



Representations of Nationalism and Patriotism in Primary Schools of Caxias do Sul (1939-1955)

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ABSTRACT. This study aims at analyzing the representations of nationalism articulated with the conceptions of a progressive education, present in the practices and materials that made up the school culture in primary education in the municipality of Caxias do Sul, located in the south of Brazil (Serra Gaúcha), between 1939 and 1955. To this end, the study is developed from the perspective of Cultural History, thinking “[...] culture as a set of meanings shared and constructed by men to explain the world” (Pesavento, 2012, p. 15); in the understanding that representations are intertwined in a multiplicity of ways that subjects have to express themselves: written texts, images, rituals, practices, discourses and materials (Chartier, 2002). In this perspective, this piece of research is methodologically founded on documental analysis, based on the following sources: photographs, circular letters, teaching syllabus, a pedagogical newspaper entitled *Despertar* - documents produced by the public teaching organ - and other printed media, produced by a local press. These sources were accessed from João Spadari Adami Historical Archive of Caxias do Sul and the Digital Newspaper Library of the National Library. As considerations, the study allowed to recognize that in this southern region of the country, the ideas of renewal of pedagogical practices circulated among public schools with the encouragement and organization of the municipal educational body, of a series of propositions that mixed actions and materials considered modern, with practices that exercised behaviors to strengthen a patriotic spirit, constituting a model of Brazilian citizen projected by nationalist ideas.

Keywords: nationalism; escola nova; school culture; primary education.

Representações de Nacionalismo e Patriotismo nas Escolas de Ensino Primário de Caxias do Sul (1939-1955)

ABSTRACT. Este estudo tem como propósito analisar as representações sobre o nacionalismo articuladas às concepções de uma educação progressista, presentes nas práticas e materiais que compuseram a cultura escolar no ensino primário do município de Caxias do Sul, situado na serra gaúcha, entre os anos de 1939 e 1955. Para tanto, o estudo é desenvolvido na perspectiva da História Cultural, pensando “[...] a cultura como um conjunto de significados partilhados e construídos pelos homens para explicar o mundo” (Pesavento, 2012, p. 15); no entendimento de que as representações estão imbricadas em uma multiplicidade de formas que os sujeitos têm de se expressar: textos escritos, imagens, rituais, práticas, discursos e materiais (Chartier, 2002). Nessa perspectiva, esta pesquisa é amparada metodologicamente na análise documental, tendo como fontes: fotografias, circulares, Programas de Ensino, um periódico Pedagógico intitulado *Despertar* - documentos produzidos pelo órgão público de ensino - e outros meios impressos, produto de uma imprensa local. Estas fontes foram acessadas a partir do Arquivo Histórico João Spadari Adami de Caxias do Sul e da Hemeroteca Digital da Biblioteca Nacional. Como considerações, o estudo permitiu reconhecer que nesta região do sul do país, as ideias de renovação das práticas pedagógicas circulavam por entre as escolas públicas com o incentivo e a organização do órgão municipal de ensino, de uma série de proposições que mesclavam ações e materiais tidos como modernos, com práticas que exercitavam condutas para o fortalecimento de um espírito patriótico, constituinte de um modelo de cidadão brasileiro projetado pelas ideias nacionalistas.

Keywords: nacionalismo; escola nova; cultura escolar; ensino primário.

Representaciones del nacionalismo y patriotismo en las escuelas primarias de Caxias do Sul (1939-1955)

RESUMEN. Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar las representaciones del nacionalismo articuladas con las concepciones de una educación progresista, presentes en las prácticas y materiales que componían la

