

History of Professional Education in Minas Gerais: A School Institution That Educates for Work

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Abstract: The focus of this paper is to study school institutions, specifically the campus of Inconfidentes, of the *Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Sul de Minas Gerais* (IFSULDEMINAS), Brazil. The aim was to investigate the transformations that occurred in this institution with Law No. 11.892/2008, which transformed it into the campus IFSULDEMINAS. Through bibliographic research and the study of primary and secondary sources organized in inventories, the significant transformation of expansion is highlighted, and the ongoing field of dispute between integral education and technical education is highlighted. This dispute, which has emerged within the institution itself, is also reflected in today's society, where individuals face the choice between the desire for integral/complete education or a purely technical/competent education in their relationship with work.

Keywords: School Institution; IFSULDEMINAS; Inconfidentes

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1. Introduction

In Brazil, with the end of slavery and the proclamation of the Republic at the end of the 19th century, there was, according to Dulci (2005) ^[1], an impulse to adhere to modernization. In 1909, during Nilo Peçanha's government, the regulatory framework for professional education in Brazil was established with Decree No. 7.566, dated September 23, 1909, as affirmed by Manfredi (2002) ^[2]. The objective was to address the needs and challenges of the Brazilian society of the time regarding economic and political issues. Under this government, a federal network of 19 schools, named *Escolas de Aprendizizes Artífices* (Apprentice Artisan Schools) was established, which, according to Manfredi (2002), was the origin of federal schools in Brazil ^[2]. These schools later became what is known today *Escolas Técnicas* (Technical Schools), which in the second half of the 20th century transformed into *Centros Federais de Educação Tecnológica* (Federal Centers of Technological Education) (CEFETs).

From 1909 to 1930, the Apprentice Artisan Schools were responsible for training technicians to meet the workforce demands arising from the establishment of the first factories in major urban centers. During the government of Getúlio Vargas, as a part of his project to expand industry in Brazil and transform the country into an industrial capitalist nation, these schools gave way to the *Liceus Industriais* (Industrial Lyceums) However, according to Manfredi (2002), there was little change in the objectives of the former schools ^[2].

In 1942, the *Escolas Industriais e Técnicas* (Industrial and Technical Schools) replaced the Lyceums. This change was intended to provide an equivalent education to Secondary Education, recognizing that the

technical school, for the purposes it served, had become part of the regular school system at that time. This constitution has an important historical significance, because it would offer vocational training that aligns with the aspirations of that period. It was envisioned that the Brazilian school, at its basic level, would be characterized by workforce development, which has been reaffirmed throughout the century by the legislations that have been created and are currently in effect in Brazil.

In 1959, these Industrial and Technical Schools, operating as autonomous entities, were renamed *Escolas Técnicas Federais* (Federal Technical Schools). In 1978, due to the development of the industrial society in Brazil, its growth and evolution led to the transformation of these three schools into CEFETs (*Centros Federais de Educação Tecnológica*) in the states of Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, and Minas Gerais, as noted by Otranto (2010) ^[3]. From that moment on, other schools were gradually incorporated into this model, allowing us to affirm that the federal network of professional education in Brazil took shape and content based on these historical, legal, and political milestones.

According to data from the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Secretariat of Professional and Technological Education (SETEC), as reported by Otranto (2010), by the end of 2008, the federal network had 36 Agrotechnical Schools, 33 CEFETs, 58 Decentralized Teaching Units (UNEDs), 32 linked schools, one Federal Technological University and one Federal Technological University and a Federal Technical School ^[3].

It was in the year 2008 that the president at the time, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva sanctioned Law No. 11.892, of December 29, 2008 ^[4], published in the *Diário Oficial da União* the following day. The law created the 38 Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFETs) and, thus established, according to its Art. 1,

[...] within the scope of the federal education system, the Federal Network of Professional Scientific and Technological Education, linked to the Ministry of Education and constituted by the following institutions:

- 1) Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology - Federal Institutes;
- 2) Federal Technological University of Paraná - UTFPR;
- 3) Federal Centers of Technological Education Celso Suckow da Fonseca - CEFET-RJ CEFET-RJ and of Minas Gerais - CEFET-MG;
- 4) Technical Schools linked to the Federal Universities [...] ^[4]

Thus, it is understood that the Federal Institutes, as a reference for educational training, are institutions that were created from the reorganization or even the aggregation of former professional school institutions. It should also be noted that there was the Federal Technological University within the federal system, which remained separated from this model, but, has currently expanded to all the federative units of Brazil. As these isolated school institutions within the states were incorporated by the IFE, each group

[...] reacted differently to the government's proposal for change, published initially by Decree No. 6095/2007, which outlined the first guidelines and foundations of the IFETs, for this reason we opted for a differentiated analysis of the Agrotechnical Schools, CEFETs and Schools Linked to Federal Universities ^[3].

