

SCHOOL SUBJECTS AS FIELDS IN (TRANS)FORMATION: the case of the introduction of Economic and Social Sciences in French secondary education (1965-1985)

As disciplinas escolares como campos em (trans)formação:
o caso da introdução das Ciências Econômicas e Sociais no ensino médio francês (1965-1985)

Las materias escolares como campos en (trans)formación: el caso de la introducción de las
Ciencias Económicas y Sociales en la educación secundaria francesa (1965-1985)

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Abstract: This article analyses the first two decades of existence of the subject Economic and Social Sciences (SES) in French secondary education (1965-1985). Based on an analysis of the archives of the French Ministry of National Education, complemented by interviews with social agents who played a notable role during this period, the aim is to highlight the formation of a “social field”, whose participants were involved in a “conflictual process” of defining the legitimacy of the teaching of Economic and Social Sciences. Three phases are highlighted during the period studied: the first consisted of getting neighbouring disciplines to accept the existence of this new teaching, the second involved the homogenisation of a teaching staff in a context of a shortage of specialists in the area and the third saw the autonomy of the initial project questioned by those in favour of standardising this teaching.

Keywords: secondary education; France; social sciences; conflicts; social field.

Resumo: Este artigo analisa as duas primeiras décadas de existência da disciplina Ciências Econômicas e Sociais (SES) no ensino médio francês (1965-1985). Com base em uma análise de arquivos do Ministério da Educação Nacional da França, complementada por entrevistas com agentes sociais que tiveram notável atuação nesse percurso, busca-se evidenciar a formação de um “campo social”, cujos participantes estavam envolvidos em um “trabalho conflituoso” de definição da legitimidade do ensino de Ciências Econômicas e Sociais. Três fases são destacadas durante o período estudado: a primeira consistiu em fazer com que as disciplinas vizinhas aceitassem a existência desse novo ensino, a segunda envolveu a homogeneização de um corpo docente em um contexto de escassez de especialistas na área e a terceira viu a autonomia do projeto inicial ser questionada pelos defensores da padronização desse ensino.

Palavras-chave: ensino médio; França; ciências sociais; conflitos; campo social.

Resumen: Este artículo analiza las dos primeras décadas de existencia de la asignatura Ciencias Económicas y Sociales en la enseñanza secundaria francesa (1965-1985). A partir de un análisis de los archivos del Ministerio de Educación Nacional francés, complementado con entrevistas a agentes sociales que desempeñaron un papel destacado durante este periodo, se pretende poner de relieve la formación de un “campo social”, cuyos participantes se vieron implicados en un “conflictivo proceso” de definición de la legitimidad de la enseñanza de las Ciencias Económicas y Sociales. Se destacan tres fases durante el periodo estudiado: la primera consistió en conseguir que las disciplinas vecinas aceptaran la existencia de esta nueva enseñanza, la segunda supuso la homogeneización de un profesorado en un contexto de escasez de especialistas en el área y la tercera vio cuestionada la autonomía del proyecto inicial por los partidarios de normalizar esta enseñanza.

Palabras clave: enseñanza secundaria; Francia; ciencias sociales; conflictos; campo social.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 19th century, while Émile Durkheim and his followers in France worked to bring Sociology to the university, Rui Barbosa and Benjamin Constant, in Brazil, developed their own plans to insert the discipline into THE Brazilian secondary education (Machado, 1987)^{1,2}. It was only almost half a century after the death of the author of the *Suicide* that Social Sciences entered the French secondary education system. At the beginning of the 1966 school year, a new course known as “Introduction to Economic and Social Facts” was tested in nearly 200 classes. The following year, it was implemented in all *lycées* (secondary schools) in the country and gave rise to one of the five specific sections of the *baccalauréat*^{3,4}.

Renamed as “Economic and Social Sciences” (SES, to use the French acronym), this subject is still offered without interruption. According to figures from the Ministry of National Education (MEN) from France, fewer than 74,000 students studied this subject in 1969 (17% of secondary school students), and in 1989 there were almost 624,000 (40%). This indicator suggests that, in just two decades, the subject has firmly established itself in French secondary education. However, a closer look at the syllabi and the place of SES in secondary school architecture reveals a more intricate picture of disputes. Since the beginning, the matter has been the subject of recurring debates and tensions, resulting in changes in both its content and structure, which reveal deep and lasting ambiguities. These ambiguities are basically linked to a series of questions that have never been fully resolved and that are common to all school subjects. Nevertheless, the specific characteristics of Social Sciences highlight the following: which students should learn Social Sciences? By which teachers? What content and methods should be used? And, above all, with what objectives?

From the beginning, it should be noted that its title shows an original association between Economics and Social Sciences, which are generally separate, compared to other countries that offer the subject in secondary education. However, the conjunction “and” also reveals a fundamental and lasting ambiguity about the status of Economics

1 The author would like to express his sincere thanks to Josefa Alexandrina Silva for her careful review and invaluable advice, as well as to the anonymous reviewers and those responsible for the dossier, whose comments helped to improve the first version of this text.

2 Although their projects have not been approved and forwarded, they begin to discuss the presence of Sociology at this level of education. The implementation of teaching only occurred in 1925, with the João Luis Alves and Rocha Vaz reform (Bodart & Cigales, 2015).

3 Created by Napoleon in 1808, the *baccalauréat* is a French diploma awarded by a national examination. It marks the completion of basic education and is also considered the first higher education diploma. This allows the holder to enroll at university without going through another selection process, unlike the more elitist *Grandes Ecoles* (French National Archives, 1971d).

4 From 1968 onwards, the first two were subdivided into five sections: A (literary), B (economic and social), C (mathematics), D (physical sciences and biology) and T (industrial sciences and techniques), to which students are sent in the last two years of high school.

in relation to the other Social Sciences: is it simply a matter of insisting on the fact that social facts also have an economic dimension, or is it a circumstance of pointing out that Economics is not in fact a Social Science like the others?

Be that as it may, the teaching of this subject was originally differentiated in the French secondary education system by its epistemological and methodological approach: for its creators, the idea was not to teach theory, but to use the students' experiences and the contexts in which they were inserted as a starting point for analysis, using rigorous tools drawn from the various Human and Social Sciences. To achieve this, the emphasis was on active methods that involved putting students to work, analyzing various documents, and building the course with them. The objective of this multidisciplinary course, which has no equivalent in the university, was to develop a rigorous critical mind rather than teaching some knowledge "already made".

However, although this teaching method incited some enthusiasm among students and their teachers, it was soon questioned within and outside the educational system. Although the specter of their disappearance eventually receded, SES were, however, gradually normalized in terms of form and content, with an alignment with the school form, understood as a "[...] form of transmission of knowledge and know-how which favors the written word, separating the 'student' from the adult life, and knowledge from practice" (Vincent, 2008, p. 49, translation)⁵.

Without indulging in a mechanistic view of this process as linear and inescapable, this article proposes a retrospective of the genesis of this teaching and its evolution, relating it to the mobilizations of the various social agents involved. In the same way that the institutionalization of Sociology in French universities was not the result of the efforts of a single individual, but of rivalries between Durkheim's networks and those of Gabriel Tarde and René Worms (Muchielli, 2001), we will defend the thesis that the development of SES teaching in French secondary schools is the result of a conflicting and continuous *collective work carried out by a series of social agents*, most of whom had a common objective embodied in the promotion of this way of teaching, but with different strategies and interests.