cultura escolar, en la educación primaria en el municipio de Caxias do Sul, ubicado en la Serra Gaúcha, entre los años de 1939 y 1955. Por lo tanto, el estudio se desarrolla desde la perspectiva de la Historia Cultural, pensando “[...] la cultura como un conjunto de significados compartidos y contruidos por los hombres para explicar el mundo” (Pesavento, 2012, p. 15); entendiendo que las representaciones se entrelazan en una multiplicidad de formas que los sujetos tienen para expresarse: textos escritos, imágenes, rituales, prácticas, discursos y materiales (Chartier, 2002). En esa perspectiva, nos apoyamos metodológicamente en el análisis documental, teniendo como fuente para la investigación: fotografías, circulares, Programas de Enseñanza y un Periódico Pedagógico titulado *Despertar* - documentos producidos por el órgano público de enseñanza; y también otros medios impresos, producto de una imprenta local; fuentes a las que se accedió desde el Archivo Histórico João Spadari Adami de Caxias do Sul y la Hemeroteca Digital. Como consideraciones, el estudio permitió reconocer que en esta región del sur del país circulaban, entre las escuelas públicas, ideas para renovar las prácticas pedagógicas con el impulso y la organización, por parte del cuerpo docente municipal, de una serie de propuestas que mezclaban acciones y materiales considerados modernos, con prácticas que ejercieron conductas para fortalecer un espíritu patriótico, constitutivo de un modelo de ciudadano brasileño proyectado por ideas nacionalistas.

Palabras clave: nacionalismo; escola nova; cultura escolar; escuela primaria.

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Introduction

In the Vargas Era, the presence of nationalist aspects in primary education in Brazil became a constant factor in the discourses and actions of educators, driven by the perspective of a renewal in education based on the ideals of the Escola Nova (New School) and the Manifesto of the Pioneers of the Escola Nova. Materialized through the creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health, actions to nationalize teaching and policies to strengthen higher and secondary education and technical education, the ideal of adapting teaching to a modernization of the country was present in the regulation of national education.

The reforms that were introduced during the Estado Novo, despite what was presented in the speech, continued to maintain the proposal of an education for the elite, focusing on secondary and higher education. While the Central Government focused on some levels of the educational system, primary education was the responsibility of the State Governments, which organized it according to their own possibilities and projects (Romanelli, 1986).

Even so, the school began to assume a strategic character in national reconstruction, focusing on the formation of the complete man, that is, as a person, as a citizen and as a worker (Bastos, 2005). This transformation was accompanied by a growth in the number of public schools in Rio Grande do Sul, driven by the nationalization of education. In this sense, the 1930s were marked by the strengthening of the State, with aspects of authoritarianism, centrality and control. In Rio Grande do Sul, there was cooperation in relation to government actions, using, in addition to schools, the media as a way of promoting nationalist ideals.

In this context, a discourse on education that was the basis for the strengthening of the Brazilian nation, delivered nationally, which resonated in different corners of the country was shared. In Rio Grande do Sul, for example, the reforms¹ undertaken under the aegis of the Estado Novo show a given diligence so that, through teaching, some objectives were met, such as: the expansion of schools and the number of teachers in order to reduce the illiteracy rate; the principles of organizing a career plan for teaching; and the standardization of the exercise of school spaces. This reorganization also aimed at eliminating the external influence exerted especially in community and private school institutions, in regions of German and Italian colonization (Gertz, 2005).

In this sense, a guiding axis was visible in the Federal Government's proposal: the permanence of patriotic and elitist elements as a conception of the formation of the organizational structure. For Bomeny (1999, p. 151), “[...] the great political project to be materialized in the Estado Novo, which began with the 1930 revolution, had as its central nucleus the construction of nationality and the valorization of Brazilianness, which is to say, the affirmation of Brazilian national identity”. This nationalization, which included education in this new representation of Brazilian citizens, aimed at the standardization and uniformisation of culture, using the primary education system as one of the main strategies.

Nationalist actions emerged in parallel with those of the education renewal movement in Brazil, built around the 1930s under the influences of progressive, particularly European and American ideas, which were

¹ As an example, we cite here Decree No. 8.020, of November 29, 1939, Decree No. 491, of February 23, 1942, which intended with the Department of Education and Public Health of Rio Grande do Sul to build common guidelines that could resolve educational inequalities, especially in primary education.

introduced by different intellectuals², and which served as inspiration in the search for an ideal of school in Brazil. Among these intellectuals, the name of Lourenço Filho stands out, for his work in the Ministry of Education and Health, but especially for the dialogue carried out with the government of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, when providing consultancy for the reform of education in Rio Grande do Sul, in the mid-1940s (Peres, 2000). And, also, by the approximation with nationalist ideas, which is ratified by the permanence of this scholar throughout the Vargas administration, during the Estado Novo period, in the position of director of the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Kulesza, 2016).