These are the Federal Agrotechnical Schools, the CEFETs and the schools that became affiliated to the Federal Universities. Otranto (2010) stated that Decree No. 6.095, of April 24, 2007 ^[5] ended up generating a climate of distrust and even opposition in many of these educational institutions, due to the loss of autonomy and the understanding that they would become some of the first CEFETs. Some situations arose from discomfort with their own genesis as established educational institutions, as “[...] among all the arguments presented, the most prominent in all the Agrotechnical Schools that were part of the sample was the loss of identity of these institutions” ^[3].

The IFETs are educational institutions that have differentiated structures of training, since they

emerged from former professional schools. It is relevant, therefore, to understand how these school institutions reacted to the transformation of becoming campuses within a larger institution of the federal network. Whether there were possible resistance or satisfaction, as well as what was abandoned and retained in this model that completes the sense taken to meet the needs of a region that lacked secondary level educational institutions and higher education, which is the case in Southern Minas Gerais.

2. School institution: development, democracy and society

As professionals and educators in school institutions, it is understood that school education drives the development of society. According to Cunha (1975), the notion of development as synonymous with scientific advancement has always been incorporated into various ideological, political, and economic discourses ^[6]. In the social context, understanding that a society can only develop as its institutions improve in each historical period entails the recognition that a society is only deemed developed if all its institutions evolve within the same historical context. The author warns that this understanding carries the risk of conceiving society as a living organism that can only develop if each organ matures and reaches its full potential together.

However, if in this social context, the development of society is understood as a natural evolution, disregarding the internal and contradictory forces, those that dispute or even those that contradict each other within institutions and their relationship with the social whole. One misunderstands that an institution corresponds to the evolution and development of a society, as long as each one fulfills its role in a linear and conflict-free manner. An example of this is the school model during the civil-military dictatorship in Brazil (1964–1984), where the internal power hierarchy of the institution and its external power followed a strict order, which, in one perception, demonstrated order and progress.

According to Cunha (1975), there is a third way of understanding the development of society: it is possible to separate societies or, at least, “normal” and “pathological” patterns ^[6]. This way of understanding is an extension of the hierarchical vision of society and instituted powers. However, the opposite of these three ways of understanding the evolution of society is to conceive of its development as a transformation within each institution, which will follow the form and content that each institution acquires with the macro-social the transformations, according to the role it must fulfill in a given historical period.

School education in Brazil, in its broadest sense, focuses on the role that the school institution plays within the framework of institutions that make up society. According to Cunha (1975):

The economic theory postulated, until the 1950s, that the growth of national income was the result of the incorporation of new contingents to the labor force, the expansion of cultivated land, the discovery and exploitation of natural resources, and investment of new capital ^[6].

In the perception of the economists at the time, the focus should be on human resources, which gave rise to the thesis that higher the levels of education would result in greater income growth. The author highlights the contradiction in this belief, since on one hand, there is this recognition of the relationship between education and income, but on the other hand, there is the naive belief that one directly causes of the other. This contradiction points to the possibility that the opposite could also be true.

Cunha (1975) states that after World War II, the United States of America rose to the forefront at the expense of the devastated nations of Western Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the newly liberated African colonies. This difference played a crucial role in the development gap among nations, a context characterized as “modernization theory”. Some countries invested in sumptuous constructions, but went bankrupt, because their labor force could not keep up with the level of development, as the workers were poorly trained. Others, following the North-American model of efficiency, prospered. It was observed that the difference “[...] was in education, while some countries had sufficiently educated populations for the

‘modern society,’ while others had an uneducated population only capable of living in a ‘traditional society’”^[6].

During the post-war period and the second half of the 20th century, there was a transition from a non-industrialized (traditional) society to an industrialized (modern) society. However, the author asserts that for a society to undergo this transformation and industrialize, it needs capital, skilled workers and entrepreneurs. According to Cunha (1975 p. 19): “Here appears the role of the ‘entrepreneurial spirit’, either spontaneously, as in already industrialized countries, or induced and planned, as the others can do”. This reaffirms the school as an educational institution that alienates its students solely to the world of production and labor. As a result, the educational institutions were designed to train labor for the world of production, capital, and social differences.

It should be considered that the liberal or even the liberal-democratic vision prevailing on the second half of the 20th century in Brazil, expected school education to not eliminate the differences among citizens, but rather to create a school to produce citizens who had access to it, incorporated their social roles, and were equipped and motivated to compete among themselves. As Cunha (1975) states:

This last trend permeates the official ideology of capitalist countries, both those with totalitarian regimes and those with liberal-democratic regimes [...]. Education is treated by the State in Brazil as the light capable of illuminating a vast “region” of social life left in the shadows by the “economic” development^[6].

The author believes that the inability of the economic sector to reverberate in society on its own leads it to seek school education in the realization, through training, of the consumer citizen alienated to an educational project that instrumentalizes and keeps them in the condition of not reflecting on their choices. And in moments when the citizen takes a position in society, it is to defend the status quo.

