling individuals, contributing to the strengthening of the myth of equal opportunities and to the legitimization of social inequalities. Under the motto "*Order and Progress*" and a biological-adjustative conception, tests were used to assess the intellectual abilities of students, diagnose, select and refer them to special classes, blaming children and their families for school failure.

It is in this scenario that the first Psychology courses emerged, originating from laboratories located inside psychiatric hospitals and Normal Schools, under an experimental, classificatory, psychometric and clinical perspective (Souza & Barbosa, 2020). With the regulation of the Psychology profession, through Law No. 4119 (1962), the first curriculum was established under Opinion No. 403 (1962), in which the internship was conceived as a period of supervised practical training to be carried out in the final year of the course (Cury & Ferreira Neto, 2014). Thus, according to Mello (1997) and Patto (1997), curricula were constructed that were marked by the fragmentation of knowledge, disconnected from the social and human sciences, Disconnected from social reality, lacking a foundation for practice, a technocratic training with an adaptationist and pathologizing bias, intending to be neutral and uncritical.

However, in the 1980s, a counter-hegemonic movement began, strongly criticizing the ideological position of Psychology and its articulations within the educational field. Works such as *Introduction to School Psychology (Psicologia Escolar)* - (1981/1977) and *Psychology and Ideology: a critical introduction to School Psychology (Psicologia e Ideologia: uma introdução crítica à Psicologia Escolar)* - (1984/2022), both by Maria Helena Souza Patto, constituted a landmark of denunciation and criticism, exposing the historical and ideological conditioning of School Psychology and postulating the need for its transformation. With this, 'learning difficulties/problems' came to be understood as difficulties in schooling, related to the various aspects involved in this process – public educational policies, the economic system, the relational networks of a school, its physical conditions, working conditions, educational techniques, among others (Patto, 2015).

At the same time, the Federal Council of Psychology initiated discussions focused on training and professional practice, emphasizing the need for social commitment, formulating several proposals for curricular changes, which called for an increase in the number of hours dedicated to internships, their presence throughout the course and at gradually increasing levels of complexity, and the expansion of the diversity of approaches, in order to overcome the prevalence of clinical practice (Cury & Ferreira Neto, 2014).

We thus had a long debate about the creation of DCNs for undergraduate courses in Psychology, which was only published in 2004, through Resolution No. 8 (2004). The National Curriculum Guidelines of 2004 established the creation of a common core, composed of subjects focused on basic competences and curricular

<sup>3</sup> The choice of the term Critical School Psychology stems from a theoretical alignment with Checchia (2015), who argues that this term reveals its Marxist basis and points to the implication and commitment of Psychology to emancipation and social transformation. This term also denotes Meira's (2012) perspective, which explicitly outlines four constitutive elements for a critical theory/conception: 1) capacity for dialectical reflection; 2) critique of knowledge; 3) denunciation of degradation, alienation, and human heteronomy under the conditions imposed by capitalism; and 4) the possibility of critique serving as an instrument of social transformation.

emphases, referring to a set of contents, competences and skills articulated to the fields of study, and internships compatible with current and/or potential social demands and with institutional particularities (Resolution No. 8, 2004). Although it retains an operational and technically applied perspective, this concept has evolved towards the internship promoting contact with social reality, integrating theory and practice, and becoming present at both basic and specialized levels.

The year 2019 was a landmark for the PEC, as Law No. 13935 (2019) was enacted, which provides for the provision of Psychology and Social Work services in public education networks, the Technical References for the performance of psychologists in basic education were published (Federal Council of Psychology, 2019), and a new process of reformulation of the DCNs began with Opinion No. 1071 (2019), which were republished in 2023 through Resolution CNE/CES No. 1 (2023). In the DCNs 2023, the following stand out: a generalist education articulated with structuring axes; curricular emphases ceased to be specific areas/disciplines and became work processes; and research and extension were curricularized, and supervised internships came to occupy 20% of the total course workload, with the aim of providing diverse experiences in work situations, being distributed throughout the course and linked to the social context.

Even with significant progress, a market-oriented and technocratic bias is still evident in the skills and competencies, which seems to indicate a training more focused on knowing how to do than on knowledge production, reflection, and ethics (Teles, 2020). Furthermore, some research has shown that training programs continue to provide few practical experiences in contact with reality (Santos & Toassa, 2015), the clinical-individualized model continues to prevail (Brasileiro & Souza, 2020), students perceive themselves as poorly prepared to work in institutions and groups, and to work multi-professionally (Cruces et al., 2020b), and that it is urgent to broaden the debates about Educational Policies for training (Facci & Barreto, 2023). Specifically, in the field of PE, practices more focused on psychodiagnosis and individual care prevail (Cruces et al., 2020b), and the centrality of clinical emphases ends up leaving students without references to work in educational contexts (Facci & Barreto, 2023).

On the other hand, Souza and Ramos (2020) and Checchia et al. (2020) highlight that PE has been appearing more incisively in curricula through more subjects and internships and with greater participation from students. Pieniak et al. (2021, p. 10) indicate that clinical-psychometric practice in PE internships, although not yet fully implemented, has been occurring in the simultaneous presence of a critical perspective, demonstrating that, even far from completing the implementation of criticism, we are “[...] closer than before”.

For this, we need internship experiences that go beyond the utilitarian/technical logic of applying theory, and consider the ethical-political commitment of the profession. “The internship cannot be thought of as a neutral and objective intervention for the purpose of training, but as part of the effective struggle for the advancement of social rights” (Teles, 2020, p. 185). It is necessary to break down the theory-practice, professional-personal, and individual-social dichotomies, understanding the internship as a producer of knowledge that needs to be experienced based on the material and historical conditions of the profession in conjunction with the concrete reality present in the territory where it takes place.

