

## THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY IN FULL-TIME CITIZEN SCHOOLS IN PARAÍBA, BRAZIL

*A disciplina Geografia nas Escolas Cidadãs Integrais do Estado da Paraíba,  
Brazil*

*La asignatura de geografía en las Escuelas Ciudadanas Integrales del  
Estado de Paraíba, Brazil*



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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to reflect on the contemporaneity of school Geography through its teaching in Full-Time Citizen Schools (ECI) in the state of Paraíba, Brazil. Full-time education is not an initiative exclusive to Paraíba; rather, it is part of a broader neoliberal reform movement that has taken place across the country and culminated in the 2017 Upper Secondary Education Reform. In the case of Paraíba, this change took place one year prior to the national reform and established the provision of two curricula: the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), which includes the school subjects already taught (such as Portuguese, Mathematics, Geography, among others), and the Diversified Curriculum, composed of new curricular components such as Life Project, Protagonism Clubs, and elective subjects. In fact, there is a reduction in the workload of certain subjects in order to emphasize these so-called “educational innovations.” Accordingly, this study adopts bibliographic and documentary review as its methodological approach to understanding this educational phenomenon in Paraíba. The relevance of this research lies in situating contemporary school Geography within current times and practices, allowing us to examine the directions taken by this subject. Finally, we conclude that the integral citizen education offered by schools within this program ultimately deprives students of opportunities for critical reflection and social transformation, as there is a reduction in geographical knowledge in these schools. Regarding teachers, they are experiencing a process of work overload, as they are required to teach several subjects in addition to Geography in order to meet the minimum workload, which leads to a process of professional de-characterization resulting from the flexibilization of the New Upper Secondary Education model (NEM).

**Keywords:** School Geography; Upper Secondary Education; Full-Time Education; Paraíba.

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## RESUMO

Este trabalho tem como objetivo refletir sobre a contemporaneidade da Geografia escolar através de seu ensino nas Escolas Cidadãs Integrais (ECI) do estado da Paraíba. A educação em tempo integral não é uma ação exclusiva da Paraíba, faz parte de um movimento de reforma neoliberal que vem acontecendo no país inteiro e que culminou na Reforma do Ensino Médio (REM) em 2017. No caso da Paraíba, esta mudança ocorre um ano antes da reforma nacional e institui a oferta de dois currículos: a Base Nacional Curricular Comum (BNCC) com as disciplinas escolares já ensinadas (Português, Matemática, Geografia, entre outras) e a Base Diversificada, que são novos componentes curriculares como Projeto de Vida, Clubes de Protagonismo e disciplinas eletivas. Na verdade, há uma diminuição na carga horária de algumas disciplinas para dar ênfase a essas “novidades educacionais”. Assim, nos apoiamos como metodologia na revisão bibliográfica e documental para a compreensão desse fenômeno educacional na Paraíba. A importância desta pesquisa se dá no âmbito de situar nos tempos e práticas a Geografia escolar contemporânea, onde podemos contemplar os rumos dessa disciplina. Por fim, concluímos que a educação cidadã integral ofertada pelas escolas deste programa acaba por retirar do(a)s estudantes possibilidades de reflexão crítica e transformação social, pois há uma redução do conhecimento geográfico nestas escolas. Sobre o(a) professor(a), este(a) está passando por um processo de sobrecarga de trabalho por necessitar lecionar várias disciplinas além da Geografia para conseguir atingir sua carga horária mínima, o que acarreta na descaracterização profissional docente, por causa da flexibilização do Novo Ensino Médio (NEM).

**Palavras-chave:** Geografia escolar; Ensino Médio; Educação Integral; Paraíba.

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo tiene como objetivo reflexionar sobre la contemporaneidad de la Geografía escolar a través de su enseñanza en las Escuelas Ciudadanas Integrales (ECI) del estado de Paraíba. La educación en tiempo completo no es una acción exclusiva de Paraíba; forma parte de un movimiento de reforma neoliberal que viene ocurriendo en todo el país y que culminó en la Reforma de la Enseñanza Media (REM) en 2017. En el caso de Paraíba, este cambio ocurre un año antes de la reforma nacional e instituye la oferta de dos currículos: la Base Nacional Común Curricular (BNCC), con las asignaturas escolares ya impartidas (Portugués, Matemáticas, Geografía, entre otras), y la Base Diversificada, que incluye nuevos componentes curriculares como Proyecto de Vida, Clubes de Protagonismo y asignaturas optativas. En realidad, se observa una disminución de la carga horaria de algunas asignaturas para dar énfasis a estas “novedades educativas”. Así, nos apoyamos metodológicamente en la revisión bibliográfica y documental para la comprensión de este fenómeno educativo en Paraíba. La importancia de esta investigación radica en situar, en el tiempo y en las prácticas, la Geografía escolar contemporánea, permitiendo contemplar los rumbos de esta disciplina. Finalmente, concluimos que la educación ciudadana integral ofrecida por las escuelas de este programa termina por limitar las posibilidades de reflexión crítica y transformación social de los/las estudiantes, debido a la reducción del conocimiento geográfico en estas instituciones. En cuanto al/la profesor(a), este/a atraviesa un proceso de sobrecarga laboral al necesitar impartir varias asignaturas además de Geografía para alcanzar su carga horaria mínima, lo que conlleva a la desconfiguración profesional docente a causa de la flexibilización del Nuevo Ensino Medio (NEM).