To understand a school institution that trains for agricultural work in Brazil is to consider a historical approach to the reality of the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. During this time, children were immersed in the world of work, playing a leading role in this context. However, this aspect was not always given the degree of importance it deserves in this type of study. It was a children that was part of a larger societal project chosen by the political society of the time for the development of Brazilian society.

According to Nery (2009), since Imperial Brazil, there has been a need for an institution responsible rural work training, with the most prominent agricultural school being the *Instituto Agrícola da Bahia* (Agricultural Institute of Bahia)^[7]. The author stated that the type of “bookish” education provided by such institutions contradicted what was needed at the time: practical knowledge to work with the land and training for agricultural workers, which would contribute to the development of Brazilian agriculture and livestock.

Thus, starting in 1918, in response to this need, the *Patronatos Agrícolas Federais* (Federal Agricultural Patronages) provided primary agricultural training and education. Their main target was to address the regeneration of underprivileged children from urban areas, with the intention of creating conditions for the formation of young farmers. However, as history shows, this model of education eventually led to its extinction, as it combined agricultural training with the assistance of delinquent minors who populated the urban centers, thereby impacting the societal image of the time.

Telling this story is of utmost importance, since we are currently in research, which considers the discussion of laws and public policies in order to argue for or critique education for work and the necessary skills needed for such endeavors. The history of vocational education in Brazil shows that school institutions were established with this objective in mind, and the State made choices on behalf of the population, sending their young children to engage in agricultural “labor” from an early age.

If there was a concern with the training of rural workers, there was also a one with the urban population.

According to Nery (2009), the Agricultural Apprenticeship programs were created and at the same time as the Schools of Apprentices and Artisans, both linked to the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, and both aimed to train manual workers who would do the “heavy” work for the desired development by the political and social elites of the time ^[7].

With Decree No. 8.319 dated October 20, 1910, agronomic teaching and its regulations were approved ^[8]. The first institutions created were in Barbacena, Minas Gerais (MG), São Luís das Missões, Rio Grande do Sul (RS), and São Simão, in São Paulo (SP), in the years 1910 and 1911. From these three, others began to emerge, but always in the areas where growth and the creation of municipalities was desired. However, the period of the budgetary crisis primarily affected this project, which remained unchanged until 1934, when there was a reformulation of the agronomic education, transforming the objectives of this training ^[7].

Therefore, rural education in Brazil emerged at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century with the aim of social and economic development. According to Carvalho (2011), the discussion between rural and urban development during that period demanded governments to implement public policies for this purpose, which promoted the idea of developing the rural world at the expense of urban civilizing ^[9].

Thus, with this division between urban and rural worlds in the context of capitalist society, there was a demand for specialization in the world of work, with attention to the specificities of each sphere. In this way, the training of labor force linked to the country’s development resonated throughout all educational projects in the 20th century. However, Carvalho (2011, p. 11) states: “The idealized image of the countryside would correspond, thus, to a critical reaction to the alienated form of the dominant social relations in already urbanized areas.” ^[9]

On the other hand, the duality of rural/urban is reaffirmed as the urban world is conceived as the place par excellence of consumption, of the power of capital. This reinforces the idea that rural areas are always seen as a backward place, and highly dependent on the urban world. The promotion of this idea is related to the desire to reaffirm capitalism as the economic system to be embraced and developed in 20th century Brazil, a political will and investment in institutions that would provide the necessary workforce for labor.

It is worth considering that in the state of Minas Gerais, during the Economic Congress of 1903, socioeconomic conditions were discussed by Faria Filho and Xavier (2002) ^[10]. The goal of the Congress was to explore productive partnerships that were possible among the owners of the means of production in the country. The prevailing idea in this Congress was the notion of “progress for the state” under the motto of “unity in diversity,” aiming at modernizing agriculture without neglecting coffee production, as well as modernizing rural areas and regions.

Another model that greatly influenced the training of technicians focused on agricultural production from the 1960s was the implementation of farm-school system in former agricultural schools. This model was part of the government’s efforts to restructure agricultural education at the primary and secondary levels. In the implementation of this model, as with the others mentioned, the alliance with Christian ideology played a significant role. However, its purpose was not evangelization, but rather the formation of individuals for work, aiming to shape a meek and passive spirit in agricultural technicians. “And the church appeared there as an important antidote with its social doctrine” ^[11].

3. History of education in Minas Gerais

Faria Filho, Chamon and Rosa (2006) stated that in Minas Gerais, as in other regions of the country, and based on the Brazilian reality of the 19th century post-independence, public schooling as a theme and place was brought up in the speeches of politicians/statesmen ^[12]. It is understood that development, progress, and civilization should be the roles that education plays in society at the time. In other words, school education had the task of civilizing the Brazilian population and guide them towards the development level

already seen in other continents, mainly in Europe.