Among Lourenço Filho's concerns, which were shared with other Brazilian intellectuals, the mismatch between what emerged as modern in society and the school's inability to train citizens prepared for this new time, explained in an excerpt from one of his works that dealt particularly with the New School:

[...] faith in the power of education is not lost. What is needed is to review the theoretical models and practical resources for possible adaptation to the serious changing problems of our time. This change can only be understood through a more accurate analysis of the functions of school institutions as instruments of reorganization and rebalancing, and thus by a better perception of the technical and moral bases of the process in which the school seeks to interfere (Lourenço Filho, 1969, p. 32).

The proposal was that the focus of education was on the student, with the use of Psychology and Experimental Pedagogy. In Rio Grande do Sul, for example, the actions articulated a modern science to the renewal of pedagogical practices. The influence of Lourenço Filho's ideas is perceived in the insertion of the *ABC Tests*, in the change of teaching programs, in the use of objective tests, in the characterization of childhood, and in the identity constitution of the teaching staff. This configuration of the pedagogical discourse “[...] also represented a moralizing perspective for teaching, especially for primary education” (Peres, 2000, p. 130). This moral aspect associated with the civic aspect, which are articulated with the propositions of a renewal of education propagated nationally, reflect the ideals of some intellectuals, but particularly demonstrate the interference of other social bodies, such as the Church and the military sphere, in this new organization of education in the country, aiming to garner support for what was being proposed in this nationalist endeavor.

It is from this scenario that this writing developed: in the historicization of the vestiges of nationalism and patriotism, articulated with the conceptions of *Escola Nova*, present in primary education institutions in the municipality of Caxias do Sul between 1939 and 1955. The time frame emerged from the sources selected for the analysis. For this, we found our theoretical perspective on Cultural History, based on the vision of Pesavento (2012, p. 15), who proposes “[...] to think of culture as a set of meanings shared and constructed by men to explain the world”. We take as a concept for our analyzes the conception of representations given by Chartier (2002), who considers them as social constructions that legitimize the meanings of a given time, of others and space. Representations encompass a wide range of forms of expression, such as written texts, images, rituals, practices, and discourses.

In the proposal of the analysis of the traces of patriotism identified in the documents produced for and by the municipal schools, it is also worth thinking of these representations as socially constructed assets, shaped by the social, historical, political and cultural conditions of the period, and in this way, we rely on the documentary Historical Analysis to make sense of the inventoried sources, such as photographs produced by the Board of Public Instruction of the municipality, newsletters, Teaching Program for Municipal Schools, pedagogical journal *Jornal Despertar*³, newspapers of the period, among others.

The actions carried out in favor of nationalism and patriotism influenced the school culture of the municipality, materializing through rites, celebrations, school practices, the teaching program and school materiality, marking primary education and leaving its traces in the schooling process of Caxias do Sul.

School culture, materialities and school practices: representations of nationalism and patriotism

As significant as the introduction dedicated to situating which national context the researchers focused on to write this study, is the description of the municipal context in which nationalist/*Escola Nova* ideas

² Anísio Teixeira, Fernando de Azevedo and Manoel Bergström Lourenço Filho who were at the forefront of the *Escola Nova* movement in the country. Anísio Teixeira was one of the main disseminators of the methodology proposed by Dewey and presented the idea of a school that harmonized school life with the student's life, centered on children and their interests (Valdemarin, 2010). Fernando de Azevedo participated in the creation of the Ministry of Education (1930) and initiated the first education reforms in Brazil (Penna, 2010). Lourenço Filho was a technical member of the Ministry of Education and shared the ideas of the new school movement, with propositions related to an experimental psychology (Kulesza, 2016).