**Palabras clave:** Geografía escolar; Educación Secundaria; Educación Integral; Paraíba.



## 1. INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Citizenship and the teaching of Geography are closely intertwined, as the former constitutes part of the social function of the discipline. The citizen is initially understood as one who holds the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968), a form of social experience that changes over time in accordance with historical moments and hegemonic structures worldwide. In the context of school Geography, its concepts and contents contribute to the formation of citizens through the understanding of their socio-spatial reality, enabling them to know how to act and exist within geographic space.

Throughout its trajectory as a school subject (Albuquerque, 2011), Geography has undergone several transformations and has been directly affected by educational reforms that, at times, have sought to remove it from the school curriculum and/or reduce its instructional hours. However, since the 2017<sup>1</sup>, Upper Secondary Education Reform, the teaching of Geography in Brazil has undergone significant changes, such as its non-compulsory status within the curriculum and a further reduction in instructional hours, consequently limiting the possibilities afforded by geographical knowledge in schools.

We emphasize that this change does not affect only the aforementioned subject but also others included within the fields of the Humanities and Exact Sciences. This movement can be understood as part of contemporary educational reforms in Brazil which, according to Giroto (2024, p. 191), “are part of a global geopolitical movement toward the consolidation of neoliberalism as a new ‘rationality of the world,’” deepening the logics of capitalist social reproduction and becoming consolidated through public administration grounded in conceptions derived from the private sector.

Upper Secondary Education, as the final stage of basic education and a key moment in the consolidation of students’ education, whether aimed at preparing them for the labor market, entry into higher education, or citizenship formation has been marked by criticism and controversy due, in part, to issues related to educational quality, access and retention, as well as debates surrounding its identity and purposes (Mendonça & Fialho, 2020).

Thus, around 2013, civil society, together with business sectors, undertook actions of public pressure in favor of educational reforms. Among the main agendas were the reduction

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that, in 2024, the 2017 Upper Secondary Education Reform underwent legislative changes with the enactment of Law No. 14,945/2024, which establishes new guidelines for Upper Secondary Education (National Upper Secondary Education Policy) and amends/revokes parts of the original 2017 model. Among its key provisions are the increase in the minimum instructional workload and the reinstatement of all compulsory subjects within the General Basic Education curriculum.



of school dropout rates, the promotion of more attractive and up-to-date forms of teaching, and preparation for the labor market (Ferretti, 2018). This popular mobilization is significant and should not be considered in isolation, but rather as a phenomenon in which the deepening of neoliberal doctrines occurs in combination with the conservative backlash that the country has experienced since at least 2013 (Morais & Farias, 2024, p. 195).

According to the aforementioned authors, the state of Paraíba is one of the contexts in which the implementation of Law No. 13,415/2017, which established the New Upper Secondary Education model (NEM), brought about transformations in local education through the creation of the Full-Time Citizen Schools Program (ECI). This public policy is aligned with neoliberal proposals implemented nationwide and promotes, in its discourse and slogans, the formation of citizens prepared for the labor market.

Therefore, with the aim of reflecting on the contemporaneity of school Geography through its teaching in Full-Time Citizen Schools (ECI) in the state of Paraíba, we raise the following questions: how is the teaching of Geography configured in schools operating under this educational model? Are we succeeding in educating citizens? Or, rather, what kind of individuals are being shaped within this neoliberal context?

To address these questions, we draw on a bibliographic review, highlighting authors such as Albuquerque and Lima (2021), Dias and Carvalho (2024), Giroto (2021), Ferretti (2018), Farias (2022), and Santos (2007). In addition to the literature review, it was also necessary to consult official documents that guide and define the educational directives of Upper Secondary Education and the Full-Time Citizen Schools in the state of Paraíba.

The importance of this study lies in its reflection on contemporary school Geography. Based on a phenomenon observed at the local scale, we are able to envision hegemonic configurations transforming and reconfiguring the country's educational systems, inserting them into a neoliberal logic that restructures schooling, particularly the teaching of Geography and reshapes its role in citizenship formation.

## 2. EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY

Education and citizenship are generally understood by society as interconnected elements, within a relationship in which the idea of teaching is directly associated with citizenship formation. Educating and shaping conscious individuals is, indeed, one of the most important functions of the school, among many others that have been attributed to it throughout different historical periods.



Among the various school subjects, Geography stands out for playing a key role in fostering students' spatial and civic awareness. Geographical knowledge enables individuals to understand multiple socio-spatial realities, both at the local scale and at broader scales, such as the global. Such understanding equips them to perceive, act upon, and produce space not in an irrational manner, but as conscious subjects aware of their potentials and possibilities. In this sense, Benevides (1998, p. 170) characterizes such individuals as active citizens, stating that:

[...] they are more than mere holders of rights; they are creators of new rights and new spaces for the expression of such rights, thereby strengthening the conviction always open that new political subjects can be created and consolidated, aware of their rights and duties within society.

We may therefore understand that, according to the aforementioned author, the citizen is synonymous with activity, the generation of rights, and the production of space. The origin of the term "citizenship" is associated with the development of the Greek polis and social life in the eighth and seventh centuries BC (Cavalcanti, 1999). This concept emerged in relation to the city, and those who held the right to this space were considered citizens. In this sense, Cavalcanti (1999) emphasizes that it is the right to have rights that constitutes the citizenship.

