

## OLD SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOKS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: the Ariosto Espinheira collection

Antigos livros didáticos de ciências sociais para a escola elementar:  
a coleção de Ariosto Espinheira

Antiguos libros de texto de ciencias sociales para escuelas primaria:  
la colección Ariosto Espinheira

ANTONIA TERRA DE CALAZANS FERNANDES

Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, SP, Brasil. E-mail: [antoniaterra@usp.br](mailto:antoniaterra@usp.br).

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**Abstract:** The text intends to contribute to the study of the history of textbooks, performing the analysis of a collection elaborated from a curricular program of Social Sciences, implemented in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s, in a conjuncture of debates for reformulation of the principles of national education. The collection was authored by Ariosto Espinheira, based on the *Programa de ciências sociais* of 1934, proposed by the Department of Education of the Federal District, directed by Anísio Teixeira, and published by the Institute of Educational Research, under the direction of Carlos Delgado de Carvalho. By following the guidelines of the official program, arising from the intense pedagogical debates that included the contributions of north american authors, such as those of John Dewey, the analysis of the school makes it possible to evaluate how to approximate the educational ideas defended in the context, presenting texts and activities that instigated teachers and students to transform their teaching practices and approach the reality of their community. At the same time, the text seeks to pay attention to the characteristics of this didactic collection and the historical specificities of its editorial production.

**Keywords:** textbook; social sciences; social science textbook; curriculum.

**Resumo:** O texto intenciona contribuir para os estudos da história dos livros didáticos, realizando a análise de uma coleção elaborada a partir de um programa curricular de Ciências Sociais, implantada no Rio de Janeiro na década de 1930, em uma conjuntura de debates para reformulação dos princípios da educação nacional. A coleção era de autoria de Ariosto Espinheira, baseada no *Programa de ciências sociais* de 1934, proposto pelo Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, dirigido por Anísio Teixeira, e publicado pelo Instituto de Pesquisas Educacionais, sob direção de Carlos Delgado de Carvalho. Ao seguir as orientações do programa oficial, decorrente dos intensos debates pedagógicos que incluíam as contribuições de autores norte-americanos, como as de John Dewey, a análise da coleção possibilita avaliar como ocorreu a aproximação das ideias educacionais defendidas naquele contexto, apresentando textos e atividades que instigavam professores e estudantes a transformarem suas práticas didáticas e a se aproximarem da realidade de sua comunidade. Ao mesmo tempo, o texto procura dar atenção às características dessa coleção didática e às especificidades históricas de sua produção editorial.

**Palavras-chave:** livro didático; ciências sociais; livro didático de ciências sociais; programa curricular.

**Resumen:** El texto pretende contribuir al estudio de la historia de los libros de texto, realizando el análisis de un acervo elaborado a partir de un programa curricular de Ciencias Sociales, implementado en Río de Janeiro en la década de 1930, en una coyuntura de debates para la reformulación de los principios de educación Nacional. La colección fue de autoría de Ariosto Espinheira, con base en el *Programa de ciências sociais* de 1934, propuesto por el Departamento de Educación del Distrito Federal, dirigido por Anísio Teixeira, y publicado por el Instituto de Investigaciones Educativas, bajo la dirección de Carlos Delgado de Carvalho. Siguiendo los lineamientos del programa oficial, surgido de los intensos debates pedagógicos que incluyeron las contribuciones de autores norteamericanos, como los de John Dewey, el análisis de la colección permite evaluar cómo se produjo la aproximación de las ideas educativas defendidas en ese contexto, presentando textos y actividades que incitaron a docentes y estudiantes a transformar sus prácticas docentes y acercarse a la realidad de su comunidad. Al mismo tiempo, el texto busca prestar atención a las características de esta colección didáctica y las especificidades históricas de su producción editorial.

**Palabras clave:** libro de texto; ciencias sociales; libro de texto de ciencias sociales; currículo.

## INTRODUCTION

The school, in a modern democracy, cannot be disinterested in the social life of the environment in which it is and be alien to the problems of the community that, ultimately, it represents. First of all, to fulfill its main objective of regulating social evolution, it needs to be in a position to study the elements of this evolution. In this way, it can help control this movement, helping it in its normal and progressive development. In a true democracy, freedom of thought must be respected, and the circulation of ideas, mainly through educational means, must be subordinated to the concern of the method for the benefit of the clarity essential for their assimilation (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934, p. 11)<sup>1</sup>.

In education, from a teaching perspective, when one reflects on “what is” or “what should be” teaching at school, one is faced with the exercise of identifying or projecting its purposes: the one that is wanted or should be produced. And to delve deeper into these questions, which apparently depend on the immediate context of the classroom, it is necessary to consider their immersion in historical educational perspectives and social and political positions and issues, both official and alternative theoretical lines, and their implementation instruments and dissemination.

The teaching contents and methods chosen to meet the purposes outlined for school training are intertwined between teaching choices based on their cultural histories of experiences and training and the official guidelines present in programs, school curriculum, and textbooks. In the latter case, they extend their influences over long durations, submerging but remaining and grounding educational conceptions over time. So, it is then worth getting to know them.

Here, in this text, the intention is to evaluate some aspects of the history of a didactic collection conceived based on a proposal for a Social Sciences program implemented in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s by the Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal in a context of debates to reformulate the principles of national education.

In some way, in a broad perspective, the analysis developed here includes the propositions of sociologist Meucci (2020), who, supported by Nibert Elias, defends the

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<sup>1</sup> The same program was later published in the following edition: Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos [INEP] (1955). T. N.: “ A Escola, numa democracia Moderna, não se pode desinteressar da vida social do ambiente em que se acha e permanecer estranha aos problemas da comunidade que, em última análise, ela representa. Antes de tudo, para poder desempenhar o seu objetivo capital de reguladora da evolução social, ela precisa estar em condições de estudar os elementos desta evolução. Assim poderá colaborar no controle deste movimento auxiliando-o no seu desenvolvimento normal e progressivo. Numa verdadeira democracia, a liberdade do pensamento deve ser respeitada, mas o tráfego das ideias, principalmente pelos meios educacionais deve ser subordinado à preocupação do método em benefício mesmo da clareza indispensável à sua assimilação”.

idea that the analysis of textbooks enables the unveiling of social processes internal to their configuration. In this case, here, with this aim, the proposal includes identifying the social agents involved, the premises of the conceptions consolidated in a curricular program, and the editorial product in which the most comprehensive philosophical, pedagogical, social, and political references are concretized.