The recognition and institutionalization of the imperial state itself were linked to this civilizing project. In this historical period, according to Matos (1990), public education assumed a role in reaffirming the political transformations of Brazilian society, which should be “spread among all classes” to position Brazil, along other nations, as a “civilized nation.”^[13] It was understood that one of the country’s shortcomings was the lack of education. In fact, this is a prevailing perspective and justification for the “backwardness” in terms of education and quality at all levels of school in Brazil, from Basic Education to Higher Education, up to the present day.

At the time, instruction provided was elementary. However, as stated by Faria Filho (1990, p. 72), “[...] the rudiments of reading, writing, and counting [...]” were for the free population, while “[...] the slave population was excluded from this horizon.” Just like in present times, public education was not easily implemented at that time, as it required “[...] creating more schools, training teachers, establishing curriculum content and effective teaching methods, defining access conditions, number of vacancies, school materials, as well as creating a system of supervision, among other things.”^[14]

This required the Imperial State to enact legislation in 1827 to regulate public education. However, in Minas Gerais, such regulation only occurred in 1835, with Law No. 13, dated March 28^[15]. This period became known as the “civilization of society.” The challenges were diverse, ranging from infrastructure to the model of schools that would be established, as well as the lack of qualified teachers. Those who offered to teach, according to records in the *Arquivo Público Mineiro sobre a Instrução Pública* (Public Archive of Minas Gerais on Public Instruction), often had limited knowledge of reading, writing, and mathematics. Moreover, the salary offered was not enough to attract the most qualified individuals in society, resulting in a profession marked by low qualifications.

Law No. 13/1835 in the province of Minas Gerais stipulated that primary education would be composed of two groups: the first for reading, writing and counting; and the second for general notions of moral and religious duties^[15]. Art. 1 of this law established that mathematics, including applications of for commerce, geometry and linear drawing, and surveying, should be taught to provide the necessary knowledge for professions in demand at that time. Art. 6 stated that the government should establish, as soon as possible, a Normal School for 1st grade education, based on the methods practiced in civilized countries^[15], and to hire teachers to ensure fairness for the province.

According to Faria Filho (1990), the history of Minas Gerais shows that from this moment on, there was an attempt to organize school education, with teachers being sent to France to learn about the school model to be implanted in the province^[14]. Based on the narratives of the trip of one of these teachers, Faria Filho (1990) states that the French schools were focused on arts and crafts – with technical education^[14]. Thus, the first Normal School with these characteristics, was established in Ouro Preto in 1840, with Professor Peregrino as the director. However, his tenure was short-lived due to his premature death. As Faria Filho (1990) stated, Peregrino’s perspective was one of having seen what to do, an observable practice, but it should not be mistaken for a mere copy of the French model^[14]. According to Faria Filho (1990, p. 86), the goal was to “[...] seek foreign models in an attempt to modernize the school, to adjust it to civilized standards.”^[14]

Francisco de Assis Peregrino was one of the teachers sent to France in 1836, where he lived for a few years, financed by the Province of Minas Gerais. In 1839, in his report “*Memória Apresentada pelo professor Francisco de Assis Peregrino*”, he specifically addresses primary education, and proposes the substitution of individual teaching (*aulas régias*) practiced in Brazil, by simultaneous teaching, as done in France. The teacher would deliver simultaneous lessons to groups of students^[14].

Furthermore, it should be considered that the characteristic of Brazilian society, specifically in Minas Gerais, is rural. Moreover, one cannot approach education as a civilizing project without considering what

Ianni (1984, p. 7) “The agrarian question is present in the transition from Monarchy to the Republic, from oligarchic state to populism, from populism to the militarism, in the crisis of the dictatorship, and in the movements and parties that are fighting for the construction of other forms of the State.”^[16] Carvalho (2011, p. 76) further adds: “The original rural framework demonstrates how the rural environment constitutes a significant space of political and economic demands, as well as a territory of tension [...]”^[9]

According to Carvalho (2011), this rural and urban reality is one of the factors that motivate public policies to promote educational proposals^[9]. The author exemplifies that, since the scholastic reform movement, there was an intention to adapt the education to students in rural areas, but this did not bring about significant change in their reality in rural Brazil. Because the main goal was to develop better education for students from rural areas, and from there, develop educational institutions that would drive the development of the rural world. From this perspective, Minas Gerais has always been receptive to the ideals driven by this movement. Thus, as Carvalho (2011, p. 76) states, “[...] we understand the reasons why the educational policies were developed for this portion of the Brazilian population.”^[9] In the early 20th century, vocational education, the Patronage system, and the Agricultural Schools serve as good examples of this approach.