In contemporary times, the citizen is no longer understood primarily as one who holds the right to the city, but rather as one who votes; that is, in order to promote individual engagement in the electoral process, the notion of citizenship becomes associated with electoral participation. For Santos (2007), in a capitalist society the citizen comes to be defined as a consumer. Thus, according to the author, the economic system and the state begin to recognize individuals not as subjects of rights, but as agents of consumption.

School Geography plays a fundamental role in students' citizenship formation, insofar as it contributes to the construction of a critical awareness of socio-spatial dynamics. As Santos (2007) points out, citizenship is not a given condition, but a historical achievement that must be continuously taught and reaffirmed, especially because it is a right that is constantly under threat.

In this sense, it is within geographic space that citizenship is realized or denied since social inequalities manifest themselves primarily in the territory. By stating that "the citizen is the individual in a place," Santos (2007, p. 151) highlights the spatial dimension of citizenship and the centrality of place in the constitution of the social subject.



The appropriation of geographical knowledge enables students to recognize themselves within the dynamics of places, understanding the power relations, contradictions, and possibilities present in lived space. Such understanding may lead either to alienation or to the transformation of reality, depending on the pedagogical mediations established. In this context, it is the role of the geography teacher to exercise their social function by fostering in learners a critical awareness of space and of the processes that produce it, thereby encouraging active civic participation.

Although the school is not the only institution responsible for promoting citizenship, the role of this institution in mass, urban, and industrialized society has long been a subject of debate. In this context, throughout the twentieth century, the constitution of a form of schooling expanded in its social and cultural tasks was advocated that is, the conception of integral education (Cavaliere, 2002). The Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education (1932) itself presents the term integral education as “the individual’s right to a public education that encompasses multiple dimensions of their formation” (Cavaliere, 2002, p. 253).

In Brazil, with the institutionalization of the Escola Nova (New School) movement in the 1930s, the concept of integral education took on different meanings, such as the idea of forming the “integral man” to serve the interests of the integral state, advocated by the Integralist movement and Catholic religious groups and integral education as a means of disseminating democratic values and practices defended by utopian socialists and liberal currents (Dias & Carvalho, 2024).

The model of integral education that was outlined envisioned that, during one part of the day, children would attend conventional classes, while in the opposite shift they would receive notions of or initiation into work activities (Freire, 2016). Thus, a new spatial ordering emerged based on the school as territory (territory-school) (Viñao Frago, 1998, as cited in Faria Filho & Vago, 2000), in which the delimitation of time became necessary. This process involved the expansion of the school day, the detailed structuring of class schedules, and the definition of the instructional hours allocated to the subjects composing the school program, elements that ultimately influenced learning and assessment processes (Dias & Carvalho, 2024).

It is necessary to emphasize that the categories of time and space are not neutral in education and that, even within the conception of expanded education, integral education was anchored in the extension of school time. This highlights the relationship between the school building and the quality of integral education in Brazil as proposed by the Escola



Nova movement (Dias, 2021). We understand that this reformist movement was articulated with the national economic context of developmentalism, which is not very different from the contemporary context of neoliberal reforms reflected in education and in the need to (re)shape citizens to adapt to a new reality (Dias & Carvalho, 2024).

Starting from the contemporary reality of education in Paraíba, particularly within the context of the Full-Time Citizen Schools, in order to understand whether the teaching of Geography offered therein contributes to the formation of citizens or, on the contrary, reinforces the production of individuals reduced to the condition of users, that is, non-citizens, we turn to the topics discussed in the following sections.

### **3. THE UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORM AND FULL-TIME CITIZEN SCHOOLS IN PARAÍBA**

Upper Secondary Education constitutes one of the stages of basic education in Brazil, alongside Early Childhood Education and Primary Education, and its provision is the responsibility of the public authorities. It is organized under a collaborative regime among the federative entities, as established by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB – Law No. 9,394/1996).

Within this arrangement, municipalities are primarily responsible for providing Early Childhood Education and Primary Education; states are responsible for Primary Education and, above all, for Upper Secondary Education; while the Federal Government is tasked with coordinating national education policy and providing Higher Education. Upper Secondary Education is configured as the final stage of basic education, with a minimum duration of three years, and has the following purposes:

I – the consolidation and deepening of the knowledge acquired in Primary Education, enabling the continuation of studies; II – basic preparation for work and citizenship, so that learners may continue learning and be able to adapt flexibly to new occupational conditions or further professional development; III – the enhancement of learners as human beings, including ethical formation and the development of their autonomy and critical thinking; IV – the understanding of the scientific and technological foundations of productive processes, relating theory to practice within the teaching of each subject (Brazil, 1996, Art. 35, items I-IV).

Because it focuses on citizenship formation, preparation for entry into the labor market, and access to Higher Education, this stage receives greater attention from society,



with increased demands and targets to be achieved, as well as debates within spaces of popular participation (Ferretti, 2018).

Sectors of civil society involved in this process, such as the national business community, have undertaken intense action in pursuit of better outcomes at this stage of basic education. More directly, they were closely involved with Provisional Measure No. 746/2016 and, subsequently, with the 2017 Upper Secondary Education Reform. Among the demands of this sector are the improvement of the quality of education offered at this stage and the need to ensure greater engagement of young people in the teaching–learning process of Upper Secondary Education (Ferretti, 2018).

