



**The marks of secondary education expansion:
Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul (1942-1961)¹**

As marcas da expansão do ensino secundário:
Paraná, Santa Catarina e Rio Grande do Sul (1942-1961)

Las marcas de la expansión de la educación secundaria:
Paraná, Santa Catarina y Rio Grande do Sul (1942-1961)

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Abstract

This paper systematizes the results of investigations carried out by researchers from the Southern Region of Brazil, adding to the efforts of the project entitled “Secondary Education in Brazil from an Historical and Comparative Perspective (1942-1961)”, the general objective of which was to analyze federal, state and municipal government policies for secondary education based on a comparative perspective. The project gathered government documents, statistical data on secondary education, as well as a set of school documentation. With regard to the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, the research allows us to establish similarities (and contrasts) in the processes of secondary education expansion in those states, especially in relation to the following aspects: population growth and interiorization as vectors of the expansion of secondary education; government investments in the creation/expansion of a network of education establishments; and the actions of private and/or confessional institutions.

Keywords: Secondary education. Expansion. Southern Region.

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Resumo

Texto sistematiza os resultados de investigações realizadas por pesquisadores e pesquisadoras da Região Sul do país, somando aos esforços do projeto “Ensino Secundário no Brasil em Perspectiva Histórica e Comparada (1942-1961)”, o qual teve como objetivo geral analisar as políticas governamentais, federais, estaduais e municipais para o ensino secundário, em perspectiva comparada. Projeto mobilizou documentos governamentais, dados estatísticos sobre o ensino secundário, além de um conjunto de documentação de natureza escolar. No que se refere aos estados do Paraná, Santa Catarina, e Rio Grande do Sul, as pesquisas permitem estabelecer aproximações (e contrastes) dos processos de expansão do ensino secundário nesses estados, especialmente com relação aos seguintes aspectos: o crescimento populacional e a interiorização como vetores da expansão do ensino secundário; os investimentos do poder público na criação/ampliação de uma rede de estabelecimentos; e as ações das instituições privadas e/ou confessionais.

Palavras-chave: Ensino secundário. Expansão. Região Sul.

Resumen

El texto sistematiza los resultados de investigaciones realizadas por investigadores de la región Sur del país, sumándose a los esfuerzos del proyecto “Ensino Secundário no Brasil em Perspectiva Histórica e Comparada (1942-1961)”, que tuvo como objetivo analizar las políticas del gobierno federal, estatal y municipal para la educación secundaria, en una perspectiva comparada. El proyecto movilizó documentos gubernamentales, datos estadísticos sobre educación secundaria, además de un conjunto de documentos de carácter escolar. Con respecto a los estados de Paraná, Santa Catarina y Rio Grande do Sul, la investigación permite establecer aproximaciones (y contrastes) de los procesos de expansión de la educación secundaria en estos estados, especialmente en relación con los siguientes aspectos: crecimiento de la población e interiorización como vectores para la expansión de la educación secundaria; inversiones del poder público en la creación/ampliación de una red de establecimientos; y las actuaciones de instituciones privadas y/o confesionales.

Palabras clave: Enseñanza secundaria. Expansión. Región Sur.

Introduction

This paper systematizes the results of investigations carried out by researchers from the Southern Region of Brazil², adding to the efforts of the project entitled “Secondary Education in Brazil from an Historical and Comparative Perspective (1942-1961)”, the general objective of which was to analyze federal, state and municipal government policies for secondary education (junior high schools [*ginásios*] and high schools [*colégios*]) using a comparative perspective, based on government documents, statistical data on secondary education and a set of school documentation. The research developed by the work teams from Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul were registered in reports for each state that were shared with the general coordination of the project and discussed during four research workshops. In this paper, we present an attempt to analyze similarities in the research results, taking into account the particularities of three states of the Southern Region³.