According to Versieux (2013), agricultural education emerged in the state of Minas Gerais as part of a modernization process of the society of that time^[17]. It was evaluated by the economic, political, and intellectual elites that the state, after the golden age of mining, remained stagnated throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. The author affirms that this perception was held by the conservative classes. According to Faria (1992), the term “conservative classes” refers to a historically constructed and undefined category with agroexport interests – the farmers, traders, industrialists, and bankers, who opposed the other class, the one that produced^[18]. These interests were accentuated at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century, transforming schools that provided agricultural education into broader educational and research institutions that catered to the professional education needed in each region nationwide.

In 2008, the Federal Institutes underwent a major expansion, with the creation of many others by the Federal Network of Vocational, Scientific and Technological Education: 31 Federal Centers of Technological Education (CEFETs), 75 decentralized educational units (UNEDs), 39 Agrotechnical Schools, Federal Technical Schools and eight schools affiliated with universities. These institutions ceased to exist independently and were restructured to form the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology. This information was accessed on March 25 2022, and is available at: <https://portal.ifsuldeminas.edu.br/index.php/o-instituto>

Thus, the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Southern Minas Gerais (IFSULDEMINAS) was created by unifying the three recognized agrotechnical institutions in the South of Minas Gerais: Inconfidentes, Machado and Muzambinho, due to their regional importance in vocational training and high-quality development in the form of Secondary and Technical Education. Over a decade since its creation, the Institute currently has campuses in Passos, Poços de Caldas, Pouso Alegre, and advanced campuses in Carmo de Minas and Três Corações, as well as advanced centers and network poles in various cities in the region.

The courses offered ranged from integrated technical and high school (post-high school), technical specialization, the National Program for Integration of Professional Education in the Youth and Adult Education Modality (Proeja), undergraduate, graduate, and distance education courses (EoD). The location of the *Reitoria* (Rectorate) in Pouso Alegre is justified by its strategic location and serves to connect all campuses and provided administrative and educational support to them.

Despite the expansion policy in southern Minas Gerais adopted by the Federal Government, even during difficult political times from 2014 onwards, the IFSULDEMINAS still can manages to demonstrate its continuity in opening new campuses and advanced fields, due to the lack of educational institutions for

this purpose in this region of Minas Gerais. There are political forces and economic interests centered around the existence of this school, while at the same time there are attempts to control its expansion through policies resulting from political, media, and legal upheaval currently taking place in Brazil.

4. From the Patronato Agrícola de Inconfidentes to campus in IFSULDEMINAS

In 1909, the state government of Minas Gerais donated 810 hectares of land for the creation of the Colônia Agrícola de Inconfidentes (Agricultural Colony of Inconfidentes), Minas Gerais. The term “colony” goes back to the time period when Brazil was a colony of Portugal, which meant being subjected politically and economically to the Portuguese state, while being its property. This term has been used since ancient Greece to designate groups of migrants who left their homeland to populate, cultivate, and exploit a foreign land. Inconfidentes, due to the period of gold exploration in the mountains of Minas Gerais, is part of the route that transported gold to the ports of Santos and Rio de Janeiro, and it is also a tribute to the participants of the *Conspiração Mineira* (Mineira Conspiracy), a movement that took place in the 1720s.

According to Ortigara (2014), the economy of the municipality was focused on agriculture and livestock when the *Patronato Agrícola Visconde de Mauá* (Agricultural Patronage Visconde de Mauá) was created. It was established to operate within the “[...] Núcleo Colonial de Inconfidentes (Colonial Nucleus of Inconfidentes), an institution that distributed land to foreign settlers who migrated to Brazil.”^[19] The author states that the objective of the Patronage’s education was to offer educational opportunities to minors/children collected from urban centers, mainly from Rio de Janeiro, to receive instruction/education focused on basic agricultural and livestock knowledge. The researcher reiterates that it was a corrective action that solved the problem of marginalized children at that time, promoting social adjustment.

Table 1. Inventory of IFSULDEMINAS creation and transformations - Inconfidentes campus

Year	Nomenclature	Purpose
1918	Agricultural Patronage (Ministry of Businesses Agriculture, Industry and Commerce)	Remove the poor boys from the streets of the city of Rio de Janeiro. Develop the rural zone of the region. Train labor force.
1934	Agricultural Apprenticeship of Minas Gerais	Intensification of rural labor training. Changes pedagogical didactics.
1939	Agricultural Apprenticeship “Visconde de Mauá”	Primary course divided into Middle and High School, with certification with professional qualification.
1947	School of Agricultural Initiation “Visconde de Mauá”	The school is divided into: Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Rural Industry and Administration.
1950	Agricultural School “Visconde de Mauá”	Entrance exam for the Agricultural Initiation Course. Official letter from the Brazilian American Commission on Education of Rural Populations.
1964	“Visconde de Mauá” Gymnasium Secretary of Supply (SAEB)	In 1973, the National Coordination of Agricultural Education (CNEA) authorized the Training Center for the Formation of Rural Workers.
1978	Federal Agrotechnical School of Inconfidentes/MG "Visconde de Mauá" 05/19/1967 – MEC	School-Farm System: link between school and labor market labor market: “learning to do” and “doing to learn”. In the 1980s: Monitorship and Supervised Internship. 1993 - Authorization. 1995 - Technicians in Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Agribusiness.