³ The photographs used for this analysis belong specifically to the 1943-1948 album, digitized and made available on the research website of the João Spadari Adami Municipal Historical Archive (AHMJA), in Caxias do Sul. The circular letters and other documents related to municipal education were also consulted in the file.

circulated. Caxias do Sul is located in the Northeast region of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, in Serra Gaúcha. Historical data released by the Municipal Administration of Caxias do Sul (2023) clarify that initially the city was called 'Campo dos Bugres' because it was occupied by indians, but it was also a territory where tropeiros (cattle dealers) circulated. And, from the year of 1875, this landscape began to gain new contours with the arrival of Italian immigrants in the region, which contributed to the change of its denomination and also of the sociocultural characteristics, which began to have the influence of immigrants, collaborating, according to the study on Italian schools in Rio Grande do Sul, undertaken by Rech and Luchese (2018, p. 21), for a racial transformation of the country: "[...] as economically and socially excluded groups, upon arriving in Brazil, they were received and seen by the Brazilian authorities, inspired by eugenic theories, as racially superior and civilizing groups, which would allow population whitening".

Regarding the field of education, in Caxias do Sul there is a movement similar to that of other regions of the interior of the State of Rio Grande do Sul occupied by European immigrants, in which, due to the absence of schools, there is, in the initiative of immigrants, the installation of ethnic-community institutions. In these schools, teaching was taught in the immigrants' language of origin, teaching materials were offered by the consulate or by associations that preserved the immigrants' culture, such as those of Mútuo Socorro, with the support of the motherland (Rech & Luchese, 2018).

As this community grew, a connection with European culture was strengthened, a maintenance given by these school institutions. What happens until the first decades of the twentieth century, with an education that preserved cultural aspects such as the language and habits of the homeland of origin, in some cases under the influence of the ideology defended by the governments of these nations (Rech & Luchese, 2018). Thus, these communities become the focus of attention of the Brazilian government, when initiatives are taken to contain this influence.

As an example, in a Report written in 1939, sent to the Secretary of Education and Public Health, J. P. Coelho de Souza, the Director of the Administrative Section of the State of Rio Grande do Sul narrates, after his diligence to inspect educational institutions in regions of immigrant communities in Caxias do Sul, Pelotas, Santa Maria and in the Capital, a series of behaviors that he judged to be at odds with nationalist policies, such as: the teaching staff expressing themselves in their mother tongue and not in Portuguese; inside schools there are portraits of Mussolini, of kings of Italy, and fascist advertisements that incited war; in addition, children using fascist greetings (Relatório, 1939).

The Vargas Government's actions on the Italian community were not contradictory, but apparently strategic, since it was under the influence of fascism and communism that the Government, particularly from the 1930s, began to look at social issues in Brazil, glimpsing at the country's development (Cabral, 2016). The same ideology that inspired the reorganization of the Brazilian nation is the one that is repelled, at least in these communities of the Serra Gaúcha, in an attempt to extinguish the interference of the immigrant homelands in the country, contributing to the effectiveness of Brazilian nationalist policies.

It is in this context that education plays a fundamental role in the implementation of nationalist policies in this region, particularly those related to the mandatory use of the Portuguese language in schools in the municipality. For Peres (2016), while the State turned to the education of urban centers, the municipality was responsible for the schools in the countryside.

Known throughout the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the Escola Nova movement was formalized through the expansion in the opening of school groups, in the programs adopted by primary schools, in the activity guidelines, in teacher training and in the strengthening of the actions of the Center for Educational Research and Guidance (CPOE). For Quadros (2006), however, the reform of education in Rio Grande do Sul was possible thanks to the relationship established between different subjects, such as the government, the Church, political parties, the press, schools, and the community in general. If on the one hand the State sought to use a technical-scientific discourse to direct primary education, bringing the proposal of a modernization of practices and institutions, on the other hand, the movements related to the nationalization of education aimed at the coercion of the children of immigrants through the expansion of inspections, the appreciation of civic moments and the mandatory use of the Portuguese language inside and outside school.