Overall, the work teams gathered information from a myriad of sources: publications of national scope such as the Statistical Yearbooks produced by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística – IBGE*), documents produced by the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos – INEP*), publications of the Directorate of Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture, among others. Other sources were state-level documents, such as reports made by governors and legislative bodies, as well as specialized periodicals and vast school documentation, preserved in public, institutional and/or private collections. Finally, we analyzed extensive historiography registered in theses, dissertations, books, book chapters, and other forms of published research.

In view of the theoretical, methodological, and even narrative diversity that the authors used for their investigations, we have chosen to present the results based on an analytical exercise, identifying possible areas of comparison (SILVA, 2019; 2021), highlighting movements that are both close to and far from each other regarding the histories of secondary education in the Southern Region. Before presenting our comparative analysis, we feel it is necessary to briefly contextualize the three states of the region, in order to identify their particularities in the process of expansion and consolidation of secondary education with effect from the 1940s.

Some aspects of secondary education expansion in Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul

In demographic, social, economic and cultural terms, there are several similarities that have been built historically along the singular trajectories experienced by each of the three states that currently comprise the Southern Region. In view of this, within the limits of this text, we will present some considerations about the processes of secondary education expansion and consolidation in this region between 1942 and 1961.

² The following investigators comprised the team: Eduardo Arriada (UFPEL), Elomar Tambara (UFPEL), Fernanda Gomes Vieira (UDESC), Gabriel Moura Brasil (UDESC), Giana Lange do Amaral (UFPEL), Kevin Lino de Oliveira (UFPR), Letícia Vieira (SED-SC), Norberto Dallabrida (UDESC), Patrícia Weiduschadt (UFPEL), and Sergio Roberto Chaves Junior (UFPR).

³ It is worth remembering some particularities of Brazil's regional administrative divisions. From 1945 until 1970, the Southern Region of the country was composed of the states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. In 1970 the Southeast Region was created, comprising the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, whereby the latter three had been part of the Eastern Region in the previous period, together with Bahia and Sergipe. For the purposes of this text, we will only analyze the three southernmost Brazilian states, namely Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.

The expansion of secondary education in Paraná, marked by a certain degree of acceleration since the first half of the 1940s, took place in the midst of a series of political, economic and social events. These include the growth and industrialization of urban centers, agricultural development, migratory flows and occupation of the territory (especially in the interior region of the state). In the same way, this acceleration was leveraged by several political actors, government discourses and practices emanating from the state's Executive and Legislative branches, under the keynote of progress and modernization. In terms of public policies on secondary education, we highlight the advent of the normal and secondary teacher careers; the establishment of guidelines for competitive examinations to fill positions as teachers and principals; free secondary and normal education; the concession of financial aid to municipal, state, private and confessional junior high schools; the granting of scholarships; the creation of new state junior high schools; the incorporation of municipal and private junior high schools into the state-level system, among other initiatives (OLIVEIRA; CHAVES JUNIOR, 2021).

In a study on elementary and secondary education in Paraná, Erasmo Pilotto (1954, p. 88) points out that the significant expansion of state secondary education can be divided in two distinct moments: the first, linked to the 1930 Revolution, through the "mass advent of private education"; and the second, in the late 1940s, characterized by the "expansion of the secondary school network throughout the interior region of the state". A relevant aspect of this second moment relates to the predominance of public education, especially public education funded by the state government, in contrast with the other Brazilian Federative Units in the same period. In 1945, of a total of 28 schools, 6 (21.43%) were public and 22 (78.57%) were private or confessional. In 1949, of the 45 schools, 15 (33.33%) were public and 30 (66.67%) were private or confessional. By 1960, there were 167 secondary schools, of which 109 were public (65.27%) and 58 private or confessional (34.73%). During the period as a whole, there was a 1816.60% increase in public schools, while the total increase of the private or confessional network reached 136.36%. In relation to the number of junior high schools and high schools, regardless of how they were funded, the data show an increase from 15 to 141 junior high schools (840%) and from 13 to 26 high schools (100%).

