

**A perspective of comparison in the historical and social writing of
secondary education curriculum¹**

*Uma perspectiva de comparação na escrita histórico-social do currículo
do ensino secundário^{2 3}*

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Abstract:

We present herein, part of the research results, which are based on the dissertations and theses, used as our sources, regarding secondary education in the Brazilian states of southern Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais and produced by/in the Studies and Research Groups, Observatory of School Culture (UFMS) and History of (UFMG) from 1999 to 2012. We have established research practices with a comparative study, provided by theoretical and methodological pathways, which we understand as being a particular version, because we have drawn on the crossing of compared education with the comparative history of education. In this sense, we enter into stories of "secondary teaching" built around a similar interpretation for their origins, from the point of view of the organization of the cities, the socioeconomic characterization of the target population, the fetishes around the *institutions*, even when dealing with differentiated objects in historical spaces and times. The empirical development of these histories showed that differences of the analyzed systems, if they exist or existed, were not addressed. We are talking about differences related to the composition, practices and dynamics of local educational policies, of the social stratifications, of the interests of families, responsible for differentiated socializing experiences.

Keywords: Secondary Education, Comparative Study, Dissertations and Theses

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Resumo:

Neste trabalho, apresentamos parte de resultados de uma pesquisa que toma como fontes dissertações e teses sobre o ensino secundário no sul do Mato Grosso e de Minas Gerais, produzidas no Grupo de Estudos Observatório de Cultura Escolar (Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul) e no Centro de Pesquisa em História da Educação (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais), no período de 1999 a 2012. Temos constituído práticas de pesquisa com os estudos comparados, alimentadas por percursos teórico-metodológicos que entendemos em uma versão particular, por recorrermos ao cruzamento da educação comparada com a história comparada da educação. Diante disso, incursionamos por histórias dos “ensinos secundários” construídas em torno de uma interpretação semelhante para suas origens do ponto de vista da organização das cidades, da caracterização socioeconômica da população-alvo e dos fetiches em torno das instituições, mesmo tratando de objetos diferenciados nos espaços e tempos históricos. O desenvolvimento empírico dessas histórias evidenciou que diferenças dos sistemas analisados, se existem ou existiram, não foram abordadas. Estamos falando de diferenças ligadas à composição, às práticas e às dinâmicas das políticas educacionais locais, das estratificações sociais e dos interesses das famílias, responsáveis por experiências socializadoras diferenciadas.

Palavras-chave: ensino secundário, estudo comparado, dissertações e teses

Introductory Notes

In this paper, we present part of research results, about to be concluded, and inscribed in the curriculum history field, which uses dissertations and theses⁴ on secondary education in the states of southern Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais, produced by the Study Groups and Research, School Culture Observatory (OCE, UFMS)⁵ and History of Education (GEPHE, UFMG)⁶, from 1999 to 2012, as its source.

⁴ In the *Historical-comparative study research of knowledge production on secondary education* (Silva, 2013), a composed set of six dissertations and one thesis from GEPHE and eight dissertations from OCE were used as a source. It is noteworthy that we did not use the dissertations and theses based on the perspective of analysis and/or evaluation of the theoretical-methodological practices performed, nor on questions about the chosen/accessed sources for writing on the history of secondary education, we are, thus, interested in the informed/constructed history.

⁵ OCE – abbreviation in Portuguese of Observatório de Cultura Escolar. UFMS in Portuguese of Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul.

⁶ GEPHE – abbreviation in Portuguese of Grupo de Estudo e Pesquisas de História da Educação. UFMG in Portuguese of Federal University of Minas Gerais.

The dissertations and theses are perceived as research sources and objects. In terms of sources, as printouts that select, regulate and distribute knowledge, mobilize discourses in the production of truth about the schooling process, while occupying a privileged area in the reconstitution of ideologies or educational mentalities taken from a particular projection. In terms of objects, by allowing one to observe the discursive materiality of a *habitus* belonging to the analysis of secondary education, that is,

that which gives relative autonomy to practices with regard to the external determinations of the immediate present. This orderly and active autonomy is from the past, which acting as accumulated capital produces history at the base of history and thus ensures that permanence within change makes the individual agent a world within the world (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 56).⁷

This *Habitus* is unable to function in a situational void and, therefore, can only be analytically reconstructed through the study of its products; in the way of thinking and structuring the practices for an analysis. Based on the premise that epistemic rules are changing, due to the entrance of new global configurations within the educational process; of the intense circulation of knowledge; of the technological changes, which directly affect the spaces and times of historical conditions, in the perspective of the proposed analyzes, we have shaped a particular version of the comparative studies, built up by

theoretical-methodological paths, which we understand as being a particular version, as we resort to the intersection of comparative education with comparative history, the latter investigated by the referents of the historical method, which has allowed us to look for the differences and similarities of/in the specific, starting from the broader historical processes. (to understand history as a process) and to reconstruct them as part of a given reality that is always complex and open to transformations under the action of social subjects (using history as a method). (Silva, 2014, p. 4).⁸

In the current context, the perspective of comparison, in the field of history of education, starts out with

the collection of documentary collections, construction of source guides and document publication; the incorporation of a documental mass, beyond legislation, in field work, result of the dialogue with the discipline of History, [...] and the growth of the historiographical production in the country have led the researchers in history of education to perceive and to

⁷ Translated from Portuguese

⁸ Translated from Portuguese

question the precariousness of the historical analyzes that intended to extend the understandings to Brazil, which were particularly built by research in the southeast region. (Vidal, 2001, p.39).⁹

Given this, it seems to focus on different units and specific objects, at the same time that we recognize that the uses and consequences of comparison are very vast, yet their fundamental principles emerge not only from discourses, institutions and educational practices, but from the need to deconstruct realities given hegemonically, in order to reconstruct the political, economic, social and instrumental assumptions that produce them.

To understand it in this way, we have witnessed a process of configuration construction that puts the perspective of the intersection between conflict and consensus theories; descriptive and conceptual approaches (Nóvoa, 2009); reflection theory linked to scientific reform and theory connected to the understanding of the differences between educational systems (Madeira, 2009); and/or differences and similarities in finding meaning for the educational processes (Ferreira, 2009).

In spite of the perspective of the intersection of theories, the research in the scope of comparative study, particularly the one we have developed, focuses on the criticism of the validity of theoretical-methodological procedures based on the establishment of similarities and differences in historical contexts marked by distinct economic, social, political and cultural characteristics, which shows little abundance in the production of knowledge.

In the case of this research, the comparative study is determined by a multidisciplinary approach, suggesting proximity between education and the history of comparative education. This approach is based on the understanding of other history of secondary education written in master dissertations and doctoral theses, taken from or among them, as a recreation of an already consolidated historiography of secondary education, tinted by some interpretations characterized by the allocation, at a given historical moment, to a specific part of society and marked by homogeneity and organicity.

In this sense, we search for evidence of a “regional secondary education” during the twentieth century, in southern Mato Grosso¹⁰ and Minas Gerais, in a “singular-plural” relationship (Detienne, 2014, p.46), producing thought mechanisms which are able to construct

⁹ Translated from Portuguese

¹⁰ This portion of the state of Mato Grosso consisted of the cities of Corumbá, Porto Murtinho, Bela Vista, Ponta Pora, Dourados, Entre Rios, Miranda, Nioaque, Maracaju, Campo Grande, Aquidauana, Herculanum (Cushion region), Ladário, Três Lagoas and Parnaíba (CASTRO, 2018, p. 29 apud Assis and Silva, 2018, p. 55).

what is comparable, while allowing the historicity regimes to be put into perspective. The construction of these comparisons is underpinned in Gonçalves Neto and Carvalho, according to whom,

Local and regional analyses are seeking new angles to understand Brazilian reality, without, however, losing sight of the national context, expanding the locally identified categories, establishing points of comparison with similar or dissimilar realities and rethinking the formation process of the Brazilian teaching system in Brazil. (2005, p.184).¹¹

Thus, we analyzed two dissertations and one thesis, based on investigations about school discipline areas and school institutions of a secondary school in the cities of Campo Grande and Belo Horizonte. The study of school subject areas within the limits of the chosen sources pointed to an analysis of the slow and gradual process of establishment and operation, while at the same time, highlighting the conflicts and achievements of distinct pedagogical experiences; the success achieved in the qualification of students, in the implementation of the proposed objectives and mainly in the interest of the students. As for the history of institutions, it developed in a process that sought to understand the school, integrating it with the history of education with a complex internalization, which influenced reality and was influenced by it, through the standardization and transmission of norms and attitudes.

To do so, we started from the premise that every field, in this case that of the History of Education, particularly of Secondary Education, has a structure, a *doxa* (consensus opinion, common sense, that which everyone agrees on) and a *nomos* (laws governing it and regulating the struggle for the domination of the countryside). And that both *doxa* and *nomos* are structured depending on the agents or institutions involved.

Approaches to the *doxa* and *nomos* in the writing of brazilian secondary education history

(...) to put very important "theoretical things" into play about very precise "empirical" objects (...). (Bourdieu, 1989, p.20).¹²

¹¹ Translated from Portuguese

¹² Translated from Portuguese

In the analyzes produced by the historiography of Brazilian secondary education, we find references in different studies¹³, which inform about the impact of the reforms suffered since 1837, after the creation of the Imperial College of Pedro II, to that of Benjamin Constant Reform, based on Decree No. 981, dated 8th November 1890, to those undertaken by Minister Francisco Campos (Decrees No. 19,890, April 18th, 1931 and No. 21,241 April 4th, 1932), in terms of organization (curriculum, disciplines, and qualifications) and operation (preparatory courses, continuous assessment examinations, compulsory attendance) aiming at the education and modernization of this level of schooling.

Souza (2008, p.163) considers that the Francisco Campos Reform laid the foundations for the consolidation and expansion of secondary education in the following decades. Dallabrida (2009, p.190) sees the markings of an authoritarian and centralizing state in this reform, which sought, through education, to consolidate a project of political, economic, social and cultural modernization (and homogenization).

This reformist/modernizing scenario culminated in the publication of Decree No. 4,244 of April 9, 1942 (Capanema Reform), which gave secondary education its fundamental purpose, that is, “to mold, following the educational work of primary education, the whole personality of adolescents; accentuating and heightening, in the spiritual formation of adolescents, patriotic and humanistic conscientiousness and; give general intellectual preparation that can underpin higher special formation studies”.

Schwartzman, Bomeny and Costa (2000, p. 205) credited the following premise to the Capanema Reform that “the educational system should correspond to the economic and social division of labor. Education should serve the development of skills and mindsets according to the various roles assigned to different social classes or categories”.

With the enactment of the Law of Education Guidelines and Bases, n. 4024 of 1961 (LDB 1961) the central government's control became more flexible over secondary education, attending the demands of those who sought the decentralization of the education system, that is, “with the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases, the power of decision was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Federal Council of Education and the State Secretariats

¹³ In the history of secondary education in Brazil there are references to three classic works: Geraldo Bastos Silva, “Critical Introduction of Secondary Education” (1959); Maria Thetis Nunes, “Secondary Education and Brazilian Society” (1962); and Maria de Lourdes Mariotto Haidar, “Secondary Education in the Brazilian Empire” (1972).

of Education.” (Nunes, 2000, p.54). Souza (2008) notes that the 1961 LDB¹⁴ increased the curriculum by indicating general guidelines when compulsory and optional or complementary disciplines were indicated. In this case, the Federal Council of Education took over the predominance of scientific and technical areas, to the disadvantage of the humanities, giving shape to the technical paths that would later be followed by education.

The advantage of this level of education, in the different historical spaces and times of its (re)organization, occurred in the follow up of the social, economic and political transformations of the Country and, at the same time, incorporated these transformations into the perspective of offering education to the so-called Brazilian bourgeoisie and/or elite. In this perspective of supply, different interpretations were fostered about its purpose, that is, aimed at the middle classes of the population, identified with the interests of the ruling classes, or determined by ideals of illustration, freedom and property that are necessary for the production of meaning of the bourgeois and/or elite. In the midst of these senses, the presence of the declaration stating that secondary education was organized with the intention of directing its clientele to higher education institutions and to the most privileged positions in society. (Beisiegel, 1995, p. 393).

This historical portrait *per se* admits the *doxa* that secondary education, made up of individuals, structure and objective educational relations, built its history apparently dependent on the economic, social and political conditions to which it was linked. However, this apparent dependence seems weakened if we demand analysis rather than traces of a guiding *modus operandi*. In other words, the knowledge produced on secondary education seems to pursue the assertion of this portrait, consolidating a scientific practice, or *nomos*, that makes it autonomous.

This empowerment feeds on oppositions such as education for the elite *versus* education for the underprivileged, humanities *versus* science, which are being restored so as to “pedagogically” analyze the complexity of thought and social reality.

Thus, the history of secondary education was formed, in particular, by a set of historically possible units of delimitation or hierarchy; social classes or extracts from society; and very slightly, by structured social spaces in which certain institutions fought due to the positions they establish in that space, or that they wanted to establish.

¹⁴ LDB – “Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação”: Law of Brazilian Educational Guidelines and Principles

On secondary education: dissertations and thesis as a collection¹⁵ for compared social writing

For the conference of the historical sense, we are sustained by some practices presented as a context to discuss the specific objects of each academic production, be it a school subject, the history of the institution, or the role of the state in increasing secondary education in the cities of Campo Grande and Belo Horizonte.

In this exercise, dissertations and theses were a substantial resource for uncovering the agents' belonging to a social environment in which members share identities, assumptions and expectations, or a *milieu* in which communication is based on personal characteristics, detached from context and calls for the development of different forms of language, associated with class structure. (As per Bourdieu, 1999).

Given this, we start from the assumption that the analyzed productions adopted two types of references, authors linked to the field of History and who studied the cities in their political, economic, social and/or cultural aspects; other academic productions, which had studied similar objects, or related to those investigated. Thus, the two dissertations (D) and one thesis (T) elected here for the analysis promoted a cross between these two types of references to build a historiographic discourse that gave meaning to the historical context of their objects, namely: (D) Menezes (OCE, 2012), *Indices Of Curricular Practices In The Discipline Of History In An Exemplary Campo Grande School Between 1942 and 1970*, identified and analyzed the purposes of a school discipline from the relationships it establishes with the objectives that determine the social function of the school and the cultural changes resulting from the binomial, school society. To this end, the evidence that could reveal the curricular practices of the History discipline at Maria Constança Barros Machado High School, considered to be an “exemplary school”, was investigated between 1942 and 1970; (D) Oliveira (OCE, 2009), *The History of School French Discipline at the Campograndense State School (1942-1962)*, analyzed the history of the School French Discipline, its functioning in the middle school of the Campo Grande State School, in Campo Grande, at the time in the State of Mato Grosso, between 1942 and 1962; and (T)

¹⁵ In history, it all starts with the gesture of *separating*, gathering, transforming certain objects otherwise distributed into *documents*. This new cultural distribution is the first work. In fact, it consists in *producing* such documents simply by recapping, transcribing or photographing these objects while changing their place and status. This gesture consists of *isolating* a body, as it is done in physics, and *disfiguring* things to set them up as pieces that fill gaps in a set, proposed *a priori*. It forms the *collection*. (Certeau, 2010, p.81, emphasis added).

Teixeira (GEPHE, 2011) “*A SCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS*” - *Minas Gerais State School* (1956-1964) investigated the production of the collective memory referring to the Minas Gerais State School in 1956-1964, marked by academic excellence, culture and freedom. In addition, the school, architecturally designed by Oscar Niemeyer, “a school without walls”, a milestone in the history of the institution and the city of Belo Horizonte, allowed the freedom of coming and going and the increase of the number of vacancies.¹⁶

We used the materiality of the representations, in the studies of different *school institutions*, as a criterion for the grouping of these sources in different *cities*, in the increase of *secondary education* for the education of the *subjects*. It is worth noting that in this materiality, there was the incorporation of the historiographical discourses set up to produce an interpretative form that reinforced them, from a veracity position that permeated the narrative, which organized the meaning of the text, to the semantization, which built the *nexus* that gave meaning to the text in secondary teaching (Certeau, 2010).

In addition, the prospect of not incurring the study of the “other” as solutions to problems faced in these regions, considering that the “other” is better. This inaccuracy was nourished from the perspective of interculturality, an aspect of the renewal of comparative research underpinned in the idea that the influences are reciprocal, even if there is a pattern exercising hegemony. In this sense, it should be remembered that:

The historian is not only someone who perceives the powers and the controls that men of a certain age established over space, he/she is also the creator of a territory, in that by cutting out an object of knowledge, a space of power and control is established, through his/her own historiographical discourse. (Barros, 2005, p.115).¹⁷

To analyze secondary education, in the different regions between the 1940s and 1960s, we retrieved the following information about *cities*:

... the construction of the Brazilian Northwest Railway (NOB), inaugurated in the city in 1914, put Campo Grande in more direct contact with the São Paulo-Rio de Janeiro axis, contributing to increase the population flow and its consequent economic development. However, in addition to the railroad, the transfer of Corumbá's Military Command in 1921 made Campo Grande the military capital of the state from then on. This results in an alliance between the

¹⁶ Translated from Portuguese

¹⁷ Translated from Portuguese

city's economic elite, consisting essentially of ranchers, and the military commanders. (Menezes, 2012, p.56).

Belo Horizonte¹⁸, above all, also experiences the growth spurt. With the rural exodus, the population of the city, which in 1940 was 211.377 thousand inhabitants, practically doubles its size in 1960, according to IBGE¹⁹. The demands for higher schooling motivated by industrialization, particularly in the urban area, and growth and articulation problems of primary education, would eventually be reflected in secondary education. (Teixeira, 2011, p. 11).

These configurations of the *cities* remit to the tendency, present at the time, of the diffusion of urbanization and sanitation actions, whose social transformation vehicle was schooling. However, such transformations were dependent on the republican projects these regions built for themselves.

In the case of southern Mato Grosso, a development project was seen, which concentrated the schooling process in cities of greater importance in the state's economic sector and which was restricted to students from financially more privileged classes, particularly in Campo Grande. In Minas Gerais, this project seemed to be underpinned in the industrialization process, particularly in the urban area, Belo Horizonte, as the foundation for the need for education as an instrument of social mobility. "Through actions of inculcation and imposition of values, the school institution contributes to creating the general disposition for legitimate culture" (Bourdieu, 2007, p.22).

In this context, public secondary education *institutions* were created and/or consolidated in response to the quantitative increase in private institutions. In Belo Horizonte, the State School of Minas Gerais, installed in the capital of Minas Gerais since 1897, represented a form of spatial organization of the city, revealing a strategy of distinction. This distinction was definitively fueled by the move in 1956 to a building that embodied what was modern.

The architectural ensemble, signed by Oscar Niemeyer, himself a symbol of modernism, was designed for the young high school student and is therefore a place of youth, school and cultural activities. In its outline, it included a cultural universe in which part of Belo Horizonte's youth participated in a movement of exchanges with other spaces, institutions and people of the city. (Teixeira, 2011, p. 12).²⁰

¹⁸ The capital of the State of Minas Gerais.

¹⁹ IBGE - Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística – The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics.

²⁰ Translated from Portuguese

This distinction remained in the history of the Campo Grandense State School in the south of Mato Grosso, when in 1954, it was set up in a building also designed by Niemeyer.

The creation of the State School in Campo Grande can express the modernization projects of social groups interested in education [...]. In 1954, the State School, as it was known by the community, was transferred to its own headquarters in the Amambaí neighborhood. The building is Oscar Niemeyer's project. (Oliveira, 2009, p. 63-64).²¹

The architecture of these institutions revealed a school creation and installation process, with its rituals, its culture and its meaning for those societies. Another common element was the indication that the new building complied with the new requirements imposed on secondary education, even with the explicit explanation in the texts, that these requirements were related to the quantitative need arising from the growing demand for vacancies.

In this context, other questions were also inferred, one concerning the social function that secondary education played at that historical moment in the representation of the social groups of cities. New monumental buildings, with innovative and modern architecture, were thus a materialization of the symbolism acquired by the secondary level student as a leader of specific social groups.²²

... the target audience of the Minas Gerais middle school was the one that would prepare for liberal careers, that is, future bachelor degree graduates in law, medicine and engineering. It was primarily for males, although the presence of females was patent. Like women, poor students were an exception. [...] a school without walls, of academic excellence, whose institutional daily life was defined by the exercise of freedom. (Teixeira, 2010, p. 13 and 51).²³

... as an “exemplary school”²⁴, because besides being considered excellence in the quality of the education offered, it interjected itself into the social groups that considered themselves as the elite in the city, becoming part of the cultural identity of these groups. (Menezes, 2012, p.11).²⁵

In addition to the characteristics of the “elected” *subjects* to be educated by these institutions, we find another indicator of selectivity, that is, both the Mineiro State School and

²¹ Translated from Portuguese

²² Translated from Portuguese

²³ Translated from Portuguese

²⁴ [...] those that would have been not only references of quality and formation, but also perceived as linked to the cultural identity of the social groups that expressed themselves as “elites” in these cities, at specific historical moments (PESSANHA et al, 2007, p. 25).

²⁵ Translated from Portuguese

the Campo Grandense State School, despite being “public”, charged fees for enrollment and entrance exams which was not forbidden²⁶.

Given this, the supposed education for the elite in these institutions indicated the control they had over the selection of their students through either the financial selection resulting from the value of the fees, or the entrance exams.

... it is never possible, in any case, to say with certainty who, between the agent and the institution, really chooses; if it is the good student who chooses the school or if it is the school that chooses ... (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 198).²⁷

When it comes to the entrance exam, which lasted until the early 1970s, the reading of the sources indicated the presence of the premise that performance standards actually define the "hierarchical" position of these *institutions*. This dialectic between the standard performance and the hierarchy translates itself into the culture, as a social game, whose value is based on the collective belief about this same value (fetish).

According to Minhoto (2008), during the 40 years in which the entrance exams prevailed, there were numerous legal changes in the form, content and functioning, but “neither of the norms extinguished the ritual of passage between the two areas of education” (p. 451).

Between the 1950s and 1960s, it was still possible to surmise the debate about the entrance examination in the two regions studied:

In the case of candidates for the entrance exam of the State School, the demand was for students from primary school since there was no such articulation in the case of public schools. We are talking about numerous school groups in the city of Belo Horizonte and the interior of the state for one single state school and one municipal school (Teixeira, 2011, p. 80).²⁸

Based on data collected from the Maria Constança School Archive in 1958, out of the candidates who underwent the examinations, only 26% passed, the highest pass rate recorded in the first years of operation was 67% in 1945 (Oliveira, 2009, p. 66).²⁹

We hypothesized that the rigidity of secondary school entrance examinations was also due to the character of the students' relationship with their studies in which the “fundamental

²⁶ See Article 25, line c, of Decree No. 19.890, 18th April 1931.

²⁷ Translated from Portuguese

²⁸ Translated from Portuguese

²⁹ Translated from Portuguese

relationship that their social class maintains with global society, social success and the culture” appears (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1992, p. 36). In this way, it expresses what is really at stake, that is, not secondary education at its core, but rather the operationalization and translation of its purposes.

Such a hypothesis was embodied in the question of the study regime, class or disciplines, present in the studied sources:

The Madureza exam was the name of the course and also the final exam for passing the course - which taught subjects in the former middle and high school under the 1961 LDB Law. It established the minimum ages for the beginning of the courses, as being 16 for middle school Madureza and 19 for high school Madureza. (Teixeira, 2011, p. 123).³⁰

This practice corroborates what was recorded by Zotti (2004, p. 103), stating that in Brazil, “[...] the reality of secondary education was very critical, since until then it did not have a nationally based organization, just a preparatory course, only serving as a link to higher education”. However, in studies on secondary education in southern Mato Grosso, what was worthy of note was not the progression of schooling, but the dynamics of expansion outlined by the public *versus* the private debate.

secondary education, between the 1930s and 1960s, despite seeking to follow national regulations for this sector, complemented by state laws and decrees, and to show figures suggesting development regarding the number of students enrolled and of official teaching institutions, *shows the state government as always being shy about initiatives that could effectively expand secondary education in the state*, addressing the educational issues according to their political conveniences. (Menezes, 2012, p. 48 – emphasis added).³¹

Still in this context, it was not possible to deny public investments in this educational segment, even with the “shy” participation of the state in the dissemination and organization of secondary education in southern Mato Grosso. The involvement of the State with the maintenance of private establishments, “since it directly subsidized the construction and maintenance of these schools, [...] or indirectly, keeping scholarship students in private institutions” (Menezes, 2012, p. 123), cannot be considered as just “political convenience”, but rather as part of the actions that made up the education implementation strategy in this locality.

³⁰ Translated from Portuguese

³¹ Translated from Portuguese

This analysis of the organization and expansion of secondary education leads us, in this perspective, to educational policy as a field of forces, where social agents are defined by their relative positions. In other words, this policy became a constructed space of relations, which associated the place, the social aspect and the cultural aspect, according to the positions and evaluations made by the social agents.

A substantial part of this force field was built precisely by the professors of the studied *institutions* as agents who represented a hereditary *habitus* (Bourdieu 1999), with an inner disposition to believe³² in their excellencies, references, as well as, the school spaces.

The first teachers, called *lenses*, were appointed by the Governor of the State and, during the first decades of the twentieth century, participated in highly competitive open public exams, attended by authorities. They were all "doctors" and presented a classic culture, which was typical of that time. (Teixeira, 2011, p. 51).³³

... the school counted, at the beginning of its activities, on some teachers from teacher training colleges and other teachers who did not have specific training for the teaching profession, and who were *doctors, lawyers, army soldiers, priests*, among other professions. Most of them entered the school on an interim basis, i.e. without a public exam, and had no registration at the Ministry of Education (MEC). With the completion of the CADES (Secondary Education Improvement and Dissemination Campaign) courses, these teachers were able to take the Sufficiency Exams and be registered at the MEC. (Menezes, 2012, p.61, we added the emphasis).³⁴

If, on the one hand, these teachers were raised to this condition, because they did not have specific training for teaching, on the other, in terms of practice, they were, for the secondary education of the studied institutions, what this level of education demanded from them. Therefore, the pedagogical excellence of these agents was defined as an act of imposition of a cultural arbitrariness, which concealed itself as such, and which concealed the arbitrariness from what it instilled.

Final Comments

The distinct historical contexts, the contradictions and inherent complexities in these contexts, analyzed and/or portrayed in the dissertations and theses, comprised the questions

³² In the sense of belief, as a way of belonging to a field, translated in terms of *illusio* (Bourdieu, 1996).

³³ Translated from Portuguese

³⁴ Translated from Portuguese

that formed the first movement of the comparison undertaken. Secondly, we focus on the identity crisis outlined in the patterns on secondary education, since the present *doxa* has brought idealized, sometimes anti-historical, views into discussion that predominate in the *nomos* of developed epistemes.

Idealizations and anti-historicity portrayed in a marked historiographical production, above all by structural analyzes, which reproduced an interpretation of secondary education, in which the authors focused their research objects and documentary sources on political guidelines, economic determinations and/or educational reforms carried out in the period and their effects in the context of the schooling of Brazilian society. Which *per se* prevented a historiographical writing from the distinct and singular forms, marked by different rhythms, tensions and disputes and negotiations, which impressed the configuration of secondary education in the context of Brazilian regions, states and municipalities.

We point out that these referred dissertations and theses register cultural and ideological relativist processes that produce historical-social writing for/about secondary education. It should be noted that it was not possible to surmise the differential emphasis of secondary school treatment in this writing, either in the sense of schooling or in the sense of a culture, against the belief of a purely “preparatory” objective, focused on the subjects to be educated.

For this point, we (re)allotted the stories about “secondary teaching”, built by the sources, dealing with the *nomos*, or the conditions that fulfilled the transmutation by which this writing recreated the fetishes of those societies around this level of education. (*the doxa*).

In this sense, the stories about “secondary teaching” were built around a similar interpretation to their origins, from the point of view of the organization of cities, the socioeconomic characterization of the target population, the fetishes around the institutions, even dealing with distinct objects in historical spaces and times.

The empirical development of these stories showed that differences in the systems analyzed, if they exist or existed, were not addressed. We are talking about differences linked to the composition, practices and dynamics of local educational policies, social stratifications, family interests, responsible for different socializing experiences. These experiences would inform about the processes of incorporating a heritage of different dispositions and, in parallel, would establish a particular relationship with those institutions and the establishment processes of an educationalising culture.

Finally, the comparison undertaken here has brought to light other main characters, limited by the *illusio* of new games between the States, educational systems, as well as cultural forces and the social environment, which would endow analyzes of/over/for secondary education from a dialectical perspective in/out of education. That is, thinking of secondary education not as a life orientation, but a process that would imply in a reflexive openness to new ideas and people, far from a historiographical loyalty to certain writing norms and traditions.

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