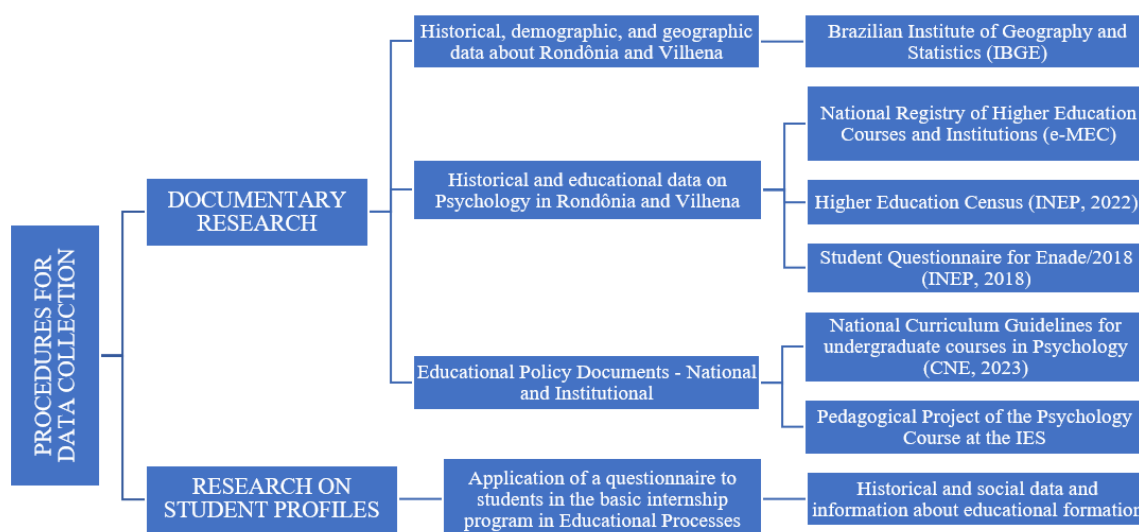
Therefore, it is not enough to simply consider national Educational Policies, it is necessary to take a critical look at the concrete reality of Psychology courses, seeking to understand how they are materializing in institutional curricula and in daily training, as well as understanding who these students and professionals are, who build the internship on a daily basis, their historical, social and formative conditions, as well as the territories in which this training is taking place, in order to understand their challenges, particularities and also their potential.

## Methodology

The research undertaken is of an exploratory-explanatory type, anchored in the Historical-Cultural Method (HCM), in which phenomena are studied in their processuality, historicity, and movement, with the objective of unveiling (explaining) the relationships and determinants that constitute them (Vigotski, 1991; 1996). Our aim was to investigate the training process in PEC by understanding how the historical and social conditions of the territory, the curriculum, and the students' life trajectories appear in the training and how they can help us in the construction of internship theories and practices that seek the critical development of the students.

The research was authorized by the Research Ethics Committee under Opinion No. 6.208.767 and carried out the following procedures for data collection, as illustrated in Figure 1: 1) Documentary research on the

territory, the presence of Psychology, and Educational Policies for training; and 2) Research on the Student Profile through the application of a questionnaire with closed questions, via Google Forms, with 32 students enrolled in the basic internship course in Educational Processes during the second semester of 2023 at a private higher education institution in the municipality of Vilhena/RO.



**Figure 1.** Flowchart of procedures for data collection.

Source: The authors.

The analysis procedures were based on the singular-particular-universal dialectic (Pasqualini & Martins, 2015) and are structured in five dialectical stages (Fonseca & Negreiros, 2019): 1) Understanding of immediate reality; 2) Empirical description; 3) Theoretical description; 4) Unit of analysis; 5) Return to the reality of the data. The results were organized into analytical axes and their respective units of analysis, whose titles were inspired by the anthem of the State of Rondônia<sup>4</sup>, entitled "Céus de Rondônia" (Skies of Rondônia), which holds aspects of identity, history, and social aspects of this territory that are very relevant to the analysis of how the formative process in PEC is taking place in this space. The analytical axes and their units of analysis are presented and discussed below.

### Between territories and curricula – 'We are Brazilians!'

How do the territory of Rondônia and the institutional curriculum, the object of analysis in this research, relate to the national panorama of training in Psychology and, more specifically, to its educational dimension? What elements can this research indicate for the construction of Educational Policies for teacher training in PEC? It is through the paths of the singular-particular-universal dialectic that we can consider that it is in this relationship between territories and national/local/institutional curricula that we may find some explanations and answers.

### 'In the western landscapes'... Psychology and capital 'advance like sentinels'

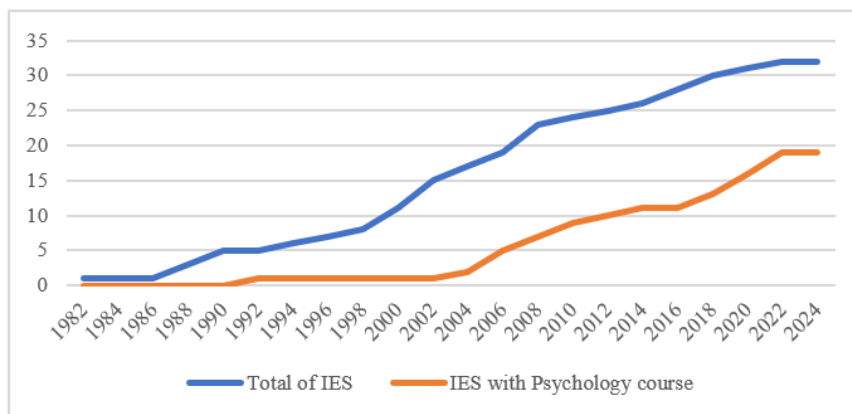
The state of Rondônia is located in the northern region of the country, bordering the states of Mato Grosso, Amazonas, and Acre, as well as Bolivia. It was elevated to the status of a state within the federation in 1982, receiving this name in honor of Marshal Cândido Rondon, who commanded a Commission whose objective was to reach the Amazon region by building telegraph lines through the forest in order to integrate it with the rest of the country. According to the latest demographic census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2022), the state has a population of 1 581 196 people distributed among 52 municipalities.