In the state of Santa Catarina, the history of secondary education and its institutionalized origin centers on the *Ginásio Catarinense*, created in the state capital, Florianópolis, in 1892. However, this official establishment was not attended by the regional elites who sent their children to continue their studies in other Federative Units. In 1905, the state government, together with some German Jesuit representatives, signed a contract for the setting up of a Jesuit school in the capital, to be called *Ginásio Santa Catarina*. This secondary school started its activities the following year, meeting the educational demands of the wealthy strata of society, resulting in the closing of the public junior high school and the consequent privatization of state secondary education (DALLABRIDA, 2001). In 1918, this school joined with the *Colégio Pedro II*, and took on the name *Ginásio Catarinense*, being the only secondary school in the entire state until the early 1930s. Another particularity of this context was the existence of a contract signed between the state government and the Padre Antônio Vieira Literary Society, in 1920, which determined that the *Ginásio Santa Catarina* would have the status of an official teaching establishment and that while the contract was in force the government could not create another official junior high school. The contract remained in force from 1921 to 1946, and established the privatization of secondary education in Santa Catarina (DALLABRIDA, 2006).

Since it came into being up until the early 1960s, secondary education in Santa Catarina was characterized by a network of private confessional Catholic schools. This assertion appears to be confirmed by the analysis of some aspects of the expansionist process of this schooling stage in the Santa Catarina, which started after the Francisco Campos Reform (1931). In that context, the traditional *Ginásio Catarinense* began providing both cycles of secondary

education. Seven private junior high schools were also created and provided the first cycle. These new junior high schools were set up in the state's main cities and were linked to different Catholic congregations, among them: Jesuits, Franciscans, Marist Brothers, and Sisters of Divine Providence. Of these, only two received aid from the municipal government and only one had a secular curriculum. Most of them were intended for the intellectual formation of male adolescents, with the exception of one aimed at the education of the female sex and two that catered for mixed-sex education (DALLABRIDA; CARMINATI, 2007).

Between 1942 and 1961, secondary education in Santa Catarina experienced unprecedented growth. In this period, the percentage increase in junior high schools and high schools, regardless of how they were funded, reached the order of 416.66% (from 12 to 62 schools), whereby private Catholic school institutions continued to predominate the composition of the secondary school network. With regard to how these establishments operated, the confessional schools were characterized by a strict disciplinary framework, involving a boarding school regime, stable teaching staff and separation according to sex. The public schools, on the other hand, had an open disciplinary atmosphere, heterogeneous and diversified teaching staff and were mixed-sex. While private schools had their own school buildings, public junior high schools and high schools operated in an improvised and cramped way in the buildings of normal schools and institutes of education. This situation only began to change following the State Government Target Plan – PLAMEG (1961-1965), under which new school buildings for secondary education were built in several large and medium-sized cities (DALLABRIDA; VIEIRA, 2021).

In the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the process of secondary education expansion in a broader and more systematized way was directly related to the time period studied and was associated with processes of urbanization, creation of municipalities and consolidation of the network of private religious educational establishments. Throughout the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the ramifications of post-primary education in the state were of a private nature. That educational structure changed with effect from the late 1930s, through the growth of private religious education networks, which became hegemonic during the 1940s and 1960s. In that period, several different religious congregations were active in secondary education. In that period, the Catholic educational network was predominant, but the Lutheran network stood out with regard to confessional schools and had the operational capacity to rival the Catholic Church network in relation to secondary education (TAMBARA; ARRIADA; AMARAL, 2021).