According to Farias and Morais (2024), the Upper Secondary Education Reform is embedded within a broader agenda that can be understood in relation to a specific historical moment in Brazilian politics, having been imposed through a Provisional Measure. As stated by Farias and Morais (2024, p. 194), these developments were associated with “the resurgence of the most radical neoliberal postulates as a doctrine of the State, adopted in the post–parliamentary/judicial/media coup of 2016.” At the time of its implementation, the Reform of Upper Secondary Education (REM) generated divided opinions:

On the one hand, there are those who believe that this reform is necessary and will address the problems faced by Upper Secondary Education. On the other hand, there are those who oppose the reform, as they argue that it represents an old discourse presented in a new guise (Campos Neto, Lima, & Rocha, 2017, p. 87).

According to Ferretti (2018), dissatisfaction with Upper Secondary Education and the need for a reform were legitimate, considering the high rates of school dropout and grade repetition, as well as inadequate infrastructure and teachers working under precarious conditions in terms of workload and remuneration. The author also highlights that among the factors leading students to drop out of Upper Secondary Education are family needs to supplement household income, curricular issues, family violence, teenage pregnancy, the lack of dialogue among teachers, students, and administrators, and violence within schools.

However, despite all the challenges faced by basic education in Brazil, particularly at the level of Upper Secondary Education, this reform focused primarily on the curricular perspective, on the minimum amount of time students spend at school (which was increased from 800 to 1,000 hours per year), and on an organizational structure that is no longer disciplinary but rather organized by areas of knowledge, in accordance with the National



Common Curricular Base (BNCC). In addition to the areas of knowledge established by the BNCC, areas of technical and vocational education were also implemented.

Another innovation of the New Upper Secondary Education model (NEM) is the so-called Learning Pathways, or Diversified Curriculum, depending on the state. According to Rego, Queiroz, and Morais (2022, p. 47), they “[...] 9reas9to f a set of subjects, projects, workshops, study groups, among other working arrangements in which students may choose to deepen their learning.”

Presented to students as pathways for the “deepening” of the general education grounded in the BNCC, ten of the new pathways were linked to the so-called “areas of knowledge-” Mathematics and Its Technologies; Languages and Their Technologies; Natural Sciences and Their Technologies; and Applied Human and Social Sciences as well as combinations among them referred to as “integrated deepening” pathways (Goulart & Cássio, 2021, n.p.).

Under this format, the NEM is marketed to students as a kind of self-service upper secondary education, in which each student may choose what best suits their preferences (Goulart & Cássio, 2021). At first glance, this model which “promises” a simple, easy, and fast form of education (Goulart & Cássio, 2021) appears, as Gil and Faria Filho (2025) argue, to be indeed positive news, insofar as it keeps young people in school for seven hours or more per day. This is especially significant for students attending schools located in regions marked by situations of social vulnerability.

However, this new configuration offers students a fragmented access to knowledge, distancing them from an integral education aimed at the full development of the individual with access to cultural, ethical, political, and other dimensions by considering only time spent within school space. In Brazil,

[...] the [...] National Education Plan (PNE), defined for the 2014-2024 decade, establishes in Goal Six the objective of offering full-time education in at least 50% (fifty percent) of public schools, in order to serve at least 25% (twenty-five percent) of students in basic education. By adopting the full-time school model as a reference for national education, the National Education Plan ultimately expanded the demand for the services of Social Organizations (SOs) in several states, based on the recognition of a discourse of know-how for the implementation of this model (Dias & Carvalho, 2024, p. 408).

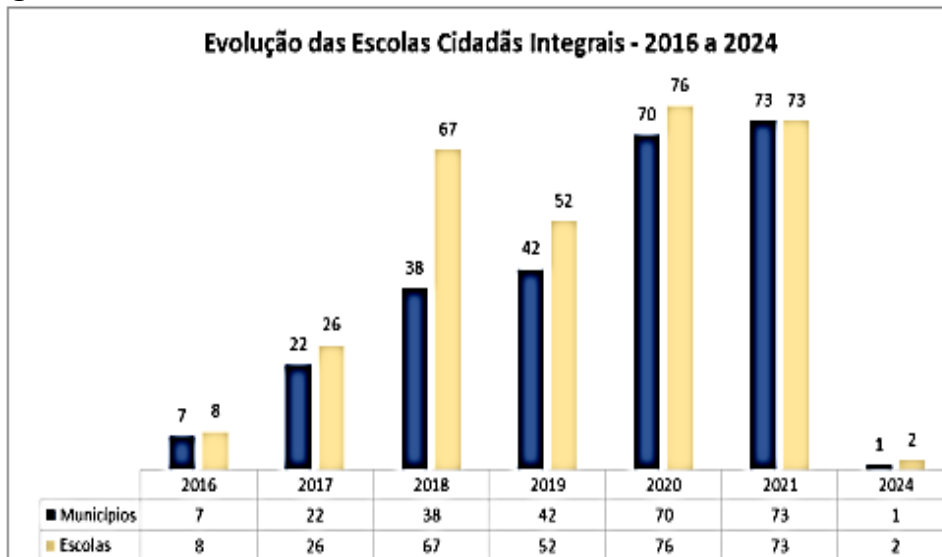
One year prior to the national approval of the Upper Secondary Education Reform, in



2016 the state of Paraíba instituted a Full-Time Education Program for basic education within its state school system through the creation of the Citizen Full-Time Schools (Escolas Cidadãs Integrais - ECI), established by Decree No. 36,408/2015, and the Technical Citizen Full-Time Schools (Escolas Cidadãs Integrais Técnicas - ECIT), established by Decree No. 36,409/2015, under Governor Ricardo Vieira Coutinho (2011–2018). Subsequently, on April 6 of the same year, the Full-Time Education Program was formally created, encompassing Citizen Full-Time Schools (ECI), Technical Citizen Full-Time Schools (ECIT), and Socio-educational Citizen Full-Time Schools (ECIS), and instituting the Full-Time Teaching Dedication Regime (Regime de Dedicaco Docente Integral - RDDI) (Costa Neto, 2023).