Vilhena is located on the border with Mato Grosso, at the entrance to the Western Amazon region, and is known as the 'Gateway to the Amazon' or 'Climate City of the Amazon' because it has a lower average temperature than other cities in the Northern Region. It is the fourth most populous city in the state with 95 832 inhabitants. Its origins date back to the beginning of the 20th century when, around 1910, Rondon's expedition arrived in this region. Its main economic activities are agriculture, livestock farming, commerce,

<sup>4</sup> Anthem of the Heavens of Rondônia. Available at: <https://rondonia.ro.gov.br/hino-de-rondonia-governo-da-cooperacao/>

and the provision of services. It is a city that has established itself as a student hub, hosting six private IES and one public institution, according to data from the e-MEC System (Ministry of Education, 2024).

It is important to highlight that the history of Higher Education in Rondônia began with the creation of the Federal University of Rondônia (UNIR) in 1982, which housed the state's first Psychology course in 1989, initially as a Bachelor's degree, and later as a full-time degree in 1991. Currently, there are 19 higher education institutions offering this degree in Rondônia (Ministry of Education, 2024), as can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Graph showing the expansion of Higher Education and Psychology undergraduate programs in Rondônia from 1982 to 2024.

Source: The authors based on data from the Ministry of Education (2024).

We can see that Rondônia is undergoing a process of expansion in ES and the Psychology training, showing intense growth since the 2000s, which can be linked to the enactment of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) in 1996, which made the provision of Higher Education open to private initiative, and the presence of a government with a neoliberal offensive. In 2016, we saw a new surge, which we can associate with the recent reorganization of Educational Policies, with the creation of several programs aimed at increasing access to higher education. According to Macedo et al. (2018a) and Dantas et al. (2019), although we have had a considerable expansion in access to ES, this occurred amidst an alliance with the financial market, which reverberated in the disorderly growth of corporate institutions of ES in Brazil.

This expansion of Psychology courses can also be linked to the high demand for this field of study, as it is the sixth most sought-after undergraduate degree in our country (Ministry of Education, 2022). Macedo et al. (2017, 2018b) link this demand to the presence of a psychological culture that conceives of this profession as capable of solving various emotional, cognitive, and moral problems, as Macedo and Dimenstein (2011) also point out, this course ends up being attractive because it is a professional activity that is quite flexible in terms of its insertion into the job market, which can occur both through private practice and through work in public policies.

On the other hand, Dantas et al. (2019) and Macedo et al. (2018b) point out that this growth is primarily part of a national neoliberal project of expansion and 'commodification' of ES, which can be expressed by analyzing the organization of the Psychology course in terms of its administrative categories – public and private. In Rondônia, considering the 19 higher education institutions that offer the course, only one is public, and, nationally, 71.17% of Psychology courses registered in 2018 were offered in private higher education institutions (Branco et al., 2022).

One point to consider is that Psychology courses in Rondônia are distributed, practically, along the BR-364 highway; extending inland, as 13 of them are outside the capital; and concentrating in the cities that are regional hubs – Porto Velho, Ariquemes, Ji-Paraná, Cacoal, and Vilhena, as shown in Figure 3.

We can infer that this process of internalization of Psychology in Rondônia bears the marks of the state's colonization, where, along with Rondon's incursion into its interior, these same cities stood out as centers of urbanization and development. Thus, this process reflects a national trend, in which 61.61% of Psychology courses are located in inland cities, demonstrating that ES also constitutes an agent of local and regional development (Branco et al., 2022; Macedo et al., 2018b).

Another issue we have encountered is the advance of conglomerates monopolizing the ES, where two of the three colleges offering the Psychology course in the municipality of Vilhena come from this type of financial and academic organization, which, according to Macedo and Dimenstein (2011), Macedo et al. (2017, 2018b), Dantas et al. (2019) and Branco et al. (2022), choose the Psychology course for well-defined



financial reasons, as it is a low-cost course to set up and implement, requiring small libraries and few laboratories, which, under the control of educational oligopolies, develop franchised educational products, reducing their costs and even lowering their tuition fees. This has generated a series of consequences for education: homogenized/standardized curricula, production of compiled materials, technocratic-content-focused teaching geared towards workforce training, curriculum flexibility with the removal of prerequisites for subjects, hiring of unqualified teachers, high teacher turnover, production of surplus value, overload, and precarious working conditions.



Figure 3. Map showing the distribution of IES offering Psychology courses in Rondônia.

Source: The Authors based on data from the Ministry of Education (2024).

Thus, we can consider the existence of a process of expansion and increase in vacancies as a relative democratization of ES, but we cannot consider this expansion to be synonymous with democratization, since it is primarily guided by the logic of the market and profit (Dantas et al, 2019). However, even so, we cannot stand idly by, watching this process unfold. We need to inquire the impasses that this scenario creates in Psychology education and seek alternative ways to address them, since for many people this educational opportunity presents itself as the only alternative given their social, historical, geographical, and economic conditions so that Psychology, through its guidelines, norms, theories, research, and professionals, cannot fail to be involved in this process.

### 'Moving forward' through the curriculum 'in the western landscapes'

Our exploration will focus on the Psychology curriculum, and specifically its educational dimension, through an articulation of the Educational Policy implemented at the institution under study with the DCNs-2023, under the singular-particular-universal dialectic. We constructed this unit of analysis based on the following aspects: 1) General course structure – history, institutional context, graduate profile, skills and competencies, curricular emphases and supervised internships; and 2) Field/area of PE – identification of subjects and supervised internships that relate to this dimension.