Therefore, this article aims to contribute to the history of school subjects (Chervel, 1990) and, more specifically, to the comparative history of the teaching of Social Sciences, both empirically and theoretically, in the perspective stated by Pierre Bourdieu, who considers school subjects as *social fields* as distinct universes of practice and meaning, "[...] within which agents face each other, with different means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to the conservation or transformation of its structure" (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 50). Nevertheless, for the most part, these are fields in formation, due to their high degree

5 " [...] la forma scolaire de transmission de savoirs et de savoir faire, privilégie l'écrit, entraîne la séparation de l'« écolier » par rapport à la vie adulte, ainsi que du savoir par rapport au faire ".

of heteronomy, which makes them particularly unstable⁶. These subject areas are part of a broader national educational field, which, in turn, is increasingly open to foreign influences in a context of globalization (Dale, 2010; Lange & Henaff, 2015). One of the merits of this approach is that it breaks with a top-down view of school policies, which is particularly tempting in an educational system as centralized as France's, and which tends to focus only on government actors. It also allows comparisons with other disciplines and other countries, particularly Brazil, where it opens a fruitful dialogue with other researchers who use Bourdieu's field theory to analyze sociology teaching in the country (Oliveira, 2023)⁷.

Although their projects have not been approved and forwarded, they are beginning to discuss the presence of Sociology at this level of education. The implementation of teaching only occurred in 1925, with the João Luis Alves and Rocha Vaz reform (Bodart & Cigales, 2015).

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the value of this approach during the first twenty years of the introduction of SES teaching in France. The analyzes that follow are based on the examination of various files related to SES teaching deposited by the Ministry of National Education in the National Archives of France in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine⁸, official texts of the time, speeches made by the Minister of National Education in the National Assembly at the time of the creation of this teaching, reported in the Official Gazette of the French Republic, and in interviews carried out with several important witnesses of this history, such as SES teachers, and in the General Inspectorate.

The text highlights three main phases in this “conflictual work of legitimation” during which the alliances and oppositions of the actors involved were reconfigured. In the first phase, the objective was to impose this new form of teaching in the face of established disciplines that felt invaded, and which involved not only the determination of the Minister of Education against his own government, but also the involvement of several academics interested in the project and in its originality. Secondly, the General Inspectorate's objective was to encourage the development of its discipline and the standardization of teaching staff in a context of a shortage of teachers with specific training and persistent competition with neighboring disciplines. Ultimately, once the discipline was better established, it was the issue of

6 Some authors prefer to speak of “social spaces” instead of fields, as Lilian Mathieu does in relation to social movements in France (Mathieu, 2007).

7 It should be noted that this theoretical convergence is as fortuitous as it is significant, insofar as this book was published after the first version of this article.

8 Mainly from the General Inspectorate of the SES with reference numbers 20040315/1 (French National Archives. (n.d.). and 2, 20060189/1 and 2,20110141/1 to 10) and from the “Bureau des Enseignements Généraux et Technologiques à la Direction des Lycées” (Office of General and Technological Education of the Directorate of Secondary Education) (19810107/3 and 4). In the remainder of this text, these reference numbers will be preceded by the letters ANF for “French National Archives” (or “National Archives of France”).

programs and teaching methods that became the main issue of struggle, with some actors, on the one hand, considering that SES teaching should be aligned with the academic disciplines in force at the university and, therefore, breaking with the founding project of the discipline, while others sought, on the contrary, to defend the latter and, with it, the autonomy of this teaching. However, they cannot interrupt a normalization process.

CREATION UNDER HIGH TENSION: INVADING THE TERRITORY OF OTHER SUBJECTS

As Stéphane Beaud and Thomas Piketty (2015, p. 6) correctly point out, “[...] contrary to tenacious prejudice, SES teaching did not originate in May 68”. This significant prejudice, which some detractors of the SES certainly harbor, should not obscure the fact that it was under a conservative government at the height of Gaullism that the idea of this new discipline was born. In a scenario of “democratization” of education, in which the age of compulsory schooling had been increased from 14 to 16 years old, in 1959, and the *collège*⁹ was being gradually unified, the Minister of National Education, Christian Fouchet, was in charge, in the autumn of 1964, of a major reform of secondary education, aiming, in his words, “[...] to adapt teaching to the changes imposed by evolution of society and the development of knowledge” (apud Chatel, 2015, p. 35). In contrast to the General de Gaulle, formerly President of the Republic, and his Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, a graduate of the “École Normale Supérieure” (ENS) with *agrégation*¹⁰ in French-Latin-Greek, and their respective advisors, who were eager to preserve the selectivity of the *baccalauréat*, and thus also of higher education, Fouchet advocated a certain degree of openness combined with early specialization, while at the same time severely restricted the freedom of students at universities (Viaud, 2015). In particular, he broke with the secondary school unit, which was to be subdivided into five sections, one of which was to be based on a new course in “Social and Economic Sciences”, which requires a solid knowledge of Mathematics and statistics. He justified this innovation in the National Assembly by

[...] the increasingly important role in our culture that the human sciences are playing. It is becoming progressively clear that between the classical and modern humanities, based on the study of languages and literature, on the one hand, and the exact sciences, on the other, there is an original field that is destined to develop considerably and that consists of the study of man and

9 The *collège* in France corresponds to Elementary School II in Brazil.

10 Public competition that qualifies for teaching at secondary and higher education levels.

human societies. The initiative to create this new section should place France among the most advanced countries in terms of adapting its school system to the evolution of modern civilization¹¹ (Debates, 1965, p. 1366).

Arguing that secondary school students “do not have the maturity” to study Social Sciences,¹² Philosophy inspectors and teachers vehemently opposed the project and launched a petition to “safeguard” their teaching, but despite prestigious support in academic ranks, including some sociologists, were unable to influence the minister's decision (Chatel, 2015)¹³. The Ministry's Curriculum Department consulted several researchers and organizations, such as the Society of History and Geography Teachers and the Autonomous Union of Teachers of the Faculty of Law and Economics. They drafted curriculum proposals that drew heavily on their respective disciplines – as if implicitly making this new teaching an extension of their own disciplines – but also issued recommendations for teacher selection (French National Archives, n.d.a.). In the absence of a board of teachers trained in Economic and Social Sciences, it was necessary to recruit teachers from other existing disciplines or attract people with appropriate qualifications.

Although the various proposals already provided a study program for the three years of the lyceum, initially it was a matter of quickly drawing up the study program for the first year, which would be tested at the beginning of the 1966 academic year. The working group in Fouchet's cabinet finally adopted the proposal presented by Charles Morazé (1913-2003), an economic historian who played a decisive role in the creation of the “École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales” (School of Higher Studies in Social Sciences, EHESS) in 1948 and was a former advisor to General de Gaulle when he was president of the Council in 1958. He was a friend of Fouchet, as well as close to Fernand Braudel and, like Braudel, an advocate at the Annales School, with an integrated vision of the various human and social sciences (Braudel, 1965).

11 TN: “[...] papel cada vez mais importante em nossa cultura que as ciências humanas estão desempenhando. Está ficando cada vez mais claro que entre as humanidades clássicas e modernas, baseadas no estudo de línguas e literatura, por um lado, e as ciências exatas, por outro, há um campo original que está destinado a se desenvolver consideravelmente e que consiste no estudo do homem e das sociedades humanas. A iniciativa de criar essa nova seção deve colocar a França entre os países mais avançados em termos de adaptação de seu sistema escolar à evolução da civilização moderna” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

12 In France, each school subject is organized by an Inspectorate General (IG) made up of a few members who have authority over the regional pedagogical inspectors (IPR) responsible for an *académie* (educational region) or more. They are responsible for supervising and commanding teachers from a pedagogical point of view. Inspectors may be assisted by temporary advisors (*chargés de mission*) appointed for a limited period. All these positions are open to public competition or appointment.

13 Élisabeth Chatel also reports that the General Secretary of the “Syndicat National des Enseignements Techniques” (Sindicato nacional dos ensinos técnicos, SNET) defended the SES project against that of a “psychosocial” section supported by the philosophy inspectorate.