The school was used as one of the main government strategies for nationalization actions, and in Caxias do Sul this meant the expansion of isolated schools and municipal school groups being inaugurated in the rural area from the 1940s. These schools were inaugurated in the localities where there was a predominance of Italian settlers and where the dialect was used in the communities.

This question was directly oriented to the teachers, as it can be seen in Circular No. 3, of July 1941, where they are instructed to use of the national language, explained by the School Inspector:

Under no circumstances will the use of a language other than our own be allowed. It could not even be different, of course, committed as we are in the great work of nationalization. [...] Inside and outside the school, the teacher will make his/her authority felt, speaking to the students in our language, and not allowing another language or dialect to prevail. Directly responsible for the civic education of thousands of patricians, teachers, especially in rural areas, must be ardent propagators of our language (Circular No. 3, 1941, n.p.).

Not only schools, but communities themselves became subject to surveillance over the use of the language; reinforcing the use of the Portuguese language outside schools was a way to expand government action, using the figure of teachers and even children in their own families, as vectors for nationalization. In the words of Escolano Benito (2021, p. 108), “[...] building schools represented something more than building spaces; it was an action aimed at building a nation”. This perspective is also reflected in the speeches of the children themselves: in the school newspaper of the municipality of Caxias do Sul, *Despertar*⁴, the use of language is linked to the ideal of the Homeland in the speech of a 4th grade student: “To be good Brazilians we must: cherish our beloved Homeland, defend and cultivate the historical past and speak only our language” (Brombati, 1947, p. 7).

In the newsletters, which were the main means of communication between the municipal government and the teachers, the importance of the Civic Worship and the National Anthem was also reinforced, and “[...] every day, when the work shift begins, the students will sing the National Anthem” (Circular No. 3, 1941, p. 1). Along with material elements, such as flags, maps, Vargas and school patrons’ portraits, the National Anthem was incorporated into school practices, constituting an element of the school culture of the period.

In commemorative dates, patriotic elements were articulated with certain expected behaviors, such as discipline, order, and obedience. From 1943, the Board of Public Instruction organized photographic albums to report the activities that were developed by Municipal Education, where several moments that corroborate the proposal of a civilizing school are recorded. On this page of the 1943-1948 album, it is possible to observe several aspects related to the development of school activities at the Visconde de Taunay Municipal Isolated School, located on Linha Cristina, in the District of Galópolis (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Aspects of the activities developed at the Visconde de Taunay Municipal Isolated School (1943).

Source: João Spadari Adami Municipal Historical Archive [AHMJSa] (1943).

⁴ Journal *Despertar* was a pedagogical journal produced by the Board of Municipal Public Instruction of Caxias do Sul, distributed in rural schools between 1947 and 1954.

In photographs 2, 3 and 4, the national flags are present, first at the time of the parade of ordained children, accompanied by their teacher, and later in the gymnastics presentations where the students are observed by army and community authorities. Gymnastics activities and games were linked to the Teaching Program through the contents of Morality and Civilism and were understood as elements that were both hygienic and recreational. According to what was oriented in the *Jornal Despertar* (Educação e Ensino, 1949, p. 2), gymnastics activities were considered as strategies for the teacher: "[...] to rectify bad habits, divert antisocial tendencies and develop at the same time the virtues indispensable to the future citizen: loyalty, courage, perseverance, honesty, self-control, obedience to the boss, individual contribution to collective victory, willpower, flexibility, dexterity, etc.".

In addition to the moral character, where body movement was an indispensable element for discipline, physical activities were also seen from a hygienic perspective, aimed at the formation of healthy children: "The physical education that you practice must be hygienic and aims at developing the great functions: respiratory, circulatory, articular and educate nervous coordination, without, however, intending to systematically develop the muscles" (Educação e Ensino, 1948a, p. 6). The conception of physical activity was supported by doctors and hygienists in order to produce collective practices associated with the constitution of subjects concerned with healthy habits. For Stephanou (2011), these actions were directly related to the perspective of physical health surveillance, concerned with the body, eating habits, hygiene and the results of physical activities. In this sense, physical activity and health were commonly related from the point of view of hygiene.