The institution studied is maintained by a conglomerate of regional partners that, since 1996, has been establishing several educational units throughout the state. The Vilhena unit was duly accredited in 2017,

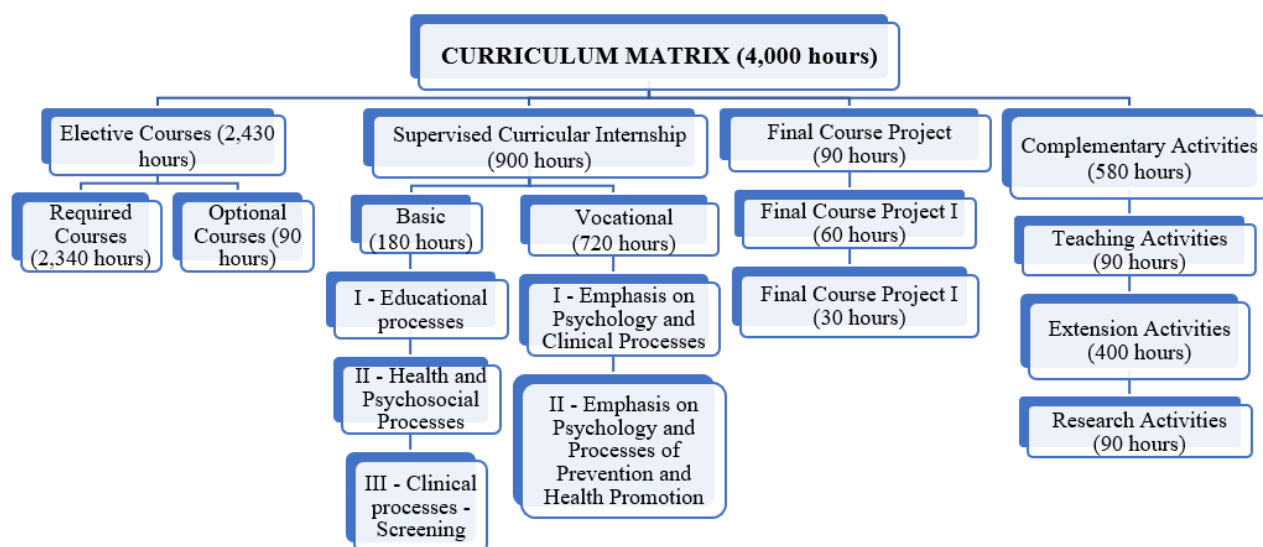
and the Psychology course began its activities only on September 23, 2019, offering 100 places in the evening, distributed over two semesters, with a minimum completion time of 10 semesters.

According to the Pedagogical Project of the Psychology Course (PPC) at this institution, the aim is to train professionals to work in the fields of teaching, research and extension through a humanistic, critical, creative and ethical perspective, considering social and regional needs, human rights, ethics, bioethics and interdisciplinarity. Regarding the graduate profile, the institution aims for a professional who understands their technical and scientific knowledge and is able to work in various types of organizations and in society.

With this, we realize that the document is already based on the values, principles, and commitments expressed by the DCNs-2023 (CNE/CES Resolution No. 1, 2023), in which the articulation with other fields of knowledge, the critical understanding of historical, social, economic, cultural, and political phenomena, the commitment to a democratic, sovereign, and socially just society, respect for diversity and human rights, and action in diverse contexts are fundamental pillars for education.

The PPC lists a series of skills and abilities to be developed throughout the course, and although they are not organized/divided into basic skills and professional skills, they resemble the skills indicated in the DCNs-2023, as well as the six structuring axes are present, indicating that its formulation was based on Opinion No. 1071 (2019).

Enrollment is by curricular component and not by semester, under the justification that this organization would allow greater curricular flexibility and intellectual autonomy for the student, enabling them to choose their academic path according to their interests. Regarding its curricular organization, as shown in Figure 4, the course has a total workload of 4,000 hours, meeting the minimum indicated standard, with 20% allocated to basic and specific supervised internships (CNE/CES Resolution No. 1, 2023).



**Figure 4.** Flowchart outlining the curriculum organization for the undergraduate Psychology program.

Source: The authors, based on the Psychology PPC.

Regarding the presence of the educational dimension, we identified some related disciplines: Humanities and culture, Psychology of child development, Psychology of adolescent development, Psychology of adult life, Psychology of learning and education, School psychology, Institutional psychology, Psychology of people with disabilities, Psychomotricity, and Social and community psychology. We have observed that their terminology is now more aligned with current discussions and that their theoretical frameworks are diverse, stemming from Behavioral Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Historical-Cultural Psychology, Philosophy of Difference, Frankfurt School Philosophy, Psychoanalysis, and Humanistic Psychology.

Specifically, the PE course has a workload of 60 hours and is offered in the fourth semester. Its syllabus reflects historical contradictions within the field of PE, including content that has been the subject of criticism since the 1980s, such as 'learning difficulties' and 'families and learning problems', as well as content that refers to a critical perspective in PE, such as 'culture, society and ideology', 'educational institutional context', and 'power and knowledge relations in school'. On the other hand, the bibliographic references are all based on PE and Historical-Cultural Psychology, one of its main foundations.



