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## **From analogies and metaphors to contrasts and antitheses**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The recent and simultaneous public demonstrations in Brazil throughout the country and with clear demands, in a certain way confirms part of the theory elaborated by André Gunder Frank and Marta Fuentes in an essay published in 1989, entitled "Ten theses regarding social movements". As distinct from what, for nebulous reasons, parts of the Brazilian press insists, this is not a movement that is interested in reducing the costs of public transportation for students. In addition, the last reported demonstrations by the press at the beginning of June barely covered the ones in the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in which the press pointed to such fares as "the main issue". However it is also necessary to remind readers that before the actual name of "Free Public Transportation Movement" was given, since the last century there has been a Free Public Transportation Campaign in the city of Florianópolis, capital of the neighboring state of Santa Catarina.

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The recent and simultaneous public demonstrations in Brazil throughout the country and with clear demands, in a certain way confirms part of the theory elaborated by André Gunder Frank and Marta Fuentes in an essay published in 1989<sup>(1)</sup>, entitled "Ten theses regarding social movements". The first thesis establishes that:

"New" social movements are not new, despite the fact they have some new characteristics; and the "classic" social movements are relatively new and probably temporary. <sup>(1:19)</sup>

As distinct from what, for nebulous reasons, parts of the Brazilian press insists, this is not a movement that is interested in reducing the costs of public transportation for students. In addition, the last reported demonstrations by the press at the beginning of June barely covered the ones in the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in which the press pointed to such fares as "the main issue". However, it is also necessary to remind readers that before the actual name of "Free Public Transportation Movement" was given, since the last century there has been a Free Public Transportation Campaign in the city of Florianópolis, capital of the neighboring state of Santa Catarina.

Later, there was a geometric progression in the movement as indignation grew, gathering together the many segments of civil society, interconnected through the low-cost medium of Facebook<sup>®</sup>. However, a really free Internet is not a reality, not even in the land of democracy, as can be seen by the recently leaked information regarding "mass surveillance" by Edward Snowden, which, for some, places him on the same crosshairs as Julian Assange and, at the same time, on a martyr's pedestal as a whistleblower, for others.

Historically, the sum of misery and ideology results in revolution. This recipe has been universally acknowledged: France (1789), China (1911 and 1949), Russia (1917), Cuba (1959), among others. In a globalized world, misery is never a local product. The echoes of dissatisfaction do not lose their power across oceans, as the "old world" fears. Perhaps the origins of such misery were denounced wisely by Lester R. Brown in his masterpiece "Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity"<sup>(2)</sup>, which is the way this author alerts the population to an already existing food crisis, as it is observed that in the last decade, the worldwide stock of grain has been reduced by one third.

Naturally, the discordant elements of the genuineness of the movement, seen as the degradation of public and private property, has been broadcast with some anger by certain media groups, but do not answer national demands. And curiously, these elements are associated with important socio-political moments in Brazil: the arrival of great events, the consolidation of the country as a democracy, and the role of regional leadership.

In terms of the continuation of social movements, there are some answers that official institutions have not been able to provide an answer for over the years. One good example of the power of demonstrations was what happened to the Constitution Amendment Bill #37 (which is also represented by the acronym PEC 37, in Portuguese)<sup>(3)</sup>, proposed by an elected deputy from the "hereditary colony" of Maranhão (which is, in fact, a state). It was almost approved by the "Lower Senate", but the Amendment was categorically rejected by the population, which then led the project to be filed.

Without any doubt, there are a large number of issues to be faced, based on the democratic state of law. However, it would be much better if a popular uprising became necessary, as the representatives were elected specifically to solve these problems.

Let's focus our discussion on the health situation: data from the Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute (IBGE, in Portuguese)<sup>(4)</sup> show that in 2012, the Brazilian population is 198,360,943, including the 513 federal deputies (the number of seats at the National Congress) elected that year. From these deputies, 50 (9.75%) had a degree in health, of whom 41 (8%) were doctors, six (1.17%) dentists, one (0.2%) a nurse, one (0.2%) a physiotherapist and one (0.2%) a psychologist. The Brazilian Federal Council of Nursing (CFE, in Portuguese)<sup>(5)</sup>, in a study published on June 28<sup>th</sup> 2013, shows that the subscribed and active members amounted to 1,856,683, of whom 346,968 were nurses. In another study published on the same day by the Brazilian Federal Council of Medicine (CFM, in Portuguese)<sup>(6)</sup> there were 400,901 active doctors.

The abovementioned census enables us to arrive at some conclusions. There is one doctor for every 495 inhabitants; one nursing professional for every 107 inhabitants, and one nurse for every 572 inhabitants. Observing the proportion between professionals,

there is one health professional for every 4.6 doctors and one nurse for every 1.15 doctors. From the start, a paradox is found, as the number of nursing professionals is 363% higher than the number of doctors. However, thinking about the power to generate laws, the proportion is inverted, in that there is 4000% more power to the doctors. This paradox is the one that facilitates the approval of the Medical Act<sup>(7)</sup> and the postponement *sine die* of legislation to set a 30 hours/week limit for nursing professionals<sup>(8)</sup>.

This is not a class struggle, but the representation in instituted legitimate forums. As Juvenal<sup>(9)</sup>, a severe critic of the Roman status quo said: *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? – Who guards the guards?*

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