Morazé himself mentioned the name of another close friend of the Annales, the geographer Marcel Roncayolo (1926-2018), who was accepted more easily because he was a fellow classmate of the advisor to the minister responsible for the reform, Jean Knapp, at the “École Normale Supérieure” (ENS). Having just been elected to EHESS, Roncayolo describes his years at ENS as follows:

I was immersed in a multidisciplinary bath out of necessity, because at the *École normale [supérieure]*, representatives of all disciplines mingle in a classroom and exchange ideas willingly. We formed a small group and we used to say: “If there was an *agrégation* in Social Sciences at higher education level¹⁴, it would be great!”¹⁵ (Roncayolo, 2013).

Due to this training, he says that “[...] he always felt the need not to divide the different Social Sciences. It is true that they have different methods, but what is interesting is the convergence and articulation between all these points of view on the same data”¹⁶ (Roncayolo, 2013). Roncayolo was asked to create a committee to draw up the study programs for the three years of the future Section B¹⁷, while Charles Morazé’s modified the study program, which consisted of four main themes (the family, the company, the main sectors of activity and the main human activities), and it was tested in almost 200 first-year high school classes. The launch of the program was somewhat hasty, with the Ministry writing directly to school principals, rather than the usual practice of going through rectors¹⁸: firstly, the director of the secondary school teaching staff asked them to recruit teachers to take charge of these experimental classes, recommending that they turn to teachers of Economic Sciences and Techniques (STE, in the French acronym), or, “if applicable”, to other subjects, such as history-geography, or, “failing that” and “exceptionally” also, to qualified external assistants or contract workers recruited expressly (French National Archives, 1966a). Then, a month before the start of the new school year, Fouchet’s own private

14 In France, there are two different competitive exams known as “agrégation”: one for secondary education, which is more valued, both financially and symbolically, than the other, known as the *Certificat d’Aptitude au Professorat de l’Enseignement du Second degré* (Certificate of aptitude to teach in secondary education, CAPES), and the other for higher education, which leads directly to a professorship, but does not exist for all subjects (such as Social Sciences).

15 TN: “Eu estava imerso em um banho multidisciplinar por necessidade, porque na *École normale [supérieure]*, representantes de todas as disciplinas se misturam em uma sala de aula e trocam ideias de bom grado. Formamos um pequeno grupo e costumávamos dizer: “Se houvesse uma *agrégation* em Ciências Sociais em nível de ensino superior, seria ótimo!” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese)

16 TN: “[...] sempre sentiu a necessidade de não dividir as diferentes Ciências Sociais. É certo que elas têm métodos diferentes, mas o interessante é a convergência e a articulação entre todos esses pontos de vista sobre os mesmos dados” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

17 One of five new grades introduced as part of the lycée reform, with SES at its center (see footnote 4).

18 Administrative management of an *académie*.

secretary sent documents to allow the teachers to prepare their classes (French National Archives, 1966b) ¹⁹.

However, the experiment was considered conclusive enough for the course to be implemented nationwide. At the same time, the work of Roncayolo's commission, which included representatives from different disciplines (Economics, Law, Sociology) but also from ministries (notably future Prime Minister Michel Rocard for the Ministry of Economy), also proved tense: "I witnessed discussions between two people who were very good friends [...] about the relative importance of Sociology and Economics"²⁰ (Roncayolo, 2013). For the geographer, these tensions can also be explained by the fact that economists had just gained their independence from the law faculties at the University²¹ and feared being subordinated to it once again. He managed, however, to make appointments, adding people close to the *Annales*, including the historian and *normalien*²² Guy Palmade (1927-1993), but also tried to bring in external supporters with a certain authority, such as Raymond Aron and Raymond Barre.

As Roncayolo still tells it, he was in favor of the experiment and the future prime minister, then considered the best economist in France, "[...] made sure that the economists at the Faculty of Law in Paris, who could constitute an extremely powerful pressure group, don't play against the discipline, don't take to the streets to prohibit us from doing this! In the end, the working group agreed on the main objective, which is to provide students with rigorous tools for reflection that will allow them to play the role of enlightened citizens."²³ As Roncayolo explains: "The formula that came up many times in the committee was: we must make them able to read *Le Monde*²⁴ [...]. But not as a professional. In other words, we didn't want to train people to do Economics, but to understand the world they lived in"²⁵.

Through a game of relational balance, Roncayolo managed to maintain the line of teaching "through" Social Sciences, and not "from" Social Sciences, which came to

19 In France, the school year traditionally runs from the beginning of September until the end of June/beginning of July.

20 TN: "Testemunhei discussões entre duas pessoas que eram muito amigas [...] sobre a importância relativa da Sociologia e da Economia" (freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

21 In French universities, economics was initially taught in law faculties before gradually gaining autonomy.

22 Former ENS student.

23 TN: "[...] certificou-se de que os economistas da Faculdade de Direito de Paris, que poderiam constituir um grupo de pressão extremamente poderoso, não jogassem contra a disciplina, não saíssem às ruas para nos proibir de fazer isso! No final, o grupo de trabalho concordou com o objetivo principal, que é fornecer aos alunos ferramentas rigorosas de reflexão que lhes permitirão desempenhar o papel de cidadãos esclarecidos" (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

24 France's main national newspaper, back then and now.

25 TN: "A fórmula que surgiu muitas vezes no comitê foi: temos que torná-los capazes de ler o *Le Monde* [...]. Mas não como profissional. Em outras palavras, não queríamos treinar as pessoas para fazer Economia, mas para entender o mundo em que viviam". (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

be called “Introduction to Economic and Social Facts”. The preamble to the 1967 curricula stated that the objective of this teaching was “to raise awareness of our current societies and their mechanisms”, using tools corresponding to “various levels of research and higher education, with their own questions, concepts and methods”, but which must be based on observations made by students under the guidance of teachers, who select the documents and supervise their analysis. Warning against an excessive use of theory, the text contains a warning reminiscent of that of philosophers: “[...] teaching models or explanation schemes too early can harden the minds of young people and make them incapable of carrying out serious studies in Science Economic and Social at a later stage”²⁶ (Circulaire n° IV 67-416, 1967).

In short, the creation of a new teaching discipline is always a sensitive undertaking, as it questions existing disciplinary terrain. However, from the point of view of existing subjects, these innovations represent both a threat of invasion and an opportunity to expand the sphere of intervention of their teachers. In the case of SES, these difficulties are aggravated by the originality of the object-based approach and by the induction that aims to break with existing divisions in the academic world. However, despite refusing to be controlled by them, it was necessary for the creators of the SES to trust certain academics to legitimize themselves and defend from attacks from the academic world. To understand the reasons for the “victory” of his initial project, however, it is important not to limit to the level of the subjects by seeing them as homogeneous blocks, but to go down to the level of social agents, bearers of diverse dispositions. For example, not all economists, not all philosophers are opposed to the creation of the SES, as illustrated by the case of the members of the Roncayolo commission or the minister's advisor Jean Knapp, a philosopher by training. These divisions within the constituted boards are also found among SES teachers, who have been a heterogeneous team from the beginning.