Regarding the origin and expansion of this educational model, its implementation began at the start of the 2016 school year in eight (8) schools distributed across seven (7) municipalities in the state of Paraíba: Joo Pessoa (which had two schools included in the program), Campina Grande, Bayeux, Santa Rita, Mamanguape, Itaporanga, and Itabaiana, each of which had one school incorporated into the initiative within their territories. By 2018, Paraíba already had 100 schools integrated into this full-time education project. This expansion can be observed in the chart below:

**Figure 01 – Growth of Full-Time Citizen Schools in the State of Paraíba (2016–2024).**



**Source:** SEE/PB (2025).

Joo Azevdo Lins Filho was elected as the successor to the state government and had the Integral Education model as a key element of his electoral platform. He undertook the process of expanding this program to 302 units in the year 2021. Regarding the spatial expansion process of this public policy, it is important to bring forth the words of the governor

himself:

We tripled the number of Full-Time Citizen Schools in the state. In 2018, there were 100, and in 2021 there were 302 schools, of which 175 were integral schools and 127 were technical schools. We worked strongly with the proposal that the universalization of integral schools had to reach all municipalities. And we managed to achieve this; that is, all 223 municipalities in Paraíba have at least one full-time school. We now want 50% of these integral schools to be Integral Technical Schools. We will prepare our youth so that they can compete in the labor market (Consed, 2022).

Based on what is presented in the aforementioned text, we understand that the expansion of this model to half of the schools in Paraíba by 2022 is part of the governmental program, and that this discourse of preparing students for the labor market is aligned with statements made by political figures, business leaders, and other market agents. It is important to understand that this process is embedded in the Brazilian upper secondary education reforms that began in 2017.

They are parallel movements, but not random ones, since this expansion demonstrates how Paraíba has been intensely integrated into the neoliberal project for education. This can be verified not only by the growth in the number of schools adopting this model and by their spatial distribution throughout the territory of Paraíba, but also by the strong participation of the private sector in this process. In reflecting upon this phenomenon, it is possible to observe that:

[...] The educational reforms implemented in Brazil in recent years are part of a global geopolitical movement aimed at consolidating neoliberalism as the New Reason of the World [...]. It is no longer merely a project for managing the capitalist State, but rather a project for managing subjectivity, in which the core values underpinning neoliberalism also become foundational to the relationships individuals establish with one another and with the world. Values such as individualism, competitiveness, meritocracy, entrepreneurship, and protagonism redefine this new social subject, with the neoliberal project being elevated to the status of a collective destiny of humanity. (Giroto, 2021, p. 91)

The aforementioned author, when commenting on the consolidation of the neoliberal project in Brazil, highlights some of the pedagogical philosophies underpinning the Full-Time Citizen Schools in the state of Paraíba. In Article 2, item I, of Decree No. 36.408/2015, we observe a clear connection between the objective of this education program namely, “to train capable, supportive, socially active, and competent citizens” (Paraíba, 2015, p. 1) and neoliberal values such as protagonism, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, among others. These themes, which are strongly present in the business sector, are thus incorporated into



schools in Paraíba.

These ideas are addressed with students through the subjects offered in the training itineraries, or Diversified Base, which are part of the curriculum of these schools, as well as through the subjects that make up the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). These subjects function as extracurricular practices aimed at promoting a “protagonist” student, within the perspectives of this educational model. According to the Pedagogical Guidelines of the State of Paraíba (2025):

[...] In addition to following the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC), the Full-Time Citizen Schools adopt innovative methodologies and personalized strategies to meet students’ needs, reducing dropout and repetition rates (Paraíba, 2025, p. 114).

Elective Subjects, Protagonism Clubs, Integrative Practices, In-depth Studies, and Life Project are part of the diversified curriculum offered by these schools. Most of them do not present a curriculum organized around historically constructed scientific knowledge, nor training paths with specific and well-established objectives; rather, they consist of practices that take subjective values into account.

The discourse is based on preparing young people for the labor market, within a logic of competition and individualism, without the use of critical thinking that could lead to the formation of critical and conscious citizens, capable of transforming the realities in which they are embedded. According to Albuquerque and Lima (2021, p. 93):

Two themes are central to these projects: youth protagonism and entrepreneurship. Their objectives are the “formation of an autonomous, supportive, and competent individual,” while promoting skills such as cooperation, responsibility, determination, optimism, initiative, and autonomy. These skills revolve around the idea that we should be entrepreneurs of ourselves, managing our lives as if they were a business, a perspective that alienates both teachers and students, leading them to believe that everything can be transformed into an opportunity for growth and personal advancement.