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Year	Nomenclature	Purpose
2008	Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Southern Minas Gerais - campus Inconfidentes MEC	Focus in the research and expansion area. Stimulate the development of technical and technological solutions, extending its benefits to the community. Half of the vacancies will be destined to the offer of technical courses, especially those with an integrated curriculum. In 2010, in Higher Education, degree courses for graduates and Computer Network Technology, Mathematics and Biological Sciences. Distance learning courses in Secretarial, Public Services and Administration in seven centers in the region, in Monte Sião, Inconfidentes, Borda da Mata, Pouso Alegre, Cambuí Bom Repouso, and Senador Amaral, totaling 700 students.

The inventory in **Table 1** not only highlights a transformation or change in the nomenclature of IFSULDEMINAS, but also the historical path forged in each period with its new interpretations new interpretations of the social development needs. In this case the investment in the development of the local, regional and Brazilian scenario – as if they could solve two problems identified in the Brazilian reality, the plight of marginalized children from major cities and the development of rural economy as a driving force for Brazilian economic activity.

The historical form of this educational institution over a century of existence (1918–2018) has undergone transformations, as shown in **Table 1**, but Bresci (2017, p. 35) observed in their doctoral research paper, “[...] the younger students sweeping the large courtyard, carrying furniture from one side to the other [...].”^[20] This reality is justified by the very purpose of the Patronages, which aimed to remove children from the streets, with a redemptive philosophy concerning the potential harm that they could represent for urban society in the early days of the Republic.

The *Patronatos agrícolas* were institutions created during the First Republic to support poor children who wandered the streets of the country’s cities, and children of farmers. The aim was to teach the children agricultural skills and guide them to work in the fields. Work was considered a regenerating element, capable of correcting the children and directing them towards the kind of labor that the elite of the time needed. It was an attempt to solve the problem of abandoned and disadvantaged children and to contain the migratory flow of farmers to the cities. The establishment of patronages was also related to a project for a modern Brazil, focused on the ideology of work, directed at underprivileged youth, aiming to form disciplined workers. The agricultural patronages emerged as a federal initiative and were implemented in several states in Brazil. According to Boeira (2012), this was one of the most important actions of the government in the First Republic in the area of social policies for children and youth, preceding the establishment of the Children’s Code of 1927^[21,22].

As the Patronatos was created in 1918 in several Brazilian municipalities as an educational work institution, Santos (2013) stated that they aimed to remove poor boys from the streets and rural areas to teach them the agricultural trade, and thus curb the rural exodus^[22]. This regenerative character caused a transformation in educational provision, as until then only children of the aristocracy had access to schooling. However, there was a need to make room for another social class, as the demand for development required a different type of labor. Therefore, the *Patronatos Agrícolas* (Agricultural Patronage) were established in Brazil. According to Santos (2013, p. 4): “Education should be targeted towards the lower social classes to prevent vice and crime; it should serve as an instrument of moralization for the people.”^[22]

The identity of the Inconfidentes campus of IFSULDEMINAS is blended with the identity of the municipality of Inconfidentes itself, that is evident when walking through the town, where one will get the

impression of being inside the school, except in the areas of the farm, which are farther away from the center of the small town. The campus facilities, located in the center of Inconfidentes, on the upper part of the town square, extending around the square, with school buildings that have housed the institution's staff and teachers for a long time. This situation creates a sense that the school and the town are interconnected by their historical constitution implies that the identity of one is part of the other and vice versa. This educational institution fulfills the role of training for rural/agricultural work and, at the same time, gives at the same time gives meaning to the existence of the city itself.

The Municipality of Inconfidentes–MG “[...] appeared in 1909, when the State Government donated 810 hectares of land to the Union to create an agricultural colony for foreigners. The bandeirantes, who settled along the banks of the Mogi-Guaçu River, attracted by the gold mines in the Gerais region. While their husbands took care of the crops, the women crocheted in their homes. Gradually, the trade of handmade products was gaining notoriety, and thus, crochet became one of the main sources of income of the municipality.”^[23] Currently, the economy is driven by the textile and agricultural industries. In 2010, its population, according to IBGE, was 6,859 inhabitants^[23].

The historical constitution of the Inconfidentes campus has a strong reference to the *Patronato Agrícola* (Agricultural Patronage), which is a part of its founding tradition. Whenever the institution’s formation is discussed, this identity characteristic becomes apparent.

Observed in the enrollment records of the Patronato, there were transfers of minors from Rio de Janeiro to Inconfidentes, these being the same underprivileged, excluded and at-risk individuals. In the records, each minor had a number, and the number was often prominently displayed on the shoulder of the uniforms, entitled “*educando no. 111*” (student no. 111).