More specifically, respecting studies of theoretical and methodological analyses of textbooks, the text considers guidelines by Choppin<sup>2</sup> (2002, 2004), which, based on work on the history of textbooks, points out the need to recognize they assume different functions. One of them is referential; in other words, generally, the book tends to be faithful to the translation of the program or its interpretation and fulfills the purpose of supporting educational content with the commitments and values of a given social class. Another function concerns an instrumental purpose of putting learning methods into practice, with activities and exercises, to facilitate knowledge acquisition. Another is the ideological and cultural function, spreading literate culture, language, cultural values, and dominant ideologies. In addition to its functions, the author also draws attention to the fact that the book is a cultural product of its time, and it is important to take a look at its internal organization, language, and graphic, editorial, and material composition

The intention is to pursue some of the links between the didactic collection to be analyzed and the guidelines of the program supporting it, highlighting the philosophical and pedagogical foundations of the social and political agents involved and observing the choices of content and teaching guidelines, some values internal to the texts and images, biographical references of the author and characteristics of the editorial composition and material of the work. And, in this process of decomposition and analysis, be careful to understand its complexity without losing sight of its integrity and purposes.

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<sup>2</sup> Choppin's studies made it possible to expand the criteria for analyzing textbooks. According to Bittencourt (2014, p. 43), who shared research with the author, "[...] textbooks were analyzed, almost exclusively, as vehicles for the ideological inculcation of the dominant social class and, from this perspective, were considered the villains, par excellence, in the lives of teachers and students. Questions about this exclusive way of understanding the textbook arose immediately for Alain Choppin in his teaching activities and were extended when developing his research at the Service d'Histoire de l'Éducation (SHE), a sector of the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique (INRP)"; original quotation in Portuguese: "[...] os livros didáticos eram analisados, quase que exclusivamente, como veículos de inculcação ideológica da classe social dominante e, sob essa vertente, eram considerados os vilões, por excelência, da vida dos professores e alunos. Os questionamentos sobre essa forma exclusiva de entendimento do livro didático surgiram imediatamente para Alain Choppin, em suas atividades no magistério, e se estenderam ao desenvolver suas pesquisas no Service d'Histoire de l'Éducation (SHE), setor do Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique (INRP)".

## ORIENTATION CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL PROPOSITIONS

From the 1920s onwards, Brazilian intellectuals began to debate education in the country more intensely<sup>3</sup>. Among the proposals that emerged in that context, one began to disseminate pedagogical models from North American authors, one of which was based on John Dewey<sup>4</sup>, who defended a new order of concepts in education that led to other practices.

Dewey's propositions<sup>5</sup> were present in educational guidance documents in the USA, such as that of the "Social Studies Commission" of 1916, which defended the dissemination of liberal-democratic ideals for an education that enabled young people to appreciate and value nature and laws of social life, acquire a sense of responsibility in society, participate in promoting the well-being of the population in general, and believe in a world community that included all humanity (Social studies in secondary education, 1916).

Dewey's ideas were disseminated in Brazil (Paulilo, 2005), influencing the development of educational proposals. His suggestions projected a school in which children should learn from experiences in social life, stating that it was also important to rethink the division of scientific knowledge into school subjects<sup>6</sup>.

Dewey's thinking influenced the *Social Sciences Program* in 1934, prepared by the Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, directed by Anísio Teixeira, and published by the Instituto de Pesquisas Educacionais under the direction of Carlos Delgado de Carvalho. The *Program* (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal - 1934) was organized for the first five years of elementary school, following the guidelines of the foundations of the new North American education proposal, and criticized the school's distance from reality and stated that a "modern democracy" could not be disinterested in "social life" and the environment in which it is nor "be alien to the problems of the community" that it ultimately represented. These were

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<sup>3</sup> To learn about the context of educational changes in Rio de Janeiro between 1920 and 1935, consult Paulilo (2005), and to learn about the educational debate of the time from the perspective of sociological studies, consult Meucci's master's thesis (2000).

<sup>4</sup> John Dewey (1859-1952) was an American pedagogue, considered the founder of adolescence psychology, and who developed a philosophy centered on the notion of "experience," seeing it as an active, transformative, and continuous exchange between subject and nature. From this perspective, he conceived the idea that it is up to the subject to develop and control experience through the use of rational principles of modern science. He sought to create a practice-oriented epistemology and developed the lesson of methodical pragmatism, linked to the idea of open reason, placed as an instrument in the complex dynamics of individual and historical experience (Cambi, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> To learn about the theoretical formulations of educational thinkers from the beginning of the 20th century, which include Dewey, see Zanatta (2012).

<sup>6</sup> In 1916, John Dewey published *Democracy and education*, with a chapter entitled: "The significance of geography and history." In it, the author proposes the integration of History and Geography through studies of social and natural human experiences (Dewey, 2015).

ideas also present in O Manifesto dos pioneiros da educação nova from 1932, defending that the school should be prepared to face modern society, having “democracy” as its doctrine, based on social solidarity, the spirit of cooperation, and the construction of a dynamic environment of connection with the region and community.

In Delgado de Carvalho, in the *Social Sciences Program*, the purpose was the production of citizens. It proposed considering the study of real life and new methods of education, which included reviewing the separation between the subjects taught to create connections between them, which would take into account the reality and complexity of life at work, at home, and in the community. This educator raised the premise that society at the time presented problems to be faced by the school and highlighted educational propositions that prioritized valuing the teaching method and the formation of attitudes and values, contrary to memorization and situations of the child’s dependence on the teacher, in their learning process (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934).