These “new” pedagogical practices introduced in the educational context of Paraíba are certainly interesting and may bring additional meaning to students’ continued engagement in school. However, we must ask how all these “innovations” are actually experienced on the “school floor.” After all, the Full-Time Citizen Education Program is implemented in many schools building that were not properly adapted for the new activities.

Thinking about and ensuring the architecture of the educational physical space is



essential, especially in a context in which students are expected to remain at school for extended periods, as well as for the development of practices envisaged within the Full-Time Education model. Regarding Full-Time Schools in the state of Paraíba, Carvalho, Santos, and Monteiro (2021, p. 114) emphasize that:

[...] Through the observation of the operation of several full-time citizenship schools and the accounts provided by some teachers, it was possible to verify that, much like the physical infrastructure, pedagogical actions have not yet been fully implemented. Consequently, the results achieved still appear to fall short of what is outlined in the official guidelines. An example of this situation is the tutoring system. In more than one school, difficulties in monitoring students were reported by teachers, due to the large number of pupils and the demands generated by this activity, given the workload available for its implementation. Similarly, school clubs have faced challenges in being effectively established in institutions that lack adequate spaces and/or appropriate scheduling arrangements for the development of activities.

Thus, physical infrastructure constitutes one of the most serious challenges faced by students, teachers, and other education professionals who carry out their activities in schools with inadequate or even nonexistent conditions. How is it possible to spend nine hours in school and achieve satisfactory results for all those involved without the necessary pedagogical or physical conditions?

What is prescribed in the guiding documents of education in our state is not always achieved in practice by schools within the state system. Ironically, the terms “citizenship” and “full-time,” which are part of the nomenclature of this educational model intended to place the centrality of students’ Life Projects at its core are undermined by the lack of adequate pedagogical and physical conditions. As a result, the model may become an instrument of penalization and exclusion for those who are unable to fully integrate into the project, ultimately failing to promote citizenship in its broader sense. This scenario can therefore be understood as yet another educational utopia in the context of Paraíba.

From this point onward, we proceed to reflect on the teaching of Geography in these schools: how is citizenship formed within this educational model? How is the curriculum structured? What possibilities are offered to students? What is the perspective of Geography teachers within this market-oriented process? These are necessary reflections in light of the challenges faced by contemporary professionals trained in Geography teaching.



#### 4. TEACHING GEOGRAPHY IN FULL-TIME CITIZENSHIP SCHOOLS IN THE STATE OF PARAÍBA, BRAZIL

Reflecting on school Geography means understanding that this discipline connects two key actors: the teacher and the student. In this regard, we reflect on the impacts experienced by both agents within the teaching-learning process. This discussion addresses the contemporary dimensions of Geography education and is presented as an analysis of praxis and practice within the context of the New Upper Secondary Education reform and the lived experiences of schools participating in the Integral Education Program of the state of Paraíba. The first point to be discussed concerns Geography classes within this new curriculum. Like other Brazilian states, Paraíba follows the guidelines that divide the curriculum between the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) and the so-called Formative Pathways, resulting in a reduction in instructional time, with the Human Sciences disciplines being among those that have lost the most space in the curricular organization. In the case of Geography, two weekly classes are currently offered at the upper secondary level. The table below presents this new configuration as implemented at the beginning of 2025.

**Figure 02 – Curricular Matrix of Full-Time Citizenship Schools – 2025**

SECRETARIA DE ESTADO DA EDUCAÇÃO GERÊNCIA EXECUTIVA DE EDUCAÇÃO DAS ESCOLAS CIDADÃS INTEGRAIS - GEECI				ESCOLA CIDADÃ			GEECI			Secretaria de Estado da Educação GOVERNO DA PARAÍBA		
<b>MATRIZ CURRICULAR - REGULAR - INTEGRAL</b> <b>ESCOLAS CIDADÃS INTEGRAIS - ENSINO MÉDIO</b> Matriz vigente da 1ª série a 3ª série - 2025							Aulas de 50 minutos Turno: Integral Tipo de Mediação: Presencial Horário de Funcionamento: Inicial: 07:20 Final: 17:00 Estrutura Curricular: Formação Geral Básica e Itinerário Formativo Modalidade: Ensino Regular Etapa: Ensino Médio Formas de Organização da Turma: Série					
			AULAS SEMANAIS			CARGA HORÁRIA ANUAL						
COMPONENTES CURRICULARES			1ª Série	2ª Série	3ª Série	1ª Série	2ª Série	3ª Série				
Formação Geral Básica (FGB)	Linguagens e suas Tecnologias	Língua Portuguesa	3	3	3	100	100	100				
		Arte	1	1	1	33	33	33				
		Educação Física	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Língua Inglesa	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Língua Espanhola	1	1	1	33	33	33				
	Ciências Humanas e Sociais Aplicadas	História	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Geografia	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Filosofia	1	1	2	33	33	67				
		Sociologia	1	1	2	33	33	67				
	Ciências da Natureza e suas Tecnologias	Química	3	3	3	100	100	100				
		Física	3	3	3	100	100	100				
		Biologia	3	3	3	100	100	100				
	Matemática e suas Tecnologias	Matemática	4	4	4	133	133	133				
	Total Formação Geral			28	28	30	933	933	1000			
Itinerários Formativos	Aprofundamento	COMPONENTES CURRICULARES	1ª Série	2ª Série	3ª Série	1ª Série	2ª Série	3ª Série				
		Aprofundamento	3	3	3	100	100	100				
		Produção Textual	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Recomposição da Aprendizagem - Língua Portuguesa	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Recomposição da Aprendizagem - Matemática	2	2	2	67	67	67				
		Eletiva	2	2	2	67	67	0				

Source: Paraíba, 2025.