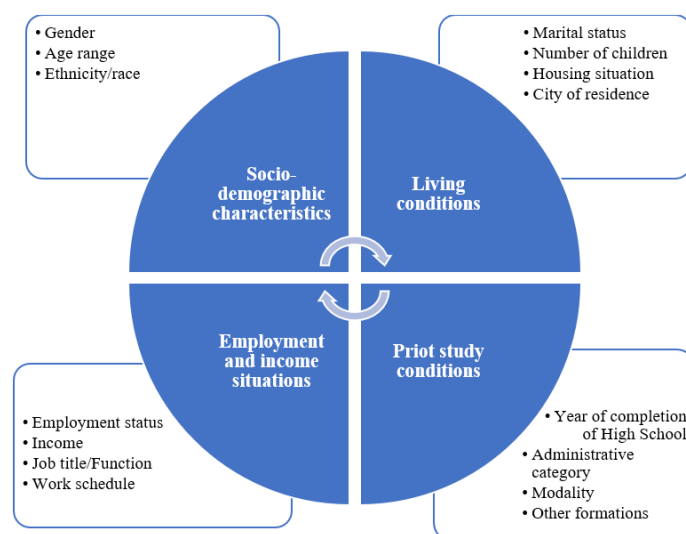
Regarding supervised internships, there is a basic internship in Educational Processes with a workload of 60 hours, offered in the 6th semester. We note that its nomenclature is already in line with the concept of work processes present in the DCNs-2023 (CNE/CES Resolution No. 1, 2023). Although its syllabus refers to the theoretical assumptions of the field of PE and related areas, indicating the 'integration of theoretical and practical knowledge acquired in the disciplines that support the practice of the school psychologist', its emphasis is on practice, on daily educational life, indicating the 'elaboration and execution of intervention projects that allow the student to observe and interact with groups of different age ranges and teaching modalities' and requiring 'visits and observation, for on-site evaluation of contexts, enabling the student to analyze cases and/or projects related to educational processes'. By all accounts, the syllabus seems to lean more towards the technical application of knowledge, in a dichotomous conception between theory and practice, than towards an integrated approach, revealing a technocratic perspective of the profession.

Therefore, we have shown that the analyzed curriculum meets the minimum requirements defined by the DCNs-2023 (CNE/CES Resolution No. 1, 2023), but some aspects deserve further analysis. The program is notable for its flexible structure; however, the curriculum is quite rigid, with the option of taking only 90 hours of elective courses. We observed a considerable discrepancy between extension activities (400 hours) and teaching and research activities (180 hours), which seems to reveal that these activities are not of institutional interest. It is important to point out the presence of only one discipline related to Research in Psychology, which may indicate, once again, the presence of a more technically focused training, geared towards the job market.

On the other hand, it offers several disciplines with an educational dimension, has a PE discipline and an internship in this work process, under the theoretical frameworks of PEC and Historical-Cultural Psychology, but it does not fail to maintain the centrality of the clinical aspect in its disciplines and curricular emphasis. This allows us to connect this to the findings of Pieniak et al. (2021), in which traditional perspectives coexist with critical perspectives, and to postulate, along with Teles and Viégas (2024, p. 8), that the term critical perspective indicates an "[...] expectation, promise, possibility, horizon [...]", revealing that we are in a contested territory, permeated by resistance and tension, and that we must continue fighting and resisting.

### Between different paths: our 'fearless' students

Seeking to elucidate the concrete students present in the basic stage in Educational Processes in a singular-particular-universal dialectic, we consider it crucial to understand their life trajectories from everyday reality in its historical, social, economic and educational dimensions, which according to Trindade et al. (2023, p. 293) refers to "[...] understanding the positions that the subjects assume in the materiality that constitutes their lives". Thus, this analytical axis highlights and discusses the presence of four central historical-social factors, as shown in Figure 5: 1) Sociodemographic characteristics, 2) Living conditions, 3) Prior education conditions, and 4) Employment and income situation.



**Figure 5.** Flowchart of the historical and social factors influencing the student profile.

Source: The authors.

Consequently, we understand the student profile from a historical, developmental, and dialectical perspective, in which the human being, as he transforms nature and adapts it to himself, constitutes himself, appropriating the objective and subjective conditions socially instituted at each moment of the life cycle (Marx & Engels, 2001; Pasqualini & Martins, 2015). That way, our students are shaped by multiple universal historical and social conditions, which, interacting with each other in a dialectical and contradictory way, are particularized in their constitution as unique individuals.

### Who are our students?

The sociodemographic characteristics of the interns, as shown in Table 1, reveal a predominantly female profile (81.3%), similar to that found in Enade/2018 (Ministry of Education, 2018), in which 82.7% of Psychology students were women. According to Trindade et al. (2023), these data indicate an intensification of women leaving the domestic environment in order to acquire knowledge related to professions and to achieve their insertion into the labor market. At the same time, they allow us to infer that Psychology is predominantly a female profession, since 79.2% of psychologists in our country are women (Federal Council of Psychology, 2022). We also highlight the presence of a transgender student, reaffirming the importance and necessity of including all genders in research, as exemplified by the Brazilian Psychology Census itself, which, for the first time, included a question about sexual orientation, allowing for the overcoming of dichotomous positions that naturalize gender and promote the exclusion of people.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic characteristics of the students.

Sociodemographic characteristic	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	26	81.3
Male	5	15.6
Transvestite	1	3.1
Age range		
18-24 years	16	50.0
25-29 years	5	15.6
30-39 years	7	21.9
40-49 years	4	12.5
Ethnicity / race		
White	17	53.1
Black	1	3.1
Mixed-race	14	43.8

Source: The authors.

The prevalence of young adult students (50.0%) aged between 18 and 24 years is noteworthy, the same evidenced in Enade/2018, whose predominant age range was up to 24 years (Ministry of Education, 2018). Looking at the professional field, we identified the preeminence of female psychologists in the Northern region in the age range up to 29 years (24.4%) and between 30-39 years (33.8%) (Federal Council of Psychology, 2022), allowing us to postulate “[...] that we are still a young professional group” (Sandall et al., 2022, p. 44). It is relevant to point out the presence of students over 29 years old (34.4%), which may indicate late access to higher education, possibly because basic social and economic needs had to be met first, or because they had already completed a first degree in another field.