The public secondary school network in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, although it had fewer schools in relation to the private denominational school network, always held institutional control in terms of curricula and administration, having the *Colégio Estadual Júlio de Castilhos* as its model establishment. However, it can be seen that educational policies to expand opportunities for access to and attending secondary school education occurred slowly and gradually. In 1946, the public secondary school network was made up of six schools, supported by state and municipal funds. By 1961, the public network had grown to 64 schools (21.40%), of which 54 were state, 9 municipal and 1 federal, while there were 235 private schools (78.60%). In the same year, the public sector had 35,435 students enrolled, while the private sector had 70,550, out of a total of 106,399 enrolled students, of which 33.70% attended public schools and 66.30% attended private schools. This scenario was only overturned years later, especially during the 1970s, when the state government took on a hegemonic role in funding this level of education (TAMBARA; ARRIADA; AMARAL, 2021).

Bearing in mind the issues presented so far, in the following pages we will move on to the challenging, but equally fruitful, exercise of attempting to write a comparative history between the three states of the Southern Region. As Rosa Fátima de Souza Chaloba (2016) indicates, when dealing with the possibilities of a comparative history of education that crosses the country's regional borders, when writing these histories certain issues pertinent to the tensions between the regional, the state, and the national levels deserve to be highlighted, since

the states of the federation stand out as fundamental units in the delimitation of internal comparison in the country, due to the relevance of state-level government policies for public education in the conformation of state-level education systems. (2016, p. 838).

The richness and extent of the data collected and analyzed in previous investigations, the fruit of investments throughout the development of the project, find resonance with the diversity of theory, methods, and even style and narrative, used by the authors. Decoding and proposing syntheses, more in-depth analyses, reflections and, in the end, the comparative exercise we wish to achieve, is the challenge that follows.

When theorizing about practices of research into secondary education, proposing similarities and (de)compositions of the comparative study, Fabiany Silva (2021) presents us with the following reflections:

we attempt another way of writing, taking the constitutive elements of comparative studies, the operation of which is anchored in the social place, in the political-educational practice informed by the expectations and needs of certain groups, by signs of a long and arduous process of confrontations, debates and negotiations, informing conditioning instruments of the production of a (re)interpretative sense of the objects and historiographical sources chosen for studies. (SILVA, 2021, p. 64)

With these intentions in mind, we have attempted to establish some areas of comparison that make it possible find similarities (and contrasts) in secondary education expansion processes in Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, as follows.

Population growth and interiorization as vectors of secondary education expansion

The data analyzed by the teams indicate that the division of large territorial areas into (smaller) municipalities, especially in/for the interior regions of the states, seems to have made a key contribution to the secondary school network expansion process. In the case of Paraná, there was concern to equip each new jurisdiction with a set of public facilities to meet demands regarding health, education, public security, among others. As a result, a considerable amount of public buildings ensured that municipalities were equipped with public solitary schools (*escolas isoladas*), school groups (*grupos escolares*), junior high schools (*ginásios*) and high schools (*colégios*).

The research done by the teams from Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul found a certain degree of correspondence with this process of interiorization. According to the latter team, “a direct relationship can be seen in the struggle for the creation of these schools and the political emancipation [of new municipalities]. This initiative was transformed into a political trump card of the municipal administrations” (TAMBARA; ARRIADA; AMARAL, 2021, p. 289). However, the data from these two states indicate a prevalence of private institutions, especially confessional ones, as being those that most proliferated in this process of secondary education expansion. In the previous pages of this paper, we identified confessional orders and the educational institutions linked to congregations that took part in the expansion to meet the needs of secondary education.

Interiorization and dismembering of state territories into municipalities were motivated by a very diverse set of reasons. The different population groups, emerging through distinct migratory waves, that occupied these territories is also a phenomenon to be considered, since the rural population exceeded the urban population in some periods in history covered by this study (in the case of Paraná, at least, with the migratory - and immigratory - waves to the northern region of the state, to the coffee and maté plantations, throughout the first half of the 20th century).

In the case of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, the migratory and immigratory waves also had an impact, both on population increase and the resulting territorial occupation. Box 1 provides a systematization of the general data referring to the proportional growth of the three states of the Southern Region and their respective capitals. Just for the sake of illustration and comparison, in 1950, Rio Grande do Sul was Brazil’s 5th most populous state; Paraná came in 8th place and Santa Catarina in 11th place. In the following decade, Rio Grande do Sul remained the 5th most populous state, but Paraná changed to 6th place and Santa Catarina to 10th place. It is noteworthy that Paraná’s population more than doubled in that interstice, being by far the highest percentage growth in Brazil (IBGE, 2011).