Bittencourt (1993), in their doctoral thesis, affirms that in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century in Brazil, it was as if the underprivileged were granted access to education not because the elite of the time recognized its importance for these individuals, the working classes, the poor, the descendants of the quilombos, of unregulated immigration, but rather because only by granting access to education there be technically “qualified” labor for the desired development of Brazilian society^[24].

In the study about the Agricultural Patronage of Anitápolis, Boeira (2012) addresses the reality regarding the identity of the educational institution in relation to the municipality/colony^[21]:

The Agricultural Patronage of Anitápolis, since its creation in 1918 until its closure in 1930, presents intriguing elements for understanding the stay of the minors, mostly coming from Rio de Janeiro, in this establishment. To understand the institution in its internal dynamics, its networks of relationships established among its residents or with its with its educational agents provides us with important instruments to understand the complexity of relationships and the behavior of people who are commonly investigated only in the productive space. However, the location of the institution and its demands, cannot be understood in isolation from the realms of education and work, since people act simultaneously in these two universes. The universe of education and the universe of work, as well as the *Núcleo Colonial* and the *Patronato Agrícola*, are interconnected through the daily experiences and practices of the minors and their educators, viewed from this perspective as social subjects. Therefore, the life of the of the Patronage is directly linked to the life of the Colonial Nucleus (Anitápolis), making it necessary to observe the channels of dialogue in which power games and struggles for rights are waged (BOEIRA, 2012, p. 13, emphasis added)^[21].

The highlights of the quote from Boeira (2012) call attention to the impressions gathered from primary sources of the Inconfidentes campus regarding an institution that, in the early 20th century, addressed the need for education (by removing young people from the streets of Rio de Janeiro) and labor (as part of a plan that aimed at agricultural development) and the use of foreign labor/land donation/colonies to redeem society from the “dangerous” presence of juvenile offenders.

Therefore, it is understandable to focus on technical training and the dynamics of the individuals within the institution, which has a field-like setting resembling a closed colony, with identification items for the inmates and the requirement of daily work within the institution. Using numbers to identify them simultaneously ensures a distancing from the human relationship that could be formed, as if exempting oneself from the need for justifications for this closed regime. Would an inmate be allowed, for example, to refuse this training at any moment? Would it be possible to leave and return to this type of training/institution at any time? These questions, for researchers in the field, are materialized in the marks of internment, a predetermined formation imposed by society on the young individuals who were perceived as a risk to society. The marks of an institution with “prison-like” characteristics undoubtedly reverberate in its current daily life, as a campus within IFSULDEMINAS.

As for the curriculum structure, Santos (2013) stated that the focus of this training is the teaching of agricultural techniques, capable of training underprivileged youth for this purpose ^[22]. The reality is also reaffirmed in the Agricultural Apprenticeships, which relates to preparation for rural work in its most rudimentary form, for immediate sustenance. This curriculum accurately represents the society of the time, with its development and hierarchical institutions, in which men and women received predetermined and closed models of education, and it was up to each individual to adapt to their given reality. In these models, the differentiated roles and the importance of men and women were emphasized, based on forging and highlighting the differences between them. It was a society that was exclusionary and burdened with prejudices

As it reaches its centenary, the Inconfidentes Campus of the IFSULDEMINAS carries the weight of its history and transformations over the course of a century, bearing the mark of its genesis as a Patronato. This fact sets it apart in analysis, because the creation of the colony for the development of the inland region of Minas Gerais was a socio-political project of a time, in which establishing a school to train the workforce was seen as a way to dignify the individuals who had access to it.

There have been not only changes in nomenclature over the past century, but also changes in purpose, as it was sometimes focused on regional development, sometimes on training rural labor, and at times on removing orphan boys from the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Ultimately, this institution was created not only to shape a worker, but also a municipality and a society that would contribute to the progress of the local and regional area.

It was evident that there have been significant and fundamental transformations of the isolated agricultural institution as it became a campus within the IFSULDEMINAS system. However, the tradition that identifies it as a unique entity did not dissipate when it became part of a network. What brings together this isolated institution and the new campus in their daily activities of preparing for work is also what sets them apart as they strive to understand, within their respective identities, the process they are going through amidst the tension between the old and the new that presents itself.

The results of this study indicate the connection between the school, the need to train rural workers, and the modernization of the countryside. It is also evident that there are conceptual misunderstandings regarding pedagogical proposals today, for example: student assistance is often mistakenly seen as isolated assistance provided to students, as highlighted by Pereira Junior (2012) ^[25].

In dealing with the long-standing reality of the rupture between a school that trains for work (technical schools) and the those that focus on general education (propaedeutic schools), several observations could be made:

- 1) The identity of the school is intertwined with the identity of the municipality itself, and this is so evident that when walking through the city, one can constantly feel like they are inside the school, except for the areas of the farm, which are located further away, away from the center of the small town.