For Delgado de Carvalho, the fact that the Program aimed to study “real life,” the different areas of knowledge were present in the facts, phenomena, themes, projects, and centers of interest, and programs should be organized into units that provide axes, around which reading, writing, and calculation revolve, highlighting their uses and purposes. From this perspective, the teacher should create an intimate connection between the historical, geographic, economic, and moral points of view, restricting the study to the elements of their significance so that they do not remain compartmentalized and independent, the subjects isolated, presented in simple oral presentation situations (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934).

Pursuing these general concepts, the suggestions for activities in the *Program* proposed effective methodological changes. The teacher was suggested to sit on the floor with the children and tell stories, organize circus, theater, and puppet shows, celebrate parties and birthdays, allow toys and animals to be taken to school, organize excursions, picnics, and visits, bake cakes, sew clothes for dolls, build miniature houses from other times, draw historical scenes, collect photographs or engravings, plant in the backyards of houses, etc. Among the guidelines and their purposes, the intentions of training the child to adapt to collective life, capitalist society, and the habits of modern life were explicit.

In the *Program's* proposal<sup>7</sup>, the child should study in the first grade life at home and school, considering the events of daily life linked to primary needs – food,

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<sup>7</sup> In the presentation of the *Program...* (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934, p. 18) Delgado de Carvalho explains the North American source that supported the proposal: “Among all the Social Science programs, organized on the principles that govern the Progressive School, those from Denver (Colorado) were chosen here, representing the work of a commission of technicians.” And, he adds: “Of course, it was not an easy and simple imitation of these programs that were aimed at here; the adaptation was attempted generally, but taking into account our local conditions.”; original quotation in Portuguese:

clothing, shelter, and recreation. In the second grade, study life in the locality, especially what it represents in terms of benefits and responsibilities for its inhabitants. In the third grade, children should study the “life of primitive man,” exemplified in the “life of the indigenous,” so that the child can understand, through contrast with the “life of the civilized,” the complexity of life in the present; and, also, life in other countries, to create interest and sympathy for the people of other lands, contributing to a feeling of universal identity. In the fourth grade, study the heritage bequeathed by the country’s colonizers to respect the contribution of those who laid the foundation of Brazilian nationality. In the fifth grade, study the development of the essential things in life (food, clothing, housing, occupation, transportation, communication) through comparisons between the present and the past and the appreciation of the “creative power of man” and liberal attitudes (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934)<sup>8</sup>.

The *Program's* proposals subsequently guided, as we will see, the production of “Social Sciences” teaching materials intended for elementary schools. From this perspective, the proposal incorporated into the school, also through school materials, a subject called “Social Sciences,” which brought together knowledge from different areas.

Social Sciences constitute the subject that aims to allow us to live well in Society, which is essential in Education, as social structures and the progress of civilization rest on the ability to live well in society (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934, p. 19)<sup>9</sup>.

The subject, in turn, required a specialized master. The text specified, “It is of capital importance that the master, specialized in social sciences, knows exactly, in its smallest details, the elements that constitute the program” (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934, p. 13)<sup>10</sup>.

It was with the principles of the new subject, with specialized masters and specific content and methods, that, in the logic of the educational market, Ariosto Espinheira created a didactic collection.

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“Entre todos os programas de Ciência Social, organizados sobre os princípios que regem a Escola Progressiva, foram escolhidos aqui os de Denver (Colorado), que representam o trabalho de uma comissão de técnicos”. E complementa: “Bem entendido, não foi fácil e simples imitação destes programas que aqui foi visada; a adaptação foi tentada de modo geral, mas levando em conta nossas condições locais”.

<sup>8</sup> The introduction to the program, with a description of each purpose of the school year, was written by Inácia Ferreira Guimarães, Head of the Extra-Class Programs and Activities Section.

<sup>9</sup> T. N.: “As Ciências Sociais constituem a disciplina que tem por fim permitir viver bem em Sociedade, o que é essencial na Educação, pois as estruturas sociais e o progresso da civilização repousam sobre a capacidade de bem viver em sociedade”.

<sup>10</sup> T. N.: “É de capital importância que o mestre, especializado em ciências sociais, conheça exatamente, nos seus menores detalhes, os elementos que constituem o programa”.

## TEXTBOOKS AND THE 1934 SOCIAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

School programs and curricula are generally references for publishers to develop teaching collections, and these collections are presented to schools as works that follow official guidelines, thus legitimizing their links with the expectations of educational institutions and teachers through materials that support and assist with classroom activities.

A similar situation occurred with works produced after the publication of the *Social Sciences Program* of 1934. In the following year, 1935, the series of books *Social Sciences* was launched by publishers J. R. de Oliveira & Cia., from Rio de Janeiro, with five volumes (Espinheira, 1941) for students from the 1st to 5th grade of primary school, authored by Ariosto Espinheira.

Access to old textbooks is often difficult. In the case of this collection, it took a few years of searching for different copies in second-hand bookstores and libraries to reconstruct all the school years. Even so, it was not possible to locate manuals from the 1st to the 5th grade that corresponded to the same edition and publication date. However, access to different editions made it easier to evaluate some editorial changes over time.

To study this collection, the following materials were found and analyzed: volume I of the *Social Sciences* series, in 1939 (Espinheira, 1939) was in its 9th edition; volume II, in 1941, was in its 16th edition; volume III, in 1935, was in its 2nd edition; volume IV, in 1935, was in its 1st edition; and, in 1937, volume V was in its 2nd edition – all from the publisher R. de Oliveira & Cia.