Regarding ethnic/racial characteristics, the interns mostly identify as white (53.1%), followed by mixed-race (43.8%), and a single black identification, data that is similar to those of Enade/2018, in which 54.9% of students were white, 30.6% mixed-race, and 9.6% black. We can infer that, although “[...] Psychology remains [sic] a profession of white people (63.9%)” (Sandall et al., 2022, p. 49), through an elitist history of training, it has been showing clear signs of changes in its profile, especially since the establishment of public educational policies of the Student Financing Fund for Higher Education – *Fundo de Financiamento ao Estudante do Ensino Superior* - FIES) and the University for All Program – *Programa Universidade para Todos* - PROUNI) (Macedo et al, 2018a; Macedo & Reis, 2021).

We understand that these sociodemographic characteristics reflect a process of ‘popularization’ and ‘de-elitization’ of the Psychology student profile underway throughout Brazil (Macedo et al., 2018a; Dantas et al., 2019), indicating the growing presence of a diversity of gender, age, and ethnicity/race, amidst the expansion

and ‘interiorization’ of the state of ES and the presence of educational policies for access and funding. However, we cannot forget that “[...] these inclusion tools gained strength from neoliberal and market logic” (Macedo & Reis, 2021, p. 13), whose effects reverberate in the precariousness of courses, difficulties in remaining in and succeeding in graduation, indebtedness of students and impossibilities for insertion into the world of work.

### What are your living conditions like?

Predominantly, the interns are single (68.8%), some are married (28.1%), and only one is divorced (3.1%), according to Table 2. Most have no children (68.8%), others have only one child (28.1%), and only one of them (3.1%) has two children. Prevaingly, they live with their families (78.2%), and only a small percentage live alone (12.5%) or only with a boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse (9.3%).

**Table 2.** Living conditions of female students.

Living conditions	Number	Percentage
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	22	68.8
Married	9	28.1
Divorced	1	3.1
<b>Presença/quantidade de filhos</b>		
None	22	68.8
One	1	3.1
Two	9	28.1
<b>Housing situation</b>		
Alone	4	12.5
With boyfriend / girlfriend	2	6.2
With Spouse	1	3.1
With Family (parents, relatives and/or spouse and children)	25	78.2
<b>City of residence</b>		
Vilhena/RO	26	81.3
Colorado do Oeste/RO	2	6.2
Cerejeiras/RO	3	9.4
Comodoro/MT	1	3.1

Source: The authors.

It is noticeable that there is a preponderance of single students who live with their families, a situation that may indicate a condition of financial dependence, which was also observed in Enade/2018, in which 52.6% of students had no income and had their expenses financed by government programs (14.4%) or by family and other people (38.2%), and that some, even if they had some income, needed help from family or other people (24.3%) to finance their expenses (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Concomitantly, we supposed that the significant presence of married students may be linked to the presence of older age groups, which, in turn, may indicate the presence of children. Thus, the combination of marital status with the prevalence of living with family seems to reveal difficulties with self-sufficiency and autonomy, as well as the challenge of reconciling domestic tasks and motherhood with studies.

Regarding the cities of residence, the interns predominantly live in Vilhena/RO (81.3%) and some (18.7%) in the surrounding cities - Cerejeiras/RO, Colorado do Oeste/RO and Comodoro/MT. It is important to highlight that they need to commute daily to study, traveling an average of 200 km per day. This situation denotes the presence of commuting, that is, daily displacements to carry out everyday activities, such as studying. According to Francelino (2020), commuting, although it has the positive aspects of the desire for a change of life, entails a series of difficulties, such as: insufficient financial resources to cover transportation and food, poor roads, exposure to vulnerable situations and fatigue, compromising the student's personal and educational life.

These markers of the students' living conditions reveal that their trajectories are determined by the imposed reality of capitalist social relations, which, contradictorily, grant a series of civil rights, but restrict or even prevent their accomplishment given the material limitations, indicating that "[...] the desired autonomy is an open

contradiction in class society, since it does not present the possibility of integrating young people into the benefits of what is produced collectively" (Abrantes & Bulhões, 2016, p. 249). In turn, these factors reverberate in barriers to access, retention, and success for these students in their higher education, as well as indicating the need for support policies for this profile.

### What were your previous study conditions?

De acordo com a Tabela 3, uma parcela significativa (43,75%) das estagiárias concluiu o Ensino Médio (EM) entre 2015 e 2019, outras antes de 2010 (25%), algumas a partir de 2020 (18,75%) e poucas entre 2010 e 2014 (12,5%). Depreendemos que somente uma pequena parcela dessas estudantes acessaram imediatamente a graduação em Psicologia, demonstrating the prevalence of late access, which, when combined with the fact that 50% of the interns are over 24 years old, may be indicating, once again, the presence of socioeconomic barriers to accessing ES.

**Table 3.** Prior study conditions of the students.

Prior study conditions	Number	Percentage
Year of completion of High School		
2020 onwards	6	18.7
2015-2019	14	43.8
2010-2014	4	12.5
Before 2010	8	25.0
School administrative category of the High School completion		
Municipal public school	4	12.5
State public school	18	56.3
Federal public school	2	6.2
Private school	7	21.9
Partially in public and private school.	1	3.1
High School Modality		
Regular	20	62.5
Full-time	3	9.4
Integrated Technical Program	2	6.2
Youth and Adult Education	7	21.9
Other formations		
Short courses	20	62.5
Technical course	6	18.8
Undergraduate degree	9	28.1
Postgraduate degree	1	3.1

Source: The authors.