BUILDING A HETEROGENEOUS FACULTY IN RESOURCE SCARCITY

Together with this curricular work, which resulted in programs as broad as they were not very detailed, which proposed the study of the main economic and social systems as well as their transformations, while at the same time gave teachers considerable pedagogical freedom to do so with four hours a week in each class level, another crucial task was the recruitment and training of teachers. To this end, Roncayolo and Palmade organized training courses that lasted several days at the “Center international d'études pédagogiques” (International Center for Educational Studies) in Sèvres, on the outskirts of Paris, mainly for teachers of Economic Sciences

26 TN: “[...] ensinar modelos ou esquemas de explicação muito cedo pode endurecer as mentes dos jovens e torná-los incapazes de realizar estudos sérios em Ciências Econômicas e Sociais em um estágio posterior” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

and Techniques and History-Geography, voluntary or not, at the suggestion of their respective supervisors. On the one hand, the organizers invited several speakers, a little younger and less advanced in their careers than the “notables” from the committee, in Roncayolo's words, and many of them from the ENS, like Pierre Bourdieu or Jean-Claude Chamboredon, who came to teach “[...] people who, in principle, knew nothing about Sociology”²⁷ (Roncayolo, 2013). Furthermore, an increasing proportion of these courses were devoted to workshops in which teachers worked in small groups in different rooms on teaching approaches to different topics. In the words of Henri Lanta (2012) “[it] was the organization of the classroom at the teacher level!”²⁸ – that is, the reproduction of the SES course model imagined by the founders.

These multi-annual meetings in Sèvres, which all new recruits systematically attended, but in which volunteers could also participate, continued throughout the 1970s and, according to a future dean of the General Inspectorate,

[...] they were greatly appreciated by young colleagues because they allowed them to pool their experiences and disseminate innovations. The directors of the subject expected from these national training courses a certain homogenization of the board of teachers recruited through competition, thus hoping, through informal dissemination in the daily life of high schools, to influence other categories of teachers in the same direction²⁹ (French National Archives, n.d.b).

While some, attracted by the novelty and diversification of their work, came by their own free will, others were called by the inspectorate and showed some reluctance, as reported by this *agrégé professor* of Economics and Management Techniques ³⁰called up for the first training courses:

27 TN: “[...] pessoas que, em princípio, não sabiam nada sobre Sociologia” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

28 TN: “[e]ra a organização da sala de aula ao nível dos professores!” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

29 TN: “[...] eram muito apreciados pelos jovens colegas porque permitiam que eles reunissem suas experiências e disseminassem inovações. Os diretores da disciplina esperavam desses cursos nacionais de treinamento uma certa homogeneização do corpo de professores recrutados por concurso, esperando assim, por meio da disseminação informal na vida cotidiana dos liceus, influenciar na mesma direção outras categorias de professores (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

30 *Agrégation* corresponds to the teaching of Economic Sciences and Techniques.

We were in a corner of the main hall in Sèvres and Roncayolo was preparing to speak: for us, he was the enemy! In other words, the guy who would steal the Economy from us³¹ (Lanta, 2012).

Claiming to have a passion for Economics but little interest in administration, he quickly converted to the SES, to the point where he was recruited in 1970 as a temporary advisor to the Inspector General by Guy Palmade, who had been appointed as the first General Inspector for the subject in April 1968³². Henri Lanta, who, like Pierre Bourdieu, grew up in Béarn and attended the same high school in Pau, but was from a much more bourgeois background, describes the reading of the *Heirs* that he did “by chance” as a true revelation – a “second birth” – which made him realize the weight of social and cultural inequalities. His discovery of SES was his “third birth”, as he realized the ineptitude of the theoretical course. He then began to put this into practice during his classroom inspections:

I remember that the course I gave them [in STE, in high school], on money, the model was Raymond Barre's book. It began like this: “definition: so, money is an indeterminate purchasing power in terms of goods and time”. My students wrote everything down. [...] Then, in the written test, they had to repeat it. Of course they didn't understand a word [...]. And I would tell the SES teachers, “This is the opposite of what you should be doing!” Then, after a while, they said: “Lanta is coming, so let's start with the tutorials!” The tutorials are not the application of the course, it is the course that is the result and product of the tutorials³³ (Lanta, 2012).

This excerpt reminds us that the role of inspectors is not limited to checking the conformity of teachers' work, but also to advising them and, in this case, socializing them into a certain professional role, even if, in this case, the testimony suggests that SES's active and inductive pedagogy was not necessarily evident to everyone. This is confirmed by a report on inspections written by Guy Palmade, who,

31 TN: Estávamos em um canto do salão principal em Sèvres e Roncayolo estava se preparando para falar: para nós, ele era o inimigo! Em outras palavras, o cara que vai roubar a Economia de nós (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

32 Marcel Roncayolo turned down the position to remain at EHESS and pursue his research career. Palmade was Dean of the General Inspectorate of SES until his retirement in 1992.

33 TN: Lembro-me de que o curso que dei a eles [em STE, no liceu], sobre dinheiro, o modelo era o livro de Raymond Barre. Começava assim: “definição: então o dinheiro é um poder de compra indeterminado em termos de bens e tempo”. Meus alunos anotaram tudo. [...] Depois, na prova escrita, eles tinham de repetir. É claro que eles não entendiam uma palavra [...]. E eu dizia aos professores da SES: “Isso é o oposto do que vocês deveriam estar fazendo!” Então, depois de um tempo, diziam: “Lanta está chegando, então vamos começar com os tutoriais!”. Os tutoriais não são a aplicação do curso, é o curso que é o resultado e o produto dos tutoriais (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

although he emphasizes that “the teacher-pupil relationship [appeared to him] to have been seriously modified in all cases”, acknowledges that:

Despite this new general attitude, I don't think practical work is used enough. Among teachers with the most advanced economic training, practical work is too often an “application or illustration” of teaching rather than the *initial exercise* through which students learn concepts and methods. The method is still, very often, deductive³⁴ (French National Archives, 1967, p. 2, emphasis added)³⁵.

This inversion of the course order is promoted in the name of the fight against educational inequalities³⁶. Henri Lanta tells how he used to comment on the classes of the teachers he inspected:

Sir/Madam, I was listening to you: in the class I just attended, you spoke for 57 minutes. This is not good at all! And if you can watch the students I was watching from the back of the room, it's clear that after seven or eight minutes of speech, some of the students – not the best – stop listening! They can't take it anymore!³⁷

In the post-May 1968 context, it was also a question of containing teachers who were mistaking their classes for a political platform, while also protecting them from their principals:

[After the inspection], some principals told me: “This teacher, Mr. General Inspector, is teaching a course on Marxism-Leninism!” I replied: “Principal, in this aspect, it is up to me to judge. And I think what he's doing is perfectly appropriate.” But later, I would say to my

34 TN: Apesar dessa nova atitude geral, não acho que o trabalho prático seja usado suficientemente. Entre os professores com o treinamento econômico mais avançado, o trabalho prático é, com muita frequência, uma “aplicação ou ilustração” do ensino, em vez de ser o exercício inicial com o qual os alunos aprendem os conceitos e métodos. O método ainda é, com muita frequência, dedutivo (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

35 “Report on the Inspection of the Teaching of Economic and Social Facts (Spring 1967).”

36 It should be noted, however, that the role of active teaching in reducing inequalities at schools is still the subject of much debate, especially in the SES (Deauvieau, 2009).

37 TN: Senhor/Senhora, eu estava ouvindo vocês: na hora de aula que acabei de assistir, vocês falaram por 57 minutos. Isso não é nada bom! E se puder observar os alunos que eu estava assistindo do fundo da sala, fica claro que depois de sete ou oito minutos de seu discurso, alguns dos alunos – não os melhores – param de ouvir! Eles não aguentam mais! (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

colleague: “Listen, the Marxism-Leninism classes are over”³⁸ (Lanta, 2012).