According to the data printed in these books, it is possible to say that they were present and used in schools, as one of them was in the 16th edition<sup>11</sup>. And, in some

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<sup>11</sup> According to Choppin (2002, p. 20), “[...] it is the association of four criteria that can give you an indication about the diffusion of a school book: the duration of the editorial life (difference between the dates of last and first edition); the number of declared editions (but the strategy of different publishers is not identical and the reality of previous editions is not always guaranteed); the number of editions indicated by the bibliographies; and, finally, the number of copies preserved. Such a choice is legitimate, but it is necessary to be aware of what this implies: this type of sampling technique must be justified from an economic point of view (production and diffusion) or in the - traditional - hypothesis of the influence of manuals on the development of mentalities. On the contrary, from the point of view of intellectual production, also taking into account the least used ones could highlight innovations, which are generally imperceptible, which concern content, methods, pedagogical strategies, pagination or typography, etc.; having said that, it is necessary to be realistic and convincing in the methodological arguments that aim to definitively legitimize the unique use of some manuals that could be found (which, if you know the history of the collection, is also significant).”; original quotation in Portuguese: “[...] é a associação de quatro critérios que podem, então, lhe dar uma indicação sobre a difusão de um livro escolar: a duração da vida editorial (diferença entre as datas da última e da primeira edição); o número de edições declaradas (mas a estratégia dos diferentes editores não é idêntica e a realidade das edições anteriores não é sempre assegurada); o número das edições indicadas pelas bibliografias; e, por fim, o número de exemplares conservados. Tal escolha é legítima, mas

copies found, there are notes from users: names of who they belonged to, handwritten supplementary study texts, images that were colored with colored pencils, markings of what to study, and the stamp of the school group.

As for the author's professional activities, in his works he recorded that in 1935 he was a teacher at the Amaro Cavalcanti Secondary Technical School, of the Federal District City Hall; in the following years, he was linked to the Paulo de Frontin Secondary Technical School, also owned by the Federal District City Hall; and, in the 1940s, in addition to being a teacher, he was also Coordinator of the Radio School of the Department of Cultural Broadcasting<sup>12</sup>.

In different editions of this publisher, on the opening pages, a list of books published by the same author was printed, which included: *Mathematics* (1936 and 1937), *Natural Sciences* (1937), and *Federal District– Social Studies – 3rd grade* (1938). Those published by Companhia Melhoramentos de São Paulo are recommended: *Radio and Education* (1934), *Popular Art and Education* (1938), and *Travel through Brazil* (several volumes – 1939).

In different editions of the *Social Sciences* series, there are references to the relationship these manuals maintained with the *Social Sciences Program*, of the Federal District, from 1934. Under the title, on the credit sheet, until the 1939 edition, it said: “In accordance with the Federal District Education Department Program<sup>13</sup>”. And a letter, published in the first edition, dated April 3, 1935, signed by Inácia Ferreira Guimarães<sup>14</sup>, said:

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é preciso estar consciente do que isso implica: esse tipo de técnica de amostragem de ser justificada sob um ponto de vista econômico (produção e difusão) ou na hipótese - tradicional - de uma influência dos manuais sobre a formação das mentalidades. Ao contrário, sob o ponto de vista da produção intelectual, levar também em conta os menos utilizados poderia por em evidência inovações, que são geralmente imperceptíveis, que digam respeito aos conteúdos, aos métodos, às estratégias pedagógicas, à paginação ou à tipografia, etc.; isso exposto, é necessário ser realista e convincente nas argumentações metodológicas que visam legitimar, definitivamente o uso único de alguns manuais que puderam ser encontrados (o que, se conhecer a história do acervo, também é significativo)”.

<sup>12</sup> This author became known for publishing, from 1939 onwards, by Companhia Editora Nacional, *Travel through Brazil*, with volumes on the Amazon, the Northeast, Eastern Brazil, Southern Brazil, Central Brazil, and the Federal District. He was also the author of the didactic collection for primary grades *Natural Sciences*, published by J. R. de Oliveira & Cia, whose 2nd edition dates from 1938, and *Brazilian Childhood*, published by Nacional, 1956. He also published in the Brazilian Didactic Collection, High School Series, vol. 27, *Geography of Brazil*, vol. I intended for the 3rd grade and II for the 4th grade of the junior high school program, published by Editora do Brasil in 1944. Currently, a school in Rio de Janeiro is named after the author – E. M. Ariosto Espinheira. On the school's blog, there is his biography, presenting his works, where he worked as a teacher, and some memories of former students who studied from his books (Ariosto Espinheira, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> In the 16th edition, from 1941, of Vol. II, the link between the book and the 1934 program is lacking.

<sup>14</sup> Inácia Ferreira Guimarães was, in that context, head of the Extra-Class Programs and Activities Section, of the Instituto de Pesquisas Educacionais do Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal.



Illustrious Mr.

I am pleased to tell you that, reading the proofs of your book – Social Sciences, I verified the care with which Mr. sought to give his work the orientation recommended in the new programs designed for schools in the Federal District.

I am sure that books like this are good teaching aids in the hands of teachers who are interested in adopting new educational methods (Espinheira, 1941, p. 5)<sup>15</sup>.

The author himself, in some volumes and editions, in addition to reinforcing the relationship between the series and the official program, also highlighted who it was aimed at, as well as some specifications, didactic choices, and intentions:

The Social Sciences series is aimed at elementary courses and summarizes lessons accessible to everyone, in accordance with the Federal District Education Department Program.

To fully comply with the program, at the end of each lesson there are small notes that remind teachers of some themes to be developed by the classes (Espinheira, 1939, p. 8).

This work represents yet another effort for the benefit of students and teachers, bringing together in a single book the most varied subjects scattered across dozens of works recommended by the same program (Espinheira, 1935a, p. 7).

[...] minimum knowledge essential for students in elementary schools, within the rules of modern pedagogy, led us to write the volumes that make up the Social Sciences series.

Summarize the program's Minimum Facts to Know in accessible and clear language.

They are not complete study compendia but rather an indication of subjects to be developed by students and teachers, arousing interest, a spirit of inquiry and cooperation.