- 2) The registration records of the Patronato, the transfers of the minors from Rio de Janeiro, and the way the records were kept, with each minor assigned a number, often prominently displayed near the shoulder on their uniforms.
- 3) Were these letters from parents requesting news about their children ever delivered to their recipients?
- 4) The work of the residents within the institution and the justification that it was a way for the boys to “pay” for their education, since they lived there and had everything they needed.
- 5) The fact that there is a duality of teachers who entered the competitions after 2008, when IFSULDEMINAS was already established, and the coexistence of these teachers with the ones considered “old” in terms of their conception of education. The new teachers have a vision of comprehensive education, while the “old” teachers have a vision of technical education.
- 6) The reality of archives, in the 21st century, shows the difficulty of recounting the history of educational institutions; it is unclear whether it is due to a lack of cultural awareness within Brazilian society or a culture of appropriating public property.
- 7) The Federal Institutes, even though they were created to break away from this duality, are a cultural heritage that remains under constant construction.
- 8) The discussion of laws and public policies is used to argue for education for work and the necessary competences for such endeavors, whether to defend or criticize professional education in Brazil. The objective is to develop the interior of the country through agriculture.

5. Final considerations

The connection between the school and the need to train rural workers and modernize the countryside, influenced by the United States after 1960, promoted changes in national production and in Brazilian agricultural education, based on the implementation of the Farm School model. This relates to the current reality of pedagogical proposals in Basic Education, Higher Education, and imported models of Postgraduate education from countries with their own ideals, but sharing a common economic source and political mechanisms to effectively implement their social plans. As a result, they instrumentalize school education to serve their objectives.

Addressing the proposed objectives in this text, we can perceive that other questions arise: What is the purpose of an educational formation in a School Institution that prepares for work? Do transformations occur primarily because they are reflections of societal changes in their respective times? Or is transformation found in the movement between what is conserved/resisted and what we construct?

Certain elements have caught the attention of the observant eye, although perhaps in fewer numbers than expected. Nevertheless, they are sufficient to assert that keeping students within the school, from the Agricultural Patronato and Agricultural Schools to the farm-school model and even with the expansion of 2008, has been and continues to be an economical way of maintaining control over the environment and the students. Society expects them to become workers integrated into the labor market.

The origin of equal right to education began to take shape with the political project of the late 19th century, specifically with the creation of *Grupo Escolares* (Elementary School Groups). However, when it comes to the field of vocational education, it took much longer for gender equality to be recognized. This delay can be attributed to the fact that the societal project that existed throughout the 20th century was highly exclusionary when it came to vocational education. It is evident that the presence of different genders in vocational schools was a relatively recent development, reflecting the historical exclusion and limited opportunities for gender equality in the professional education sector.

The condition assumed after the expansion of vocational education in 2008, reflects a position of the reformers, when they prioritized a qualified teaching staff, graduate-level qualifications, aiming to foster research within the institutes. With this, there is investment in the elaboration of regional knowledge, an

interesting conjuncture with what had been presented so far in Brazil in relation to professional education.

The architectural models of the Inconfidentes campus are a mixture of the old and the new, preserving what existed before and incorporating the changes and investments that have taken place. These models, whether traditional and old or modern, reflect the ideals of the school regarding the type of individuals it aims to educate: on one hand, there is the sense of something unchanging (the old); on the other hand, there is the movement of the present time (the new). This mutual movement accurately portrays the daily life of IFSULDEMINAS in the last decade.

The condition of the local society reflects what is cultural in Brazil, as it values common sense approaches and tends to have limited knowledge about the schools themselves, their structures, and their contexts. At the same time, the physical structures of the schools remain consistent, reinforcing a sense of detachment between the municipality and the school in everyday life. However, when examining the primary sources that have been investigated, the opposite is evident, revealing a deeper connection and a sense of belonging between the community and the school.

Another point to be remembered is the identity of the municipality, strongly linked to the school of the campus it houses, even for the region, for the state, for the country. The institution would be accommodating students from distant regions, as they are more recognized by the distant than by the local community. Certainly, this problem is inherent to the school dimension itself.

Brazil is an agrarian country with a history of slave labor. This was confirmed in this research, as this view has always been present in vocational schools as a trait that justifies their own existence: students from lower layers in the economically exclusive pyramid of society. As Buffa and Almeida Pinto (2002) affirm, the school structure presupposes human values, from universalization to the belief in school as a means to moralize, civilize, and consolidate social order^[26]. What can be observed with the transformation undergone by the institutes in 2008, as well as at IFSULDEMINAS, is precisely the choice of the location where the campus would be installed, reaffirming the agrarian nature that has been confirmed for over a century, following the republican ideology of civilizing Brazilian society through education and schooling.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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