Marcel Roncayolo also tells how, after Fouchet's dismissal in April 1967, some university economists again accused the SES, but he managed to find new support, especially from Fouchet's replacement, Alain Peyrefitte, who was also *normalien*: “For them, I represented a kind of security between the Marxists and the others. In other words, this ensured that the operation would not be taken over by hard line Marxists.”³⁹

This socialization work through Sèvres courses and inspections was made even more effective due to the relatively small size of the group of SES teachers. After the creation of an Inspectorate in 1968 – of which Palmade was for a long time the only General Inspector, having simply obtained two positions as temporary advisors entrusted to Henri Lanta and Pierre Callet, an *agrégé* in history –, the matter continued to be institutionalized with the creation of an SES CAPES⁴⁰ at the end of 1969. Again, this was achieved after much lobbying by Palmade – at the same time the first SES exams were being organized for the *baccalauréat*.

Only a few dozen teachers were initially recruited in this way each year (34 in 1969, 53 in 1970), an insufficient number, even when reinforced by teachers from other boards and non-permanent employees to implement teaching in all secondary schools. Furthermore, principals were often reluctant to create a B (economic and social) section in their establishments, forcing the inspectorate to intervene with the Ministry and relevant rectors⁴¹. In the absence of a sufficient number of permanent teachers, the Ministry of Education recruited assistant teachers, whose status were precarious but whose profiles were varied, as the only requirement was a degree in Economics or another social science, as there was a “[. ..] express desire to recruit personnel with a variety of university backgrounds⁴² [...]”, according to the note mentioned above (French National Archives, n.d.b, p. 5). Of the approximately 1,500

38 TN: [Após a inspeção], alguns diretores me diziam: “Este professor, Sr. Inspetor Geral, está dando um curso de marxismo-leninismo!” Eu respondia: “Diretor, nesse aspecto, cabe a mim julgar. E acho que o que ele está fazendo é perfeitamente apropriado”. Mas depois, eu diria ao meu colega: “Escute, as aulas de marxismo-leninismo acabaram” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

39 TN: Para eles, eu representava uma espécie de segurança entre os marxistas e os outros. Em outras palavras, isso garantiu que a operação não fosse assumida por marxistas da linha dura”. (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

40 French acronym for “Certificate of eligibility to teach in the secondary education”. This is the name of the main public competition for hiring public servant teachers in elementary and secondary education, organized for each subject (see footnote 13). Having your own CAPES is, therefore, an indicator of institutionalization for a school subject.

41 In France, rectors are the administrative directors of an *académie* (school region), and not the directors of a university as in Brazil.

42 TN: “[...] desejo expresso de recrutar pessoal com uma variedade de formações universitárias [...]” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

teachers registered teaching SES classes at the time, the same inspector estimated that around 60% would be teachers of history-geography and a third of STE (French National Archives, n.d.b). However, the General Inspectorate not only struggled unsuccessfully to increase the number of teachers who were studying at CAPES, but also to obtain more inspector positions, as Guy Palmade's correspondence shows (French National Archives n.d.c), but also saw potential recruits diverted by STE or history-geography:

I'm still in the rectory and that's what we thought: as soon as a candidate for an assistant professor position introduced himself and talked about Economics or economic initiation, he was referred to the Principal Inspector of Technical Education, and a minority were referred to history and geography. This situation cannot continue⁴³ (French National Archives, 1970a).

The aim is not only to increase the number of recruits, but also to improve their quality. In addition to the Sèvres courses, which served the dual purpose of scientific and pedagogical training and socialization of the board, the General Inspectorate created a document support system, which initially took the form of a “Centre de recherche pédagogique pour l'initiation économique et sociale” (Center for Pedagogical Research for Economic and Social Initiation) created in 1968 by Marcel Roncayolo – but which initially had no budget or adequate facilities (French National Archives, 1969)⁴⁴. A journal for teachers called *Documents pour l'enseignement économique et social* (Documents for economic and social teaching) was also launched, which, as its name suggests, offered a series of resources to help teachers build their classes, but also to encourage them to adopt the desired teaching practices, as one of the teachers at the time says:

It was there that we received the first educational packages that had been tested in classes by friends. We photocopied them and distributed them. And we often used them more than school textbooks. Especially since the first textbooks were mainly classic teacher's manuals. [...] We wanted to encourage students to use different registers of discourse, from an excerpt from a book by Raymond Barre to a comic strip and a table from INED [*Institut national des études démographiques*]. [...] We tried to get students to

43 TN: Ainda estou na reitoria e era isso que pensávamos: assim que um candidato a um cargo de professor auxiliar se apresentava e falava sobre Economia ou iniciação econômica, ele era encaminhado ao Inspetor Principal de Educação Técnica, e uma minoria, era encaminhada para história e geografia. Essa situação não pode continuar (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

44 “Preliminary note to Minister Guichard’s hearing”.

analyze the status of documents, to make them think, and we put into practice a whole pedagogical approach⁴⁵ (Jammes, 2011).

The scarcity of human and material resources meant that the small General Inspectorate had to multiply its tasks – inspecting teachers, training them, recruiting pedagogical advisors among the teachers responsible for supporting new colleagues, organizing competition juries, multiplying requests to the Ministry of Education, but also more prosaic tasks, such as responding to requests for information about CAPES from SES from students and assistant teachers (French National Archives, 1968) or transporting documents in their own cars (M. Roncayolo, 2013). This shortage was temporarily filled when Guy Palmade was appointed advisor in Olivier Guichard's cabinet when he became Minister of Education in the summer of 1969: “We had everything we wanted! But that only lasted two years[...]⁴⁶, recalls Henri Lanta, adding: “From that moment on, you wouldn't know the change in attitude towards SES from one day to the next! Mainly by our eminent colleagues from the General Inspectorate of History⁴⁷. But, in addition to the fact that Palmade had to agree to cooperate with one of the “barons of Gaullism”, although he himself was center-left, this legitimization of the SES also came at the price of an intensification of his work, as he continued to lead the general inspection of the discipline. According to his advisor Lanta, it was not uncommon for him to extend his daily working hours to create conditions for teacher qualifications.

Finally, the Inspectorate used two other channels to legitimize discipline and strengthen the esprit de corps internally. In 1970, she created the “Association des professeurs de sciences économiques et sociales” (Association of Teachers of Economic and Social Sciences, APSES), a so-called association of specialists, like those that exist in other school subjects, which could act as an intermediary with teachers in the field. In January 1971, when Huguette Bergeron was elected president of the association, Callet wrote to Palmade saying that it was a:

45 TN: Foi lá que recebemos os primeiros pacotes educativos que haviam sido testados em aulas por amigos. Nós os fotocopiávamos e os distribuíamos. E muitas vezes os usávamos mais do que os livros didáticos da escola. Especialmente porque os primeiros livros didáticos eram principalmente clássicos manuais do professor. [...] Queríamos incentivar os alunos a usar diferentes registros de discurso, desde um trecho de um livro de Raymond Barre até uma história em quadrinhos e uma tabela do INED [Institut national des études démographiques]. [...] Tentamos fazer com que os alunos analisassem o status dos documentos, para fazê-los pensar, e colocamos em prática toda uma abordagem pedagógica (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

46 TN: “Tínhamos tudo o que queríamos! Mas isso durou apenas dois anos[...]

 (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

47 TN: “Daquele momento em diante, você não saberia a mudança de atitude em relação às SES de um dia para o outro! Principalmente por parte de nossos eminentes colegas da Inspetoria Geral de História”. (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

[...] a good thing [that] will no doubt make it easier for her to become an IPR [Regional Pedagogical Inspector] later. Then, there will be the problem of replacing her, as we need to make sure we don't see crazy young men taking over the Association. I will maintain "discreet" and constant surveillance!⁴⁸ (French National Archives, 1971a, emphasis added).