With this publication, we intend to reduce the teacher's work without suppressing the initiative and collaboration of students in researching the knowledge they need to learn (Espinheira, 1935a, p. 7)<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> T. N.: “ Ilmo. Snr./Tenho o prazer de dizer-lhe que, lendo as provas de seu livro – Ciências Sociais, verifiquei o cuidado com que o Snr. procurou dar ao seu trabalho a orientação preconizada em os novos programas elaborados para as escolas do Distrito Federal./ Estou certa de que livros como este são bons auxiliares de ensino às mãos de professores que se interessam pela adoção de novos métodos educativos”.

<sup>16</sup> T. N.: “A série de Ciências Sociais é destinada aos cursos elementares e resume lições ao alcance de todos, de acordo com o Programa do Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal./ Para cumprimento integral do programa, no final de cada lição há pequenas notas que lembram aos professores alguns temas a serem

These reservations were important to meet the propositions of the *Social Sciences Program*, which stated: “It is the child’s interest that must serve as a guide for the execution of a program that only the teacher knows – it is the current program in perpetual reorganization” (Departamento de Educação do Distrito Federal, 1934, p. 22).

## THE DIDACTIC COLLECTION

Ariosto Espinheira wrote a variety of titles and themes belonging to different areas of knowledge, demonstrating the versatility of authors of his time in producing works aimed at schools. And, especially in the *Social Sciences* series, he reveals the strong link between didactic work and official school programs, as can be seen in the relationships between the contents and methodology of its collection and what was proposed by the *Department of Education of the Federal District* from 1934.

The documentary sources analyzed here were references from the official school program and the localized volumes of the collection. In the second case, books, like other human productions, were conceived as historical documents and the effort was to understand their complexities as works, that is, authorship, editorial composition, the contexts of editions, school discipline, teaching purposes, contents, teaching methods, iconography, bibliographic references, etc.

In this effort, initially, it is possible to identify some of its characteristics. In the case of editorial composition, as frequently observed in didactic productions of the time, in all volumes, the author assumed responsibility for the production of both texts and images. Objects, characters, landscapes, and maps were all signed by the author, including the cover drawings. And, correctly, he also left records of the references of the artists he was based on, as in the case of Debret’s works, indicated in small letters and accompanied by the copyist’s identifications – “AE” or “A. Espinheira.” Because of these multiple functions of the author, his books exemplify the history of how the editorial team, at that time, must have been very small.

The work *Social Sciences* reveals its context. It is possible to generalize that the textbook can be an important documentary source for studying the history of Brazilian education. Likewise, school manuals, in general, signal the educational conceptions

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desenvolvidos pelas classes (Espinheira, 1939, p. 8)./ Representa, neste trabalho, mais um esforço em benefício de alunos e professores, reunindo num só livro, os mais variados assuntos esparsos em alguma dezenas de obras indicadas pelo mesmo programa (Espinheira, 1935a, p. 7)./ [...] conhecimentos mínimos indispensáveis aos alunos das escolas elementares, dentro das regras da moderna pedagogia, levou-nos a escrever os volumes que constituem a série Ciências Sociais./Resumem o Mínimo de Fatos a Conhecer do programa em linguagem acessível e clara./Não são compêndios de estudo completo, mas, antes, a indicação de assuntos a serem desenvolvidos por alunos e professores, despertando o interesse, o espírito de indagação e de cooperação./Com essa publicação pensamos diminuir o trabalho do professor, sem suprimir a iniciativa e a colaboração dos alunos na pesquisa de conhecimentos de que necessitam para aprender”.

of the period of their publication and use, highlight the subjects taught in schools, the selection of content, and the choices of didactic and methodological propositions present in everyday school life, expose interpretations, approximations or distances from what has been studied in the classroom concerning curricular programs and public policies for the dissemination of values, and demonstrate the initiative and commercial interest of publishers in materializing works (goods) to meet the consumption expectations of a market opened by the educational system.

In the case of Espinheira's books, in the analysis of their materiality, they were clearly similar to other school books of his time: small, with a hardcover, and possible to hold with a single hand throughout a situation of reading. The volumes were equal to each other, measuring fifteen by twenty centimeters. They varied in terms of the number of pages. Each volume had a suggestive image on the cover regarding the main topic to be studied. In this sense, it is worth describing the drawings and then relating them to the values disseminated by the collection.

Volume I of the series, in its 9th edition, dated 1939, had 87 pages, with illustrations by the author, with 26 texts for reading. On the cover, there was a drawing of a landscape with a sun rising and a mother hugging her son and pointing in the direction of a path and a building with "School" written on it.

The second volume of the series, in its 16th edition, dated 1941, was also a small hardcover book with 88 pages, with illustrations by the author, and 26 texts for reading, with notes at the end of each of them suggesting other possibilities of study themes, presented as "Related works." On the cover, there was a drawing representing a boy and a girl with uniforms and school supplies, walking alongside a dog and observing from the top of a mountain the landscape of Rio de Janeiro, and the city, Sugarloaf Mountain, the relief and the sea (Figure 1).

**Figure 1** - Covers of the first two volumes of the Social Sciences Collection by Ariosto Espinheira



Capa do livro 1º Ano (1939)

Capa do livro 2º Ano (1941)

Source: Espinheira (1939, 1941).

Similarly, the third volume, in the 2nd edition of 1935, with 80 pages and 18 texts, had a cover with a drawing, signed by the author, of a boy in a uniform (shirt and tie) reading a book and, on the table, a terrestrial globe.

In the fourth volume, 1935 edition, with 128 pages and 31 texts to read, on the cover, the drawing portrayed a girl and a boy in uniforms, holding a flat map of South America, highlighting the Brazilian territory. And, in the fifth volume, in the 1937 and 1939 editions, with 212 pages and 42 reading texts, on the cover are two drawings: one of them is an airplane flying, an electric pole on one side and, on the other, a radio tower with expanding waves; and the other drawing, at the bottom of the cover, is a rural scene, with a dirt road and a car, a field with cattle, a plantation with a man and a woman planting and in the background, a house with smoke coming out of the chimney.