The teachers were guided by different means (newsletters, magazines, newspapers) so that physical activities were maintained as part of the training of children, giving primary education this civilizing character: educating the intellect, habits, morals and body, all in favor of the growth of the Homeland. In the words of a 4th grader from an isolated school⁵: "We must always take care of our health to be strong and work for the aggrandizement of Brazil. The greatest wealth a man can have is health" (Collaboration and Good Will, 1948, p. 4). A vision of discourse that also related the health of citizens to work and the Homeland was aligned.

In photographs 1, 3, 5 and 6, it is possible to identify different moments that exalted more complex and choreographed postures, in the sense of operating as a positive demonstration of the school's action in the formation of the subject, and that illustrate aspects of collective order, discipline and obedience. The activities presented had rules that should be shared and followed by all students involved to set up a collective conduct. By observing these photographs, it is possible to identify a strictly defined sociability through the authoritarian aesthetics that the exercises proposed. We can think of the diffusion of these physical practices as a way of strengthening representations related to unity and harmony, occupying social spaces to transmit the values of the regime that should be perpetuated. The stage of these presentations was in view of the entire community, in demonstrations of bodily expressiveness that portrayed the discipline of the body, control and order.

In the words of Escolano Benito (2021, p. 172) "[...] healthy, hygienically protected and harmonically developed bodies, would be the civilizing basis of a future of peace and well-being for all society [...]"; in this perspective, we can think of the practices of physical as cultural and social activities, used by the Government as demonstrations of ideal citizens and a nationalist ideal, and which was perpetuated beyond the Estado Novo regime.

Photographs 7 and 8 show the students' handiwork, with embroidery, vases and scale models. The activities of the Drawing and Applied Arts Program were defended as a set of activities that allowed emotional and affective adjustment, in the process of exercising self-control (AHMJSA, 1943). In this sense, in addition to the proposals aimed at artistic activities, we sought to exercise in children an aesthetic formation from the environment in which they were: "Order is an essential condition in aesthetic formation and this is why the school must offer students, in the arrangement of furniture and objects, in the cleanliness of their dependencies, an example and constant stimulus" (AHMJSA, 1943, p. 55). Organizing the exhibitions of appreciation of the activities carried out in the classroom was a way of validating before the community what was required of students in the school environment.

School festivities marked school time, being practices that work to order rituals and promote an education of emotions that was directly linked to the ideals of Vargas' political regime. For Escolano Benito (2021), in addition to schools, these activities were structures that affected all collective life, including family habits and community customs. The activities recorded in the photographs are part of the school rites that went beyond the classrooms and constituted socially assumed codes.

⁵ This excerpt is part of an essay sent to *Jornal Despertar* by a student, in the Collaboration and Good Will section, which aimed to gather contributions from students from school groups and isolated schools in the municipality.

In the photographs, one observes the way in which the rehearsed activities were part of the school culture: the records that are organized in these albums are not spontaneous, they are symbols chosen to be preserved for posterity (Mauad, 2008). In this sense, marking a time and a space, the photographs presented on this page of the photo album are representations of the ideal behaviors to be disseminated by the school: obedience, order, discipline, hygiene, organization, dexterity. The performance of these gymnastic activities, civic parades and handicrafts is related to the objective of promoting a sense of patriotism, national unity and the formation of a civilized citizen.

Other elements that were incorporated into the idea of renewing pedagogical practices, but that served the purposes of nationalism, and that were identified in this region, are related to a physical culture and professional training. Ideas that originated in Germany, with the pedagogue Georg Kerschensteiner, in the proposal of gymnastic practices, games, drawing, music and a moral formation (Lourenço Filho, 1969).

Records of the local pedagogical press show an encouragement to the practice of singing and poetry among students of schools in the rural area of the municipality, activities present in the festive programs, the inauguration of new buildings, and celebrations of the Homeland Week: "The solemn act of the inauguration of the new building for the 'Adelmar Faccioli' school took place on the 9th of the month ended [...] during which the students of the school made themselves heard in several popular patriotic poetry" (Noticiário, 1951a, p. 4).