In fact, the following year, when this *agrégée* of history became the first female IPR⁴⁹ of SES and therefore had to step down as president of the association, Callet expressed concern about her replacement, but also about the possible financial problems that put the existence of the association at risk:

It is not our responsibility, but we cannot ignore it. Ms. Bergeron's departure posed a problem, and four regional presidents have already spoken to me about it. They told me that Lanta was planning to bring them together during the Sèvres course in April [...]. The financial difficulties of the Paris Association are not the same as those of the regional ones, and will we have to accept a regionalization in which each one will have its own autonomy? [...] Once again, these questions do not concern us directly, but we are obliged to follow them⁵⁰ (French National Archives, 1972).

The other lever of legitimation was internationalization. As early as July 1968, Guy Palmade was corresponding with a lecturer (adjunct professor) at the University of Manchester, who gave him information about the organization of Economics teaching in British secondary education and sent him, in 1973, a report from the "Royal Economic Society" on the subject (French National Archives, 1973). This was translated into the "Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique" (National Institute of Pedagogical Research) chaired by Palmade, who also held the role of dean of the IG of SES, after leaving Guichard's office. Still from the perspective of internationalization, in 1970, the French ambassador in Madagascar wrote to Pierre

48 TN: [...] uma coisa boa [que] sem dúvida tornará mais fácil para ela se tornar uma IPR [Inspetora pedagógica regional] em uma data posterior. Depois, haverá o problema de substituí-la, pois precisamos ter certeza de que não veremos jovens malucos assumindo o controle da Associação. Mantereí uma vigilância "discreta" e constante! (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

49 She was appointed temporary assistant at the General Inspectorate in 1978, became chief of staff to Michèle André, Secretary of State for Women's Rights in 1988-1989, and ended her career at the SES General Inspectorate in 1990 (Bergeron et al., 2002).

50 TN: Não é nossa responsabilidade, mas não podemos ignorá-la. A saída da Sra. Bergeron representou um problema, e quatro presidentes regionais já me falaram sobre isso. Eles me disseram que Lanta estava planejando reuni-los durante o curso de Sèvres em abril [...]. As dificuldades financeiras da Associação de Paris não são as mesmas das regionais, e será que teremos de aceitar uma regionalização em que cada uma terá sua própria autonomia? [...] Mais uma vez, essas questões não nos dizem respeito diretamente, mas somos obrigados a acompanhá-las (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

Callet to inform him about the progress of a project to introduce economic and social studies in that country, and the person in charge of the mission informed Palmade, adding this comment by hand:

Mr. Foccart⁵¹ seemed to be interested in our subject in Francophone Africa and our friends in the friendly republics seem to take the matter very seriously. So much better!⁵² (French National Archives, 1970b).

Finally, Callet managed to be appointed French representative in a working group on Economics created by the Council of Europe in 1970 instead of a professor of economic sciences and techniques, even though they are numerically more important. In this group, he defended an integrated conception of the SES, despite having faced opposition:

The French delegate argued that the objective of the subject was to give high school students a general understanding based on Political Economy and not on Business Economics. In his opinion, “which was not shared by all members of the group”, it did not seem appropriate to teach subjects such as organization, marketing, and management accounting at this level⁵³ (French National Archives, 1970c, emphasis added).

The first years of implementation of SES were essentially based on a few individuals driven by the desire to promote a specific approach to SES. However, they faced different types of resistance: within the administration of the French Ministry of Education, to obtain an inextricably symbolic recognition and material, characterized by incessant requests for positions and which required a certain number of organizational adjustments, but also from the teachers themselves. In this regard, there are two contradictions in the inspectors' work: the first is that they are simultaneously seeking to cultivate the diversity of this board in terms of initial training, while working

51 The businessman Jacques Foccart (1913-1997) was responsible for the Élysée Africa cell throughout De Gaulle's presidency and played a crucial role in maintaining France's strong political and economic “influence” on the continent after independence (Bat, 2010).

52 TN: O Sr. Foccart parecia estar interessado em nossa disciplina na África francófona e nossos amigos nas repúblicas amigas parecem levar o assunto muito a sério. Tanto melhor! (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

53 TN: O delegado francês defendeu que o objetivo da disciplina era dar aos alunos do ensino médio uma compreensão geral baseada na Economia política e não na Economia empresarial. Em sua opinião, “que não era compartilhada por todos os membros do grupo, não lhe parecia apropriado ensinar nesse nível assuntos como organização, marketing e contabilidade gerencial (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

intensely to homogenize it. The second is the promotion of teachers' pedagogical freedom, which is reflected in the fact that the curricula are not very detailed, while at the same time taking resolute measures to impose a certain type of approach. These contradictions may explain, in part, the proliferation of conflicts from the mid-1970s onwards, which led to an initial “normalization” of the subject.

INCREASED INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONFLICTS AND NORMALIZATION OF SUBJECTS

By the early 1970s, SES teaching appeared to be well established in French secondary education, to the point that the Ministry of Education was even considering starting economic and social studies in the last two years of primary school (French National Archives, 1971b). However, it was also at this point that external tensions resurfaced. Firstly, those responsible for Economics and administration were trying to absorb the new material.

The director of the “École normale supérieure d'enseignement technique”⁵⁴ (ENSET) wrote to Palmade asking for the creation of a single board of Economics teachers, arguing that this would bring “flexibility” to the management of teachers, and, above all, that “[...] it would improve the teaching of applied economics and administration, taking it out of the isolation in which it is kept by the usual reluctance of the French towards the 'technical' [...]”, and also “[...] would prevent economic and social initiation from being separated from the realities and needs of professional life”⁵⁵ (French National Archives, 1970d). This symptomatic criticism illustrates a more general desire to redirect SES goals toward vocational training rather than citizenship, a recurring theme in the years that followed. It was also in this sense that two private agencies close to the “Conseil national du patronat français” (National Council of French Employers, CNPF)⁵⁶ took advantage of the Inspectorate's lack of resources to propose the organization of in-service training courses for teachers in the regions. Callet comments on this fact in the following terms:

There is no doubt that the two organizations that offer us their services are closely linked to the CNPF. This is not serious, but these organizations should not claim to play an exclusive and decisive role in the training of our young teachers: I am aware that our

54 The ENS of technical education.

55 TN: “[...] melhoraria o ensino da Economia aplicada e da administração, tirando-o do isolamento em que é mantido pela relutância usual dos franceses em relação ao ‘técnico’ [...]”, and also “[...] impediria que a iniciação econômica e social fosse separada das realidades e necessidades da vida profissional” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

56 France's main employers' association now renamed MEDEF.

modest means do not always allow us to organize as many courses as we would like, but this private initiative also entails certain dangers⁵⁷ (French National Archives, 1971c).

Another recurring criticism of SES is that they do not offer sufficient preparation for higher education. This is illustrated by the correspondence between the rector of the Besançon academy, which began in the early 1970s. About the results, they were considered as “disappointing” for the first bachelor’s in economics. This opinion was supported in the following year, by a report drawn up by professors from the department of economy from the local university (French National Archives, 1971d).

In 1975, a commission was created chaired by the economist Jean Fourastié (1907-1990), best known for his writings relating economic growth and social transformations (Boulat, 2006), and formed by academics and members of the “Conseil Économique et Social” (Economic and Social Council)⁵⁸. This commission held many hearings and presented a report the following year. The conclusions were quite favorable to SES and even recommended the expansion of multidisciplinary (Chatel & Grosse, 2015). At the same time, however, the report's authors lamented the lack of economic culture among students and argued that this should be remedied by history-geography (David, 2017).