Box 1 – Demographic data, Southern Region (1940-1960).

Year*	TOTAL NUMBER OF INHABITANTS						
	Brazil	Paraná		Santa Catarina		Rio Grande do Sul	
		Curitiba	Total	Florianópolis	Total	Porto Alegre	Total
1940	41 236 315	140 656	1 236 276	46 771	1 178 340	272 232	3 320 689
1950	51 944 397	180 575	2 115 547	67 630	1 560 502	394 151	4 164 821
1960	70 967 185	361 309	4 296 375	98 520	2 146 909	641 173	5 448 823

Source: Prepared based on data obtained from IBGE (2011).

Note: The data shown are as at September 1st 1940, July 1st 1950, and September 1st 1960, respectively.

With regard to the number of municipalities, Box 2 shows the data from the 1940, 1950, and 1960 censuses, bolstering the argument that population growth and interiorization were one of the vectors of expansion. It can be seen that in the same way as its population grew, in Paraná there was a considerable increase in the number of its municipalities, especially in the decade 1950-1960. Increases of similar magnitude can be identified in the other states of the Southern Region.

Box 2 – Increase in the number of municipalities in Brazil (1940-1960).

Federative Units*	Total (01.09.1940)	Total (01.07.1950)	Total (01.09.1960)
1. São Paulo	270	369	503
2. Minas Gerais	288	388	483
3. Bahia	150	150	194
4. Paraná	49	80	162
5. Rio Grande do Sul	88	92	150
6. Goiás	52	77	146
7. Ceará	79	79	142
8. Pernambuco	85	90	103
9. Santa Catarina	44	52	102
10. Maranhão	65	72	91
TOTAL (Brazil)	1 574	1 849	2 766

Fonte: Prepared based on data obtained from IBGE (1940, 1952, 2011).

Note: We opted to present the order of municipalities taking the 10 Federative Units with the highest number of municipalities in 1960. As can be seen, the order in 1960 does not coincide with that of the previous decades. This, by itself, is an important element for more in-depth analyses and reflections.

Boxes 3 and 4 demonstrate how the interiorization vector had an impact both on the creation of secondary schools and on enrollment. However, when looking at the numerical analyses of the data shown in the Boxes, certain issues need to be taken into consideration. We mention only two of them, by way of illustration: in Box 3, for example, the numbers that correspond to public education and to private education are not shown separately (we will present this analysis later); in Box 4, the numbers shown refer to enrollment rates at the beginning of the school year. However, as we know, numbers at the end of the school year are much lower. For the purposes of this study, we have not included these latter data.

Box 3 – Number of Secondary Education establishments, Southern Region (1945-1960).

Year	Paraná			Santa Catarina			Rio Grande do Sul		
	Capital	Interior	Total	Capital	Interior	Total	Capital	Interior	Total
1945	15	13	28	2	10	12	14	61	75
1947	16	19	35	3	16	19	19	90	109
1949	18	27	45	3	22	25	19	93	112
1955	19	72	91	4	36	40	36	155	191
1957	25	101	126	4	40	44	42	181	223
1959	28	120	148	4	50	54	48	212	260
1960	32	135	167	4	58	62	49	223	272

Source: Prepared based on data obtained from INEP (1945, 1948, 1951) and DESe (1955, 1957, 1959, 1960).

Box 4 – Number of students enrolled in Secondary Education, Southern Region (1940-1960).