What is shown in the figure above is the upper secondary education curricular matrix of Full-Time Schools for the year 2025. In the previous year, 2024, under the New Upper Secondary Education framework, the two Geography classes were structured as one class within the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) and another within the Formative Pathways curriculum, in which teachers were instructed to develop projects linked to this discipline. However, in response to widespread national dissatisfaction during 2023 and 2024 and as a result of popular pressure, this reduced curricular matrix was partially revoked, which, in the case of Geography, resulted in the establishment of two weekly classes across all three grades of upper secondary education.

However, even with the reinstatement of two weekly classes, there remains a narrowing of the geography curriculum in upper secondary education in Paraíba, since prior to the 2017 Upper Secondary Education Reform (REM) the subject was allocated four weekly classes. In other words, half of the instructional time available in the 2017 curricular matrix has been lost. Thus,

The removal of mandatory status or the curricular narrowing of Geography across the different modalities of upper secondary education within the state school system of Paraíba has caused significant harm to the education of young people from the working class. This process has restricted their opportunities to develop a conscious, critical, and transformative reading of the world through the lens of geographic space, as well as to acquire mastery of the methodological procedures of this discipline, which are fundamental to such a reading. These elements constitute a necessary condition for the exercise of active citizenship within the places and regions of the state (Farias & Morais, 2024, p. 227).

According to the aforementioned authors, this process of loss of space as a school subject occurs within a neoliberal context that views public schools as sites for the training of the working class. It is evident that, without the world knowledge, practices, and critical awareness inherent to the teaching of Geography in schools, the possibilities for understanding students' sociopolitical realities, among other dimensions, become significantly limited.

The authors further emphasize that this educational model is “unviable for providing an integral, universal, and omni-lateral education for the children of Paraíba’s working class, thereby contributing to the reinforcement of social apartheid and, consequently, to state-level socio-spatial inequalities through education” (Farias & Morais, 2024, p. 227). In other



words, this process sustains the continuity of socio-spatial inequalities and produces “non-citizens” (Santos, 2007), understood as individuals who lack awareness of space and, consequently, of themselves and of the multiple possibilities that could exist for qualitative social advancement.

This process is harmful and alienating, narrowing horizons and limiting possibilities for social transformation. The “non-citizen” is an unsatisfied consumer who, having their capacity for vision and self-realization reduced, comes to relate to the world in ways that are always mediated by things (Santos, 2007). Therefore,

[...] the reflections, methods, and techniques of Geography are fundamental for enabling young people from the working class to become capable of making decisions and exercising citizenship in its fullest sense, so that they do not become merely “minimal citizens,” that is, “productive citizens,” corresponding to the type of citizen that the New Upper Secondary Education proposal seeks to produce. In this way, Geography teaching can help them develop forms of reasoning that equip them to think about space and to act within it (Farias & Morais, 2024, p. 217).

Thus, we observe how significant this loss is as a result of the curricular narrowing of the Human Sciences, especially geography. In an educational context deeply shaped by neoliberal rationalities, the citizen being produced is conceived as an individual who fails to recognize the social, political, and economic agents that structure and constrain their lived reality.

It is also important to highlight issues concerning Geography teachers. The first concerns the erosion of their professional identity, since the reduction in teaching hours requires them to teach other subjects within the Human Sciences area or even courses from the diversified curriculum, such as elective subjects, Life Project, in-depth studies, among others. In this way,

[...] A significant portion of Geography teachers’ work is carried out in components that fall outside their academic training. In most cases, more than half of the required workload is devoted to planning and producing teaching materials for these subjects, which lack syllabi, defined content, or a theoretical and pedagogical framework to support them. Consequently, teaching these components requires strict adherence to documents that provide only general guidelines, from which lesson plans must be developed. This process reinforces the parameters of official prescriptions regarding what should be taught, while undermining teachers’ autonomy as well as their professional identity (Farias & Morais, 2024, p. 224).



We consider this to be an exhausting process, given that Geography teachers in Full-Time Citizenship Schools in Paraíba work under a 40-hour weekly regime, with 27 hours devoted to classroom teaching and 13 hours allocated to planning. This planning time could serve as an opportunity for continuing professional development, both in Geography and in other areas of education; however, teachers instead use it to design curricula and teaching programs for subjects for which they have not been adequately prepared.

Based on the foregoing discussion, we understand that Geography teachers in Paraíba's Full-Time Citizenship Schools face two serious problems within this curricular structure: work overload and the erosion of their professional identity. Within this context of educational reforms, those who are most adversely affected are public school students and teachers, specifically, Geography teachers both of whom should be producers of knowledge but instead find their possibilities constrained. Teachers lack sufficient time to teach Geography, and, consequently, students are unable to envision the horizons that this discipline has the potential to open.

In contrast to hegemonic conceptions and practices, Giroto (2021) emphasizes the relevance of understanding the school as a territory with the potential to produce counter-hegemonies. According to the author, contemporary conditions of Geography education should foster contexts of critical analysis and debate, capable of promoting educational practices guided by the recognition of inequalities and by resistance to exclusionary curricular impositions.