These actions had the attention of public management, with investment, such as for the acquisition of a collection of popular songs and 'moral and patriotic background', contained in copies of the book *Vamos Cantar* made available in school libraries, in the belief that they would contribute to disseminate patriotic feelings: "[...] through 120 songs, all with text and music, exalting the glories and beauties of our land [...] with an eminently national background and thus, it will contribute to the people to increasingly esteem and love what is ours and even to improve themselves in the knowledge and use of the national language" (Desenvolvimento..., 1950, p. 8).

For the poems, a series of guidelines were also followed, where there was a period of preparation, reading of poetry by the teacher, study of poetry and complete reading by the students. Poetry was considered: "[...] an educational medium that exerts great influence on the child's imagination" (Educação e Ensino, 1948b, p. 2). In general, patriotic poetry praising civic worship was chosen. In Caxias do Sul, the verse of the poem 'A Pátria', by Olavo Bilac, was displayed in the form of posters in the classrooms, "[...] as an expression of cult to the Homeland" (Circular No. 3, 1941, n.p). In this poem, we sought to praise agricultural work as a model of progress and prosperity of the nation, a discourse commonly adopted in the materials of the period.

In another disclosure, it is observed the guidance of the Board of Public Instruction for the organization of parties and celebrations of national dates in the educational institutions of the municipality. These prescriptions are accompanied by the recommendation of a special selection of activities such as the raising of the national flag, the intonation of the anthem, as well as suggestions for performing role plays, gymnastics exercises, games and excursions. There was also the demand that these practices respected "[...] the forming principles of moral conscience, not allowing, at all, songs, sambas containing lyrics that do not satisfy from the point of view of adaptation to the mental level of children, their interests and moral and aesthetic education" (Regimento..., 1948, p. 7).

Another action associated with pedagogical modernization in Brazil was the insertion of a series of artifacts into the school material culture. Through propaganda of educators and scholars, educational supports gained relevance: "[...] the adoption of a more sophisticated school apparatus, including the incorporation of new communication technologies. This understanding of the school as a social institution was clearly defended in the 'Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova' (Souza, 2013, p. 109). As an example of this, in Caxias do Sul, in a more organized way from the 1950s, actions of the Municipal Administration appeared to equip schools with modern gadgets, as evidenced in the excerpt from the local newspaper (Figure 2), which reports the submission of a proposal to the legislative branch for the acquisition of a film projector.

Cinema was a significant initiative for the proliferation of content to a representative number of people, which cooperated for an appropriation of the national language. From the titles of the films projected in this region of the Serra Gaúcha, in 1951, it is conjectured that the contents dealt with aspects of work, culture through artistic manifestations and that they focused on the entertainment of families with the exhibition of recreational films (Noticiário, 1951b). This support for education emerges more effectively in the country after the creation of the National Institute of Educational Cinema in the late 1950s, when it starts to be formally guided by the Ministry of Education as an educational support. However, before that, President Getúlio Vargas had approved the use of such an artifact, which can be appreciated in an excerpt from a speech

given on the occasion of the cinematographers' demonstration: "For the mass of illiterates, this will be the most perfect, easiest and most impressive pedagogical discipline [...] Associated with cinema, radio and the national cult of sports, the Government will complete an articulated system of mental, moral and hygienic education [...]" (Vargas, 1934, p. 189, our translation).

Educational Cinema, in this region, served the purpose of civilizing the subjects who lived in the rural area, educating through the dissemination of content that was considered morally appropriate, and in the practical exercise of given behaviors required of the audience in these situations. In addition to being considered a more attractive support, and easy to assimilate, compared to written support.