With regard to the administrative category of the school where the high school diploma was completed, it was found that, predominantly, the trainees graduated from public schools, of which 56.3% are state schools, 12.5% are municipal schools and 6.3% are federal schools; the remainder graduated from private schools (21.9%) or partially from both public and private schools (3.1%). Here, we see the presence of markers related to social class, which raises questions about the contradiction of studying high school in public schools and having to study higher education in private higher education institutions. This same contradiction can be observed in the Enade/2018, which found a high probability that students from public schools will pursue undergraduate studies at private higher education institutions (Ministry of Education, 2018). This seems to be justified by the fact that our students, in fact, need to first seek the economic conditions to enter ES and that, therefore, most of them are over 24 years old.

Regarding the type of high school education pursued, we found that predominantly, students completed it in regular education (62.5%), followed by youth and adult education (21.9%), full-time education (9.3%), and integrated technical education (6.3%). The considerable presence of students from Youth and Adult Education (EJA) is noteworthy, considering that, when compared with the Enade/2018 data, this modality represented only 5.7% of the students (Ministry of Education, 2018). This particularity seems to be revealing, once again, that social and economic restrictions permeate the trajectory of these students from a very early age, starting in Basic Education.

When we investigated the presence of other prior training, we found that a large proportion of the interns have completed some type of short course (62.5%), others have another undergraduate degree (28.1%), some have completed a technical course (18.8%), and one has a postgraduate degree (3.1%). The presence of students pursuing a second degree is linked to the presence of people over 24 years of age, but we must consider other factors that can better explain this profile.

The conditions of schooling prior to higher education emphasize that the material circumstances of existence imposed limitations on the educational development of these students, allowing us to suggest that they predominantly belong to the working classes and that late access to ES is a direct consequence of capitalist logic. Thus, the significant presence of students who completed their studies in the EJA (Youth and Adult Education) modality indicates, according to Moraes et al. (2020, p. 539), that this educational modality represented for them a possibility of obtaining knowledge and achieving training, including at the higher education level, revealing that "[...] education is a possible means of social advancement".

It is in this sense that Abrantes and Bulhões (2016) and Trindade et al. (2023) affirm that being a young or adult academic needs to be understood within the contradictory unity between professionalizing study activity and productive activity, since the concrete conditions of study and work guide human development at this stage of life. This means that academic life is constituted within the context of class struggle, marked by inequality, domination, and exploitation. This way, the fact that they entered ES late and even pursued another degree, now managing to study Psychology, denotes limitations that this system imposed on them from a very early age.

### **They are hard workers!**

Our students are predominantly working women (75%), as shown in Table 4, of which 34.4% have formal employment contracts, 6.2% have informal employment contracts, 18.8% are self-employed, 12.5% are business owners, and 3.1% are public servants, with 25% unemployed. The data is significantly higher than that found by Dantas et al. (2019), where working students represented 52.3% of psychology students in Brazil. Trópia and Souza (2023), in outlining three categories to analyze the relationship between study and work in ES – non-working student, employed student, and unemployed student – indicate that the only category that would have better conditions to enjoy all the potential of academic life are those who do not work, since those who work do not have full conditions to dedicate themselves to their studies, as their routine is divided, and the category of unemployed student would have an academic trajectory affected by the search for work and concern for material survival. Therefore, our students end up being affected by work, even when they are unemployed.

When we take a critical look at the income of these students, we find that a large majority (78.2%) have an income of up to two minimum wages, predominantly occupy non-specialized positions/functions (administrative assistant/auxiliary, secretary/receptionist and salesperson) that make up the tertiary sector of the economy (70.7%), and with working hours, for the most part, of 40 hours per week (62.5%). This allows us to conjecture that their social and economic position belongs to the popular/subaltern classes, for whom work is a source of subsistence and a means of financing higher education. This reinforces the concept of the need for early entry into the workforce and the postponement of access to higher education, or in some cases the choice of a Psychology course, due to social and economic limitations. From this perspective, Mesquita et al. (2012) question the existence of the possibility for working students to choose a course, arguing that it is, in fact, a class imposition.

These students are left with only the option of evening classes and the challenge of a triple daily workload to reconcile work and study, requiring them to resort to diverse strategies that, in most cases, are mutually exclusive and not harmonious. "It can mean choosing between performing this or that activity; between trying to reach agreements at work and managing (or not) to participate in that academic activity; or between studying, resting or taking care of the family and/or trying to do everything at the same time" (Carvalho et al., 2019).

Thus, we see the contradictory side of the 'universalization' of higher education, which involves a process of 'popularization' of the Psychology course through the increasingly incisive presence of popular classes of students and working-class students, but on the other hand, this access is made possible by the advance of capital over this level of education, in which these students are left only with private higher education and in the evening (Macedo et al., 2018a; Branco et al., 2022).



**Table 4.** Employment and income situations of female students.

Employment and income situations	Number	Percentage
Employment situation		
Formal employment (with a work contract)	11	34.4
Informal employment (without a work contract)	2	6.2
Public service	1	3.1
Business owner	4	12.5
Self-employed	6	18.8
Unemployed	8	25.0
Income		
No income	5	15.7
Up to one minimum wage	11	34.4
Between one and two minimum wages	9	28.1
Between three and four minimum wages	2	6.2
Between four and six minimum wages	3	9.4
Above six minimum wages	2	6.2
Job Title/Function		
Administrative Assistant/Clerk	7	29.1
Secretary/Receptionist	4	16.6
Salesperson	3	12.5
Employer	3	12.5
Hairdresser	1	4.2
Library Assistant	1	4.2
Traffic Manager	1	4.2
Teacher	1	4.2
Therapeutic Assistant	1	4.2
Not informed	2	8.3
Work Schedule		
Morning	4	16.6
Afternoon	3	12.5
Morning and Afternoon	15	62.5
Weekends and some weekdays	1	4.2
Not informed	1	4.2

Source: The authors.