SES teachers were particularly affected by this last criticism, which some of them interpreted as a vital threat: “it was a question of liquidating SES”⁵⁹, said one of them, Robert Jammes (2011). It was during the Sèvres courses that a small group of teachers met to convince their colleagues to mobilize against the perceived danger and to devise a strategy to change the stance of the teachers' unions, which “[...] thought we were something which had been introduced to destroy history-geography”⁶⁰ (Jammes, 2011). Initially APSES was seen as an “[...] internal association, like internal unions, that didn’t make noise, that didn’t ask for anything, that was decorative [...]”⁶¹. They ended up deciding to take control of it:

57 TN: Não há dúvida de que as duas organizações que nos oferecem seus serviços estão intimamente ligadas ao CNPF. Isso não é grave, mas essas organizações não devem ter a pretensão de desempenhar um papel exclusivo e decisivo na formação de nossos jovens professores: estou ciente de que nossos modestos meios nem sempre nos permitem organizar tantos cursos quanto gostaríamos, mas essa iniciativa privada também acarreta certos perigos (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

58 This institution was created in 1925 to represent “civil society”, but whose reports and opinions were only of advisory nature (Zarka, 2018).

59 TN: “era uma questão de liquidar o SES” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

60 TN: “[...] achavam que éramos algo que havia sido introduzido para destruir a história-geografia” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

61 TN: “[...] associação interna, como os sindicatos internos, que não fazia barulho, que não pedia nada, que era decorativa [...]” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

We started challenging them as part of the Sèvres courses, and we have already said that it was not easy to get the support of the unions, that they would not help a small group. We were not the group of history-geography or STE teachers, who were very present in the union structure. [...] Fortunately, we knew some of them and tried to convince them that the fight we were fighting was interesting and that the unions should be interested [...]. And then we thought: this association finally exists, why work against us? [...] So we said: it's better to take it on, let's turn it into an instrument... and then we can talk about it with the associations [of other subjects]⁶² (Jammes, 2011).

This form of entryism, the preferred *modus operandi* of the Trotskyists, who flourished in the post-68 years (Johsua, 2015), worked very well, and the insurgents were elected to the APSES national bureau at its next general assembly with the presidency falling to Robert James. From then on, APSES became a central mobilization structure for the profession, despite being marked by internal dissension, especially tactical:

We were not far from 68, when leftists of all stripes flourished: Trotskyists, Maoists, etc. And depending on the color of the regional leader⁶³, he thought we weren't doing enough, that we were too nice, too bureaucratic, or the opposite. It wasn't unconditional support like in any organization. But in the end, every time we acted, everyone rallied behind us. It depended on the people. There were people on the sidelines saying, "we don't agree". And that had a certain impact, even though there weren't many of us⁶⁴ (Jammes, 2011).

62 TN: Começamos a desafiá-los como parte dos cursos de Sèvres, e já dissemos que não foi fácil conseguir o apoio dos sindicatos, que não iriam ajudar um grupo pequeno. Não éramos o grupo dos professores de história-geografia ou de STE, que estavam muito presentes na estrutura sindical. [...] Felizmente, conhecíamos alguns deles e tentamos convencê-los de que a luta que estávamos travando era interessante e que os sindicatos deveriam se interessar [...]. E então pensamos: essa associação finalmente existe, por que ela poderia trabalhar contra nós? [...]. Então dissemos: é melhor assumi-la, vamos transformá-la em um instrumento... e então poderemos falar sobre ela com as associações [das outras disciplinas] (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

63 The national association is organized as a federation of regional organizations, each with its own governing board.

64 TN: Não estávamos longe de 68, quando os esquerdistas de todos os matizes floresceram: trotskistas, maoistas etc. E dependendo da cor do dirigente regional, ele achava que não estávamos fazendo o suficiente, que éramos muito bonzinhos, muito burocráticos, ou o contrário. Não era um apoio incondicional como em qualquer organização. Mas no final toda vez que tomamos uma atitude, todos se uniram conosco. Dependeu das pessoas. Havia pessoas à margem dizendo "não concordamos". E isso teve um certo impacto, mesmo que não fôssemos muitos (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

Simultaneously, the subject continued to be institutionalized with the creation in 1977 of an *agrégation*, significantly called “Social Sciences”, although Economics played an important role in the competitive exam. However, teachers were divided over this new competitive exam, as some saw it as a means of collective and individual recognition⁶⁵, others felt that it established a hierarchy among members of the new faculty, and thus undermined efforts to unify the group⁶⁶. From the Inspectorate's point of view, this certification was also an opportunity to attract students from the prestigious *Écoles Normale Supérieures*⁶⁷ to the subject, as they were required to take a certification during the course.

The Prime Minister at that period, Raymond Barre, who, it is worth remembering, had supported the creation of the SES, entrusted the mission of evaluating this teaching to a friend, Professor of Economics at the University of Dakar, Joël Bourdin. He launched an all-out attack, concluding that “Series B [economic and social] is an educational dead end”⁶⁸, that is both the result of “the Social Sciences syllabus and pedagogy”⁶⁹ and a default choice of students who do not like neither Literature nor Mathematics. Pointing out their “inaptitude for economic reasoning”⁷⁰ and the fact that they would have “more difficulty than others getting into Economics and Administration courses at university”⁷¹, he recommends that the study program, which “includes more History, Geography and Sociology than Economics”⁷², should be reoriented towards the latter and that administration ought to be introduced. Regarding teaching methods, he emphasizes that “the basis of teaching must continue to be the textbook”⁷³, although he concedes that audiovisual and computer technology

65 There is a specific internal competition for *agrégation*, which is open to full-time professors already in office (like other civil servants) after three years of service.

66 *Agrégés* are better paid and have a shorter teaching workload (15 hours per week, compared to 18 hours for CAPES holders), as well as more interesting career opportunities.

67 In addition to the best-known ENS on rue d'Ulm in Paris, there are two others, one of which was historically reserved for women and the other for technical subjects. This indicates that the Inspectorate's objective was to bring teachers trained in the best schools in the country to SES teaching, thus increasing the quality and prestige of this teaching.

68 TN: “a série B [econômica e social] é um beco sem saída educacional” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

69 TN: “programa de estudos e da pedagogia das Ciências Sociais” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

70 TN: “inaptidão para o raciocínio econômico” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese)

71 TN: “mais dificuldade do que os outros para ingressar nos cursos de Economia e administração na universidade” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

72 TN: “inclui mais História, Geografia e Sociologia do que Economia” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

73 TN: “a base do ensino deve continuar sendo o livro didático” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

can be used and, finally, that competitive exams and teacher training should be reoriented towards administration (French National Archives, 1980a)⁷⁴.

APSES mobilized against what it described as a “new obscurantism”, contacting journalists, unions, and academics from various subjects to support them, as well as circulating a petition among them “in defense of SES teaching” and several favorable articles in the press questioning the “disappearance of sociology”. The mobilization occurred at the beginning of June 1980, when APSES organized a two-day strike by SES teachers, which culminated in a demonstration of support at the *Bourse du Travail*⁷⁵, in Paris, with the presence of several famous researchers from different Social Sciences.

This campaign attracted strong support from unions, including the conservative “Syndicat National des Lycées et Collèges” (National Union of Secondary and Elementary Schools II, SNALC) (French National Archives, 1980b). The government entrusted Henri Mercillon, a professor of Economics at the University of Dijon, with a new commission on the teaching of SES, whose report contradicted Bourdin's and defended the maintenance of Series B, the necessary link between Economics and social studies and the use of inductive methods, to affirm their scientific nature. The emphasis was in the need to make a clear distinction between SES and history-geography, the text states. However, Economy must occupy “a privileged place” (French National Archives, 1980c)⁷⁶.