Some volumes from the 1945 edition can be found at the National Library in Rio de Janeiro. In this edition, all the books in the collection have the same cover: on the left side, a rural scene with a tractor, electric lights, and a cultivated field, indicating “development” in the interior of the country; on the right side, a drawing of a train, ship, factory chimneys, buildings, and a radio transmission tower, suggesting the presence of an urban, factory, and “progress” life; and, in the center and at the top, planet Earth and an airplane. The cover design seems to indicate a concern with updating the collection in light of the changes taking place in the country. Thus, the

image constructed for Brazil was one of integration between the countryside and the city and of an economy that progressed with the expansion of industry.

As for content, the texts of the first volume, following the 1934 program, presented the function of the school as being an extension of the family, focused on learning and understanding everything we see and everything that surrounds us. Reading the text indicated that it was possible to learn about what should be done at home and on the street and how to help parents, valuing camaraderie, harmony, and discipline. The short texts proposed studies of basic habits of everyday life, distributed in different areas of the book's composition: health ensured by good hygiene, good nutrition, body posture, and correct clothing. Other interspersed texts indicated different themes, without an order that linked them: the study of the cardinal points, the constellations of references in the Brazilian sky, the seasons, national civic dates, diseases and how to avoid them, what are the appropriate values and behaviors in relationships with people, the types of clouds, rain, winds, plants, animals, factories and commerce.

In the second volume of the series, as indicated in the official program, the texts presented life in the community. Thus, during the holidays, visiting a farm, the story related the rural experience with the previous grade's school studies: observing the plants, learning how butter and cheese are made, how leather is prepared and woodcut, and how fruits and cereals are harvested. A short sentence concluded: "[...] they learned the usefulness of many things that previously seemed worthless" (Espinheira, 1941, p. 8). In the following chapters, different aspects of social life were presented: types of housing and their respective construction materials and architectural design; raw construction materials and how they were obtained or produced, such as stone, brick, wood, iron, and glass. The topic changed to studies of the planet, its rotation in relation to the Sun, and its land and water surface. Next, the raw materials for making clothes were presented: cotton, linen, wool, silk, and leather. The texts also told what foods were made of wheat, yeast, coffee, chocolate, sugar, vegetables, and animals. Finally, the texts dealt with the media and public security and assistance.

In the third volume, in the 2nd edition of 1935, the contents also followed the Social Sciences program. They began with a presentation of the Brazilian indigenous people, where they lived in the territory at the time of Cabral's arrival, and continued by presenting their food, housing, customs, and their permanence over time. Then, he began a series of readings about African people and animals from cold and temperate regions. And the following readings were about different countries and their customs, including European ones, starting with Portugal and then the East, Japan, and China, suggesting the intention of spreading a universal identity<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> The contents in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade book by Ariosto Espinheira, from the 1945 edition, found in the National Library, included different themes from the 1935 edition, i.e., they were linked to food, Earth's rotation, geographical features, national symbols, history of discovery of Brazil, the history of indigenous peoples and their customs (food, housing, religion, weapons, arts), the history of the city of Rio de Janeiro, the

In the fourth volume of the series, in the 1935 edition, the texts dealt with the history of Brazil, as indicated in the official program, starting with the discovery, colonizers, customs, governors, slavery, Jesuits, The Tamoios confederation, foreign invasions, revolts, the Portuguese court and independence, agricultural crops over time (sugarcane, cotton, cocoa, coffee), end of slavery, immigration, industry, commerce and transport.

In the fifth volume of the series, in the 1937 and 1939 editions, the orientation of comparing present and past was maintained, starting with rural life in Brazil and then presenting texts on the beginning of agriculture in eastern antiquity, feudalism in Europe, and the Arabs. It went back to the history of Brazilian agriculture, world agriculture, corn, sugarcane, cotton, cocoa, tobacco, wheat, rice, mate, rubber, wood, livestock, ores, industry, and transport.

## DIDACTIC FORMS AND PROPOSALS

The books in Ariosto Espinheira's collection were for reading, without offering exercises or questionnaires. The texts were organized into small lessons written in large letters, with some in capital letters, to specify an important theme, character, or content. And in constituting the structure of the texts, the author interspersed a narrative of daily life at school and at home and the characters' oral speeches. In volume I, the boy told his parents what he studied at school about the importance of nutrition. In another text, a girl in the class talked about the differences in temperatures throughout the seasons, and, in another situation, the teacher's speech answered questions asked by the students. Along with simple texts with a tone of speech, the pages had many illustrations, which occupied half or a third of them: trees, historical characters, different types of housing, brick manufacturing process, sketches of landscapes, animals, people working, etc.

Organized as reading texts, the narratives included characters and their questions regarding the topics studied. The main character of the collection was a boy named Luiz, who spoke with his mother, the teacher, and his classmates. In volume I, Luiz began to learn about the world. Initially, his mother told him a story about the education of a Zulu child who learned from his parents to hunt, survive alone in the bush, make fire, find his food, and set up a shelter. The text thus presented the question: how would Luiz learn to live in the world?

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Brazilian states, national rivers, human life in Brazil in different regions (rubber tapper, farmer, prospector), Brazil's agricultural and mineral riches, independence and the Republic.

When Ms. Iracema finished telling the story, Luiz said.

- Mom, I wanted to learn to live like the Zulus.
- It's very easy, my son. You will go to school and there you will learn what you need to live well (Espinheira, 1939 p. 13)<sup>18</sup>.

The cover of the book had this same message. The text and design were in line with the ideas defended by Delgado de Carvalho, who stated that the school could not be disinterested in social life and be alien to the problems of the community it represented. Thus, it was a mediator in the children's education process, with the responsibility to awaken in the students an "active" interest in everything around them. Following this principle, Ariosto Espinheira explained, in the reading text proposed to children, the school's conception of being integrated into the life of the community.

- But, Mom, at school I will only learn reading, calligraphy, accounts, geography, and history of Brazil [...]
- And besides, school must be very boring with the lessons, the punishments, the prisons [...]
- No, Luiz, school is very different from what you think; is the continuation of your home [...]
- You will live in a big family [...]
- The teacher will teach you everything you need to live well, with joy and happiness, like the little Zulus [...]
- You will learn to be a man and a useful man [...] (Espinheira, 1939 p. 13-14)<sup>19</sup>.