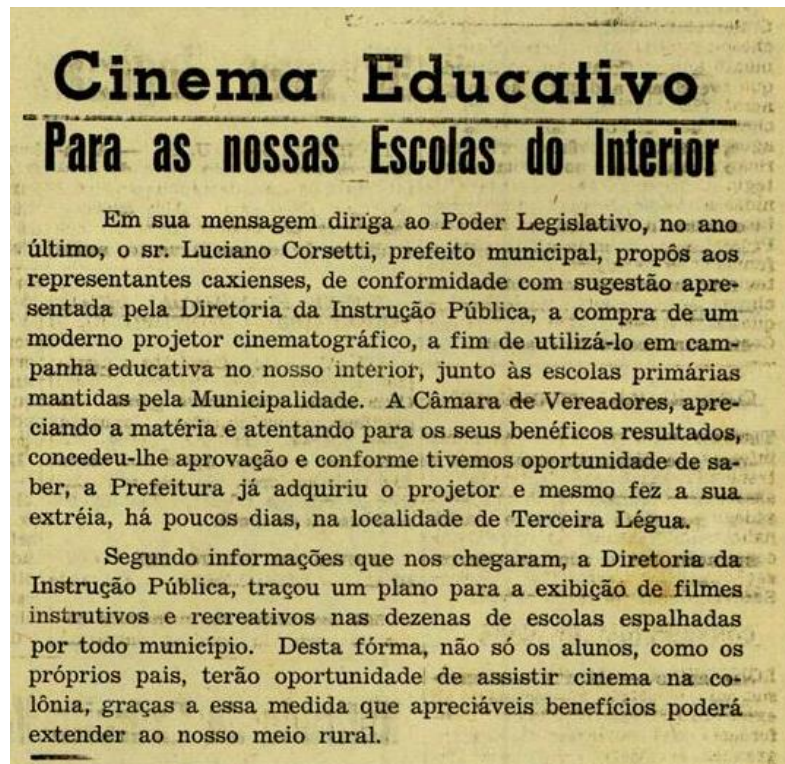


Figure 2. Excerpt from the newspaper *Diário do Nordeste* of 1951.

Source: *Cinema Educativo* (1951).

Final considerations

Many strategies were used by the government to promote the modernization of primary education linked to a posture of patriotism and focused on the nationalization of education. From the perspective of school actions, programs, artifacts, cinema, rites and school parties were some of the forms found by the municipality government, in confluence with the state government and the federal government, to foster the proposals of an ideal Brazilian citizen that were disseminated in the political context.

By historicizing the traces of nationalism and patriotism articulated with the conceptions of the *Escola Nova*, it was observed that the government's actions had an impact on school culture and on the promotion of a national identity, impacting on school daily life, as well as on communities. With the expansion of isolated schools and school groups in the rural areas of Caxias do Sul, from the 1940s onwards, the municipality's actions sought to integrate the school with the community in the education of the subjects – whether in the use of the Portuguese language, or for hygiene or conduct issues.

Through newsletters and guidelines, the teachers were instructed to use only the national language, promoting the Portuguese language inside and outside the school, as an essential part of the nationalization process, as well as civic education gained prominence with proposals for activities inserted in the School Program and the valorization of patriotic elements as part of school practices. In this sense, commemorative dates and school festivities also began to reinforce the ideals of discipline, order and obedience, reflecting the search for a school that would shape and civilize the subjects, stimulating a strictly defined sociability and shared conduct.

School activities, such as gymnastics, games, handicrafts and singing, were used to exercise values considered essential to the civilized citizen, promoting the aesthetic, moral, and emotional formation of children in the school environment. In this same proposal, the insertion of artifacts in the school material culture, such as communication technologies, also became relevant, being defended by educators and scholars as part of a pedagogical modernization. Its main exponent was the Educational Cinema, which, through a street cinema projector, promoted access to educational and cultural content that also contributed to the diffusion of the national language in the rural communities of Caxias do Sul.

The representation of the ideal citizen was built through these elements that were projected in the primary schools of the municipality, being associated with the strategy of disseminating a nationalist culture. This analysis suggests different intersections of discourses, practices, materialities, and subjects who were present in the school space and in the community itself, incorporating themselves in the process of consolidating the ideals of the Estado Novo in the schooling process of rural areas.

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