In line with this perspective, Moll (2017) points out that, even within the structures established by the Formative Pathways, there are concrete possibilities for the development of pedagogical projects in Geography education. Such projects may, for example, incorporate knowledge relating local realities and to the specific geographical configurations of each territory dimensions that are frequently neglected by the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC).

Within the context of teaching experience at a Full-Time Citizenship School in the state of Paraíba, the supplementation of teaching hours through the curricular components of the Formative Pathways has emerged as an opportunity for the development of pedagogical projects in Geography. In this regard, in 2025 a COP 30 simulation project was developed, based on the conference held in Belém, an event of international relevance to contemporary environmental geopolitics.

The proposal consisted of encouraging students, grounded in geographical knowledge, to simulate a debate session of the aforementioned conference within the school



environment, assuming roles such as heads of state, representatives of Indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, among other social actors involved in global environmental discussions.

The objective of this intervention, as well as of other pedagogical experiences developed, is to ensure the continuity of Geography teaching even within the scope of subjects that belong to the diversified curriculum. To this end, we annually design pedagogical proposals that seek to engage with students' interests and to foster meaningful processes of geographical learning. We start from the understanding that initiatives of this nature constitute possible strategies for subverting the prevailing educational logic, which tends to restrict the possibilities for teaching this discipline in upper secondary education.

We further emphasize that such practices are not configured as isolated actions, but rather form part of a broader set of experiences that have been emerging in different regions of the country, which have been characterized by certain authors as "poetic acts." According to Giroto (2021, p. 199):

It is in this sense that, while on the one hand we have an Official School Geography, articulated through a language of control and neoliberal management of life, on the other hand we daily witness the emergence, within school territories, of poetic acts that subvert the language and meanings of the geography that seeks to establish itself as hegemonic. In doing so, these acts enable schools, despite their condition of precariousness to intensify processes of profanation of instituted forms of knowledge, rendering speak able what is sought to be silenced, visible what is concealed, and alive what is deemed killable. For defending the school against its precariousness also means constructing the conditions under which no life among the different subjects, themselves precarious, who fill the school with excesses of language and meaning becomes a target of the consented extermination imposed by neoliberal governance.

The pedagogical projects in Geography developed within the scope of the Formative Pathways courses are configured as strategies of resistance to the process of curricular impoverishment. Such impoverishment, largely stems from the conditions of precariousness and the multiple absences that characterize the context in which these courses are designed and implemented.

In light of this scenario, two antagonistic pedagogical possibilities become evident: on the one hand, the provision of an education emptied of meaning, materialized in fragmented projects devoid of commitment to citizenship formation; on the other, the construction of pedagogical proposals in Geography that bring students closer to scientific



knowledge, enabling them to access the formative potential of geographical learning, such as critical reading of space, understanding of socio-spatial dynamics, and the strengthening of civic participation.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The need for reform in Brazilian upper secondary education is widely recognized, particularly in light of the high rates of dropout and school abandonment that have historically characterized this stage of basic education. In this sense is essential to promote a debate that enables the updating of curricular and pedagogical structures, as well as the overcoming of persistent structural challenges.

However, what has been observed in the process of implementing the Upper Secondary Education Reform (REM) is the predominance of interests aligned with national economic elites, often articulated with corporate groups through private foundations and institutes, such as the *Todos pela Educação* movement.

In practice, this curricular reconfiguration has reinforced the historical duality of Brazilian education: students from working-class backgrounds are primarily offered a form of education oriented toward preparation for the labor market, through technical and vocational pathways, while the upper middle classes and the bourgeoisie are guaranteed a broad education that encompasses multiple dimensions of knowledge (Farias & Morais, 2024).

The Full-Time Citizenship Schools Program of Paraíba is a public policy that provides education in accordance with the National Common Core Curriculum (BNCC) and the Formative Pathways. By promoting the slogan that the objective of this program is to train “competent, autonomous, and supportive citizens,” this educational model sets demanding goals; however, what can be observed is that the narrowing of instructional time for Geography as well as for other disciplines within the Human Sciences limits the capacity to foster critical and civic consciousness among students in Paraíba’s public schools.

We understand that the notion of citizenship employed in these schools is grounded in a contemporary perspective aligned with neoliberal ideas of an individual profile prepared for the labor market what Milton Santos (2007) terms the “non-citizen” or the “user-citizen,” that is, an individual who is unaware of the geographical space in which they are embedded, a consumer-oriented citizen with limited possibilities of becoming a producer of new realities and solidaristic spaces.



With regard to Geography teachers working in Full-Time Citizenship Schools, we observe that these professionals have limited time to deepen their subject-specific knowledge and to contribute effectively to the civic education of students in the public school system. The reduction in instructional time allocated to the discipline, combined with the requirement to design and teach curricular components unrelated to their initial training, results in the intensification of teaching work. This process leads to work overload and promotes the erosion of Geography teachers' professional identity.

Full-Time Citizenship Schools in Paraíba have not yet fully materialized the principles established in the legal instruments that institute and regulate the program. Within this context, the teaching of Geography has been significantly undermined, particularly due to the reduction in instructional time, which limits its capacity to contribute to students' civic formation. Moreover, the discipline has assumed a precarious and excessively flexible character, guided by neoliberal demands, resulting in the erosion of Geography teachers' professional identity, who are subjected to work overload and the incorporation of new functions unrelated to their specific training.

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