SES appeared to have been strengthened in the secondary school reform initiated at the time, as they became part of the basic curriculum in the first year, but at the cost of a reduction from four to two hours per week, which led to heated debates within APSES and among teachers (Jammes, 2011). Likewise, a two-hour per week option was created for second and last year of secondary school classes in other school grades, considerably expanding the subject's audience. On the other hand, the syllabi, which were rewritten for the occasion, began by acknowledging that “the experience of the last fifteen years or so has amply confirmed the value of the ideas that inspired the foundation of economic and social education⁷⁷”, and stating that the SES should aim to “ensure the application of an experimental spirit to the study of economic and social realities⁷⁸”, in particular by developing students' “sense of observation⁷⁹”

74 “Teaching economics in secondary school”.

75 Literally, “Labor Exchange”. Historically, it was a place where unions organized the recruitment of unemployed people, and currently it houses union facilities and meeting rooms that unions can make available to other organizations.

76 “Report of the Study Group on Economic and Social Education”.

77 TN: “a experiência dos últimos quinze anos, aproximadamente, confirmou amplamente o valor das ideias que inspiraram a fundação da educação econômica e social” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese)

78 TN: “assegurar a aplicação de um espírito experimental ao estudo das realidades econômicas e sociais” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

79 TN: “senso de observação” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

(Ministère de l'Éducation nationale [MEN], 1981), they strongly reinforce the place of Economics in relation to other disciplines.

The topics to be covered in the first year are: the working population, the company, the family and the household, and the national economy. The three main parts of the second year syllabus are entitled “Social and political structures, organizations and institutions; Economic structures and mechanisms; The economic and social role of the State”. Finally, the final year syllabus, organized around the theme of “economic development and social change”, covers these issues in capitalist, socialist and developing countries. Above all, the new optional course in the other grades, significantly entitled “Economics and Social Sciences”, separates the subjects even more clearly, dealing successively with social, political, and economic structures in the second year of high school, with growth and development, the internationalization of economic activity, culture, and society and, finally, the different political systems in the last year.

At the same time, the subject strengthened its place in the educational system with the creation of a “Humanities and Social Sciences” section (known as “B/L”) in preparatory courses in 1982 and, in the following year, there was an option of Economics, for those preparing for competitive entrance exams in business schools, where SES occupy a central place, thus opening up elite career opportunities for section B students as SES teachers⁸⁰. In those same years, however, the SES began to be increasingly attacked by the media. Firstly, in January 1983, a “scandal” arose at the *lycée*⁸¹ Corneille in Rouen, where an SES teacher and his first year students were carrying out a questionnaire survey with their colleagues, exploring a wide range of topics relating to the lives of teenagers, including sexuality, drugs, and political opinions. Although the approach and questionnaire were approved by the School Board, some of the school's parents and teachers were outraged and contacted the press. Several conservative newspapers and unions denounced an intolerable “inquisitorial” approach. The professor was defended by several colleagues and unions and entered into a five-year legal battle for defamation, which he eventually won. During this period, other similar cases occurred in *lycées* in Lyon and Paris, questioning the ability of SES teachers to conduct certain investigations with their students⁸².

Other attacks began to focus on the contents of the subject, in particular a long article published in December 1986 in *Le Monde de l'Éducation*, a specialized

80 Historically, higher education in France is divided between the University and the *Grandes Écoles*, where the social and academic elite of students are concentrated. Admission to the *Grandes Écoles* is done through competitive exams, which are prepared by preparatory courses dedicated to selective exams, housed in the lycées.

81 In France, *lycées* are schools that serve only secondary school students, in addition to certain higher education courses (such as *Grandes Écoles preparatory courses*).

82 The accused teacher compiled a file of almost 300 pages (French National Archives, n.d.d).

supplement to *Le Monde*, based on the Bourdin report to denounce teaching “of uncertain quality⁸³”, that would not guarantee the future of students, in which it was said that sociology and demography took precedence over Economics, and that students looked like “an educated dog that was unfolding economic concepts that they did not master⁸⁴”. Many professors and even several inspectors wrote long personal letters to the newspaper to refute these untruths (French National Archives, n.d.e), but this type of attack article continued to multiply in the following years.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

SES teaching was founded on an original approach strongly inspired by the Annales school, based on active and inductive methods and a multidisciplinary approach that involves the simultaneous study of different dimensions of a social phenomenon. Contested from the beginning, both by the academic world and by other school subjects that feared for their own territory, it was, however, imposed by the multifaceted work of its founders and by a very small General Inspectorate around Guy Palmade. Criticism and the desire to regain control never ceased during these two decades, as did the efforts of teachers and inspectors to obtain more human and material resources, to create and unify a diverse board of teachers, and to safeguard, if not the subject, at least its founding project. Throughout the studied period, the subject continued to evolve according to the balance of power not only around it, but also, and perhaps above all, within itself. Instead of considering it in binary terms, like the struggle of a village of defenders of Galicia *à la Astérix*, the evolution of this discipline is better analyzed as a heteronomous social field – or space – crossed by several internal tensions.

The group of SES teachers was initially particularly heterogeneous in terms of status and training, and it should be noted that they were also the most well-endowed in terms of cultural capital, especially the alumni of the “École Normale Supérieure”, who defended the foundation project more vehemently. This raises the question of whether, generous as it may seem, it was not too demanding, both in terms of knowledge in various academic fields and pedagogical know-how, for many teachers. Standardization, that is, alignment with traditional academic and school canons, which began in the early 1980s, continued in the following decades, gradually eliminating other Social Sciences than Economics, Sociology and Political Science, until the new curricula of the early 2010s resulted in a *de facto* separation of these disciplines, as well as a greater emphasis on the recitation of knowledge to the

83 TN: “de qualidade incerta” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

84 TN: “cão instruído ao desenrolar conceitos econômicos que não dominavam” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

detriment of experimentation and personal reflection (Martinache, 2021). However, although the growing importance of Economics can also be explained by the fact that almost 70% of SES teachers were trained in this subject, according to a survey carried out in the early 1990s (Jean & Rallet, 1993), the latter also shows that his main motivation for teaching is “[...] to awaken students’ critical thinking and curiosity, to teach them rigor and knowledge so that they become responsible and active citizens⁸⁵”. Therefore, it would be interesting to continue exploring the conditions of these teachers’ sociological conversion to a different disciplinary and pedagogical approach to the one they received during their training, following the example of Henri Lanta, as mentioned here before.

The most recent secondary education reform abolished existing grades in favor of a common core with a free choice of specialties during the last two years of secondary education. SES remains mandatory in the first year but reduced to one and a half hours per week, while it becomes an optional “specialty” in the following two years. This situation has led to a greater competition among subject teachers to attract students and maintain their positions, reigniting tensions between SES teachers and their history and geography colleagues (Martinache, 2020). It also reinforced the normalization of the subject, which is being asked more than ever to prove its usefulness in preparing students for the higher education.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the many contradictions that have characterized the SES since its creation and that its brief history reveals: among the objectives of the discipline (training citizens, preparing them for higher education or professional life); among the search diversity for teachers and subsequent homogenization; or between the reduction of educational inequalities and the cultivation of a certain elitism to legitimize the discipline – and so on⁸⁶. Amid ambiguities and contradictions, general inspectors, teachers, academics, and APSES activists acted to defend SES. These agents constituted a social field in French society that claims the legitimacy of SES in the training for citizenship.

The questions he leaves unanswered about the teaching of Social Sciences apply far beyond the French case, just as the analysis program proposed here can be used in other school subjects and other countries.

85 TN: “[...] despertar o pensamento crítico e a curiosidade dos alunos, ensinar-lhes rigor e conhecimento para que se tornem cidadãos responsáveis e ativos” (Freely translated from Brazilian Portuguese).

86 For example, this observation from an IPR for the IG of SES that foresees two strategies to remedy the supposed lack of recognition of Section B: “[...] ennoble the flow and make it more attractive” or “segment [the] teaching practice to take into account a more heterogeneous public” (French National Archives, 1985).

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