In the textbook, as well as in the Federal District's social studies proposal, the school did not abandon its literate vocation and dissemination of scientific knowledge. It incorporated the idea of continuity of the family and its integration with society, which, in turn, required the school to train "men useful" to it. In reading texts, community workers became the subject of study and shared their knowledge. This is the case with the text of the book in vol. 2, which said: "The students were running around the construction site and asking the workers a thousand questions. They saw everything, and everything they saw was explained by them" (Espinheira, 1941, p. 15).

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<sup>18</sup> T. N.: "Quando D. Iracema acabou de contar a história, disse o Luiz./- Mamãe, eu queria aprender a viver como os Zulus./- É muito fácil, meu filho. Você irá à escola e aí aprenderá aquilo que precisa para viver bem".

<sup>19</sup> T. N.: - Mas, mamãe, na escola só irei aprender leitura, caligrafia, contas, geografia e história do Brasil [...]/ E, além disso, a escola deve ser muito aborrecida com as lições, os castigos, as prisões [...]/- Não, Luiz, a escola é muito diferente do que você pensa; é a continuação de sua casa [...]/ Você viverá em uma grande família [...]/ A professora ensinará tudo de que você precisar para viver bem, com alegria e felicidade, como os pequenos Zulus [...]/ Aprenderá a ser homem e homem útil [...].

From the perspective of the teaching method, the Social Sciences series contained texts to be read and debated and guidelines for practical activities, along with suggestions for experiences based on the topics studied, which followed the indications present in the 1934 *Program*. Even in the study of themes related to the traditions of national civic dates, there was a concern to guide how they could be experienced. Drawing activities, sticker albums, dramatizations, readings of poems, and stories related to the dates were suggested.

Volume IV of the collection had the following composition: on the cover, a drawing of a girl and a boy holding a map of South America with the demarcation of the Brazilian territory. Consistent with the design, the reading texts had the following titles: “Discovery of Brazil,” “The Colonizers,” “What Brazil was like when it began to be colonized,” “How the colonizers lived,” etc. The texts presented recurring content from national history and methodological suggestions on how to develop them. In the case of the study of the discovery of Brazil, the reading characters had the responsibility of carrying out a project given by the teacher – “The Colonial Brazil” – which required research, consulting books, and producing a text to be read in class. Through the text, written by fictional characters, the author presented dates, names, and issues involving the arrival of the Portuguese in Brazil (Espinheira, 1935b).

This political history of heroic deeds was mixed with stories of daily Brazilian colonial life, based on themes such as food, housing, clothing, education, parties, games, and means of transport. In the notes at the end of the chapters, other suggestions for activities were introduced, involving different areas of knowledge and the student’s daily life, such as presenting the globe and maps with the colonizers’ travel routes, planting agricultural products in the school garden, boiling salt water to obtain salt, collect photographs or engravings of colonial things, uses and customs, plant cotton, weave cloth, etc.

From the point of view of pedagogical discourse, national values (heroes and dates), the idea of progress and development of the country, integration, and social harmony, good behavior and good education, loyalty to colleagues, good habits of health and hygiene, and care for the body and clothing. In addition, disease prevention, the knowledge necessary to understand the elements of nature and life in society, the usefulness of natural elements, the appreciation of work and the transformation of nature by humans, and the distinction between the customs of peoples and between the city and the countryside were present. All themes were present in the 1934 *Program*, with pedagogical functions of integrating the varied aspects that involved the child’s life in the world, including their physical integrity and the natural environment that surrounded them.

At the end of each text from the different books, the author included a note with suggestions for activities and “related work,” as he wrote in the presentation of the first volume. In the initial text of Volume I, which was titled *A True Story*, a mother



told her son about a very large family of “savages” called Zulus in southern Africa. In the note, the author recommended: “Children will be able to improvise beds and shelters from leaves. They will model clay dishes and pots. They will make bows and arrows from bamboo, loincloths, and feather crowns” (Espinheira, 1939, p. 12)<sup>20</sup>.

In the same book, in the text about “*Health. The feeding. The teeth*”, the author added later, reproducing the indications of activities proposed in the Federal District *Program*:

After lunch, children can brush their teeth to learn how to perform this task properly (Progr., p. 35).

The teacher will organize various meals (coffee, lunch, dinner, etc.) (Progr., p. 38).

RELATED WORK: Shopping in the warehouse. Arrangement of a warehouse at the school. Greengrocery. Fair. Dairy. Bakery. (Espinheira, 1939, p. 20)<sup>21</sup>.

Each topic studied was expanded with these suggestions of experiences. In Volume II, on cotton and clothing, “related work” was indicated as a possibility: buying cloth, cutting patterns, and making doll clothes. For the theme of making bread, there was an indication of reading recipes for biscuits, sweets, and cakes and making wheat and corn bread.

In Volumes IV and V, some end-of-page notes were no longer designated as “related works,” and some notes began to present observations on how to approach some aspect of the topic. In Volume IV, in the text about the colonizers, the note said:

Note: The teacher will show on the map the villages founded by the first colonizers and will draw attention to the location of these – close to the sea – for greater ease of communication with the kingdom and other towns (Progr. pg.33) (Espinheira, 1935b, p. 19)<sup>22</sup>.

## THE COLLECTION, THE AUTHOR AND THE PUBLISHER

<sup>20</sup> The transcription respected the spelling of the document. T. N.: “Após a merenda as crianças poderão escovar os dentes para aprender a desempenhar convenientemente esse trabalho (Progr., p. 35)./ O professor promoverá a organização de diversas refeições (café, almoço, jantar, etc.) (Progr., p. 38)./ Trabalhos correlatos: Compras no armazém. Arranjo de um armazém na escola. Quitanda. Feira. Leitaria. Padaria”.