Therefore, it is crucial that we understand the specificities of being both an academic and a working student (Trindade et al., 2023). We need to think about an education that truly includes the working student (Dantas et al., 2019), both from the perspective of pedagogical practices adapted to this context (Carvalho et al., 2019) and student assistance policies or protective legislation (Souza & Damasceno, 2019), so that higher education is truly 'open' to these students (Trópia & Souza, 2023).

Specifically, with regard to internships, it is therefore urgent to know who these students are, their concrete and material conditions of existence, and it is crucial that the condition of being a working student is not seen as a barrier or obstacle to a formative process that seeks to be critical and inclusive, but rather as a potentially transformative condition and a means of engagement with issues of struggle and confrontation of social inequalities. In this context, the teacher's role is to mediate the effective participation of these students, making structural, pedagogical, and daily adjustments so that they can combine work and internships, as well as acting to unveil the historical and social conditions of this situation, using them as a driving force for understanding and awareness of educational phenomena and the reality in which we are constituted.

Expanding this understanding to the ESB in PEC, we have the great challenge of overcoming discourses and theorizations about a critical and emancipatory practice, and achieving the full scope of a critical praxis, so that the internship is configured as "[...] a space-time-experience that enables dialogue between theory and practice, contributing to reshaping the praxis involved in the production of knowledge and in the construction of an epistemological, ethical and political identity of the profession" (Teles, 2020, p. 86). Thus, the internship becomes a fundamental formative device for awareness, which, according to Martín-Baró (1996, p. 15, author's emphasis), "[...] it constitutes the primary horizon of psychological 'what to do'".

## Final considerations

This study undertook a critical analysis of the territory, curriculum, and life trajectories of working students, seeking to understand the historical, social, economic, ideological, and geographical factors present in their training in Psychology and, especially, in their internship experience in PEC.

We have shown that capital has been 'advancing' across the national territory of Rondônia and Vilhena like 'sentinels,' increasingly and under a neoliberal market plan, through the expansion, 'commodification,' 'oligopolization,' and 'interiorization' of the ES. This allows us to postulate that, even in more distant territories, 'we are Brazilians,' and we continue to be exploited and colonized. Thus, under the dominance of private capital, Psychology has entered the 'westerly realms', allowing access to this training for many people, but, on the other hand, under the logic of capital and profit, contributing to uncritical and technocratic training.

Regarding the curriculum from the singular-particular-universal dialectic, we observed the presence of critical elements through a greater number of subjects related to PE, as well as a specific subject and an ESB, already constituted under the perspective of work processes and a theoretical framework of PEC. However, traditional clinical emphases still prevail, remaining the main foundation for training, even within the discipline of PE itself. Thus, from 'this frontier of our homeland', we highlight that the critical postulates of PE 'advance', but not as 'sentinels', since it is 40 years of a critical undertaking that has not yet materialized in the curricula, allowing us to say that 'we are Brazilians', insofar as we reflect the same national scenario.

The historical, social, and educational profile of our students revealed that 'Rondônia is working feverishly in workshops and schools,' our 'fearless' interns are working-class women from subordinate backgrounds who had to work, even before finishing high school, to ensure their family's livelihood and thus access higher education, in a daily struggle that ends with a night of studying. But we are not 'proud' of this scenario; in fact, we lament that higher education institutions are 'half-open' to these people. This lament/critical discourse needs to materialize into curricular and formative changes for evening higher education, allowing these people to successfully complete their studies.

Thus, these elements point to the fact that although the proposed constitutional amendment (PEC) has brought about changes in how we understand the process of exclusion of the working classes, allowing school phenomena to be understood from the perspective of class struggle, it has not considered (or has considered very little) the policies of access, retention, and success of these individuals in their educational trajectories, especially regarding curricular policies, which continue to be designed for a non-concrete, white, young, single student who has the financial resources to pay for her studies and an entire day to dedicate exclusively to them. We continue to produce a form of Psychology that is still based on elitism, even though a process of 'popularization' and 'de-elitization' of this training is underway.

We have not seen more concrete discussions on the 'advance' of capital in Psychology education either, nor have we seen DCNs that address the specific needs of a working student in the evening, in order to rethink issues of workload, subjects, content, practices, and pedagogical activities. Critical School Psychology has not focused on dropout rates in higher education and their causes, as well as the difficulties these students face in completing their courses. The working class remains invisible when we have to formulate actions and move beyond the theoretical plane.

In this regard, internships in Psychology have also been implemented more as a pedagogical proposal that promotes the exclusion of working students than as a mediating pedagogical experience for their continued enrollment in the course, often constituting a decisive moment in which the student must choose between continuing their studies or working. Thus, the ESB in PEC, whose foundations are based on an emancipatory and inclusive praxis, needs to position itself and act from a perspective opposite to this, materializing its precepts in this educational experience and, perhaps, managing to bring about changes in other areas.

It is from a dialectical perspective between the territories, the curricula, and the life trajectories of the students—that is, it is 'between' because there is no hierarchy among these elements, and they sometimes 'shout loudly: 'We are Brazilians!,' and sometimes only refer to 'landscapes of the sunset'—that we can, 'as advanced sentinels,' contribute to overcoming the social inequalities that are already present in the course from the moment of entry, through the construction of contextualized and critical psychological theories and practices.

Finally, we need to point out that the research presented was undertaken with a specific sample, and that, although it is relevant to understanding the training and the ESB itself in PEC, more research is needed to

unveil the concrete reality of Psychology courses, especially those located in new geographical areas, thus allowing an understanding of how Educational Policies are materializing in the curricula of IES and in the daily educational routine, where formative experiences are created. Therefore, we believe that further studies can provide more elements of the concrete reality of Psychology training, which will allow for the formulation of Educational Policies that reflect the territorial diversity of our country and consider the female students present in the daily life of Psychology courses.

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