Year	Brazil	Paraná		Santa Catarina		Rio Grande do Sul	
		Curitiba	Total	Florianópolis	Total	Porto Alegre	Total
1940	170 057	4 590	6 061	580	1 514	5 633	10 519
1949	365 851	8 931	15 472	1 482	4 969	11 203	29 991
1960	868 178	15 756	47 377	2 429	13 441	26 467	85 170

Source: Prepared based on data obtained from IBGE (1947, 1953, 1960).

Note: As we were unable to find data for 1950, we used data for 1949. It should be noted that the data refer to initial enrollments, and that these numbers may vary with census data verification and updates in other documents.

Finally, Boxes 5 and 6 show the dimension of the increase of educational institutions that provided both junior high and high school courses in the three states throughout the period studied. We denote from these numbers that the increase in junior high schools ended up boosting the demand for high schools, although with some differences between the states, which we assume are due to several reasons, such as high retention and dropout rates, the elitist character of this branch of education, especially if we take into consideration the quantity of private/confessional institutions. In spite of these differences, the data shown corroborate the maxim attributed to Isaac Kandel⁴, who stated that if the 19th century was the century of primary education expansion, the 20th century was undoubtedly the century of secondary education expansion.

Box 5 – Secondary Education establishments in the Southern Region in 1945.

Federative Units	Junior High Schools	High Schools	Total	%
Paraná	12	16	28	3.3
Santa Catarina	8	4	12	1.4
Rio Grande do Sul	61	14	75	9.1
TOTAL (Brazil)	538	289	827	100

Source: Adapted from Gatti; Gatti Júnior (2021, p. 181), based on data obtained from INEP (1945, p.283-284).

Box 6 – Secondary Education establishments in the Southern Region in 1959.

Federative Units	Junior High Schools	High Schools	Total	%
Paraná	117	31	148	5.5
Santa Catarina	45	9	54	1.9
Rio Grande do Sul	204	56	260	9.5
TOTAL (Brazil)	2 042	673	2 715	100

Fonte: Source: Adapted from Gatti; Gatti Júnior (2021, p. 181-182), based on data obtained from DESe (1959, p.6).

⁴ Isaac Leon Kandel (1881-1965) is considered to be one of the pioneers in comparative and international research. He served as international consultant on educational development for the UN and UNESCO from 1946 to 1962. One of Kandel's reference works is entitled *Comparative Education*, 1933, which was revised and published in 1955 as *The New Era in Education: A Comparative Study*. It was translated and published in Brazil in 1960 as "*Uma nova era em educação: estudo comparativo*".

Another area of significant comparison that we sought to delimit relates to the relationship between the public and private sectors as drivers of secondary school network expansion.

Secondary education expansion and public and private/confessional institutions

In the three states, to different extents, several religious orders and their schools took on distinct roles in the constitution of the secondary school culture. As we have seen, both in Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, the religious orders took on a leading role, compared to the role of the State in the process of secondary education expansion. In Paraná, government investment in the building public institutions, especially those linked to the state government (although some were municipal and later taken over by the state) was more marked.

In this sense, the configuration of public (state/municipal) and private/confessional networks of secondary education institutions appears to be a fertile field for further study. The example of Paraná can be taken as a contrast to the other two Southern states, since throughout the 1950s there was considerable investment in the growth of the public secondary school network, coexisting with a consolidated, but not so numerous, network of private/confessional institutions. Box 7 illustrates these arguments, indicating the numbers registered by the 1960 census.

Box 7 – Public and private/confessional establishments in the Southern Region in 1960.

Federative Units	Total	Public	%	Private/confessional	%
Paraná	167	109	65.26	58	34.73
Santa Catarina	62	8	12.90	54	87.09
Rio Grande do Sul	272	60	22.05	212	77.94
TOTAL (Brazil)	3 003	842	28.03	2 161	71.96

Source: Prepared based on data obtained from DESe (1960).

We can see from the data presented in this Box that the states of the Southern Region accounted for 16.68% of Brazilian secondary schools, being 9.05% in Rio Grande do Sul; 5.56% in Paraná and 2.06% in Santa Catarina. It can also be seen