<sup>21</sup> (Progr., p.) indicates the page of the *Social Sciences Program* where it is possible to find the activity suggestion.

<sup>22</sup> T. N.: “Nota: O professor mostrará no mapa as povoações fundadas pelos 1os colonizadores. Chamará a atenção da localização dessas feitorias – próximo ao mar – para maior facilidade de comunicação com o reino e com as outras povoações (Progr. pg.33)”.

For different reasons, the publisher sent copies of books from the collection to schools. The result was the receipt of return letters, some of which were published in the first edition of Volume IV, at the end of the book. Five messages sent by teachers were then reproduced, praising the series, which were attentively signed with the following references: “your very grateful colleague,” “your admirer,” “*amo. ato. e admor*<sup>23</sup>,” “students and teachers of the Celestino da Silva School,” and “always a friend and colleague” (Espinheira, 1935b, p. 129 and 130).

One of the letters considered it an excellent collection. Another thanks the offer for its commitment to facilitating “[...] the progress of education through the enrichment of didactic literature.” Another letter states that they read the proofs of the book and that they will be “good teaching aids in the hands of teachers.” Another letter assures that the three volumes provided “[...] a great pleasure: to see once again how much our didactic literature is progressing.” And, continuing, they write: “[...] in addition to the satisfaction I had, as a teacher, in reading your books, I was very proud, as principal of the Amaro Cavalcanti School, in taking on yet another triumph of one of the worthy and illustrious members of its faculty.” In another letter, the author clarifies that they delayed sending the thanks because “[...] only today did teachers and students finish the most satisfactory of experiences, applying them in class” (Espinheira, 1935b, p. 129 and 130).

As observed in these correspondences, in the evaluation of some teachers, and also by the number of editions of the collection, which was published until 1945 (according to the copies found), this didactic production probably had good editorial repercussions.

To evaluate the value of each booklet on the market at that time, we can observe on the covers and backs of these books, advertisements for other manuals and study books, and the purchase price of each edition.

THE PATH OF LIFE – Teacher Alda P. da Fonseca – Book from which the student benefits doubly, awakening their love of reading and instilling very useful knowledge for practical life..... 4\$000.  
CHILDHOOD POLITITY – Marx Yantok – Book that, while offering useful advice on good manners, is, at the same time, a very pleasant read due to the lightness of its style... 4\$000 (Espinheira, 1935a, back cover)<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Probably, the abbreviations mean: “friend, attentive and admiring.”

<sup>24</sup> T. N.: “O CAMINHO DA VIDA – Profa. Alda P. da Fonseca – Livro de que o aluno sai duplamente aproveitado, desperta-se-lhe o amor à leitura e incutem-se-lhe conhecimentos utilíssimos para a vida prática..... 4\$000./ POLIDEZ INFANTIL – Marx Yantok – Livro que, ministrando úteis conselhos de boas maneiras, é, ao mesmo passo, leitura agradabilíssima pela leveza do estilo.... 4\$000 (Espinheira, 1935a, capa de verso)”.

In the case of copies from Espinheira's collection, they cost 3\$000 to 5\$000, equivalent to the value of an average book today<sup>25</sup>.

## FINAL REMARKS

Throughout the text, the choice was to present the confrontation between the 1934 *Social Sciences Program* and the collection by Ariosto Espinheira, favoring understanding of a given historical context in which the didactic work materialized and made it possible to disseminate contents and propositions attributed to the teaching of Social Sciences, in everyday classrooms, in elementary schools in Rio de Janeiro, from the 1930s onwards. At the same time, our study highlighted how the collection favored the dissemination of Social Sciences as a school subject and training professionals to teach it at the beginning of schooling. It allowed us to relate what was taught at school with the debates of educators at the time: the influence of North American ideas in Brazil and the educational guidelines created by Brazilian intellectuals for national education.

From the point of view of values, the content analysis demonstrated what was expected from the formation of new generations: national feelings, the idea of progress and development of the country, integration and social harmony, good behavior, good education, and good health habits and hygiene. Furthermore, through its texts and images, children were expected to master the knowledge necessary to understand the elements of nature and life in society, the appreciation of work, and the integration between the city and the countryside. From this perspective, the pedagogical proposal aimed to change the course of training for new generations, adapting it to the project of modernity in society, which was urbanizing and industrializing.

The analysis of the collection also indicated the specificities of the editorial productions in terms of size, format, languages, and artisanal characteristics, as indicated by the illustrations in the small books in the collection, which were produced by the author himself and colored by the children who studied with them. Such editorial details and their use tell the story of the school book and one of its purposes: to carry values even in the small details of its composition.

There are many possibilities to learn about some situations in Brazilian education. In this text, the choice was to highlight the historical and documentary value of textbooks in their relationships and immersion in the educational system.

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<sup>25</sup> At the time, the currency was the "mil réis" and it was possible to buy five kilos of rice or two kilos of coffee with this amount (O Paiz, 1934).

They are inserted in contexts and long periods, intertwining curricula, school subjects, and educational, political, social, and economic projects of societies.

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**ANTONIA TERRA DE CALAZANS FERNANDES:**

Bachelor's and master's degrees in history from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo and doctorate in Social History from the University of São Paulo (1997). Professor in the History Department at PUC-SP and currently an Associate Professor in the History Department at FFLCH - USP. Works in the area of History Teaching, mainly in teacher training, textbooks, youth and adult education, memory, history curriculum and Law 11.645/08 mandatory studies of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history.

**E-mail:** antoniaterra@usp.br

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5586-7144>

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**RESPONSIBLE ASSOCIATE EDITORS:**

Amurabi Oliveira (UFSC)

E-mail: amurabi1986@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7856-1196>

Cristiano Bodart (UFAL)

E-mail: [cristianobodart@gmail.com](mailto:cristianobodart@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2195-2145>

Raquel Discini de Campos (UFU)

E-mail: [raqueldiscini@uol.com.br](mailto:raqueldiscini@uol.com.br)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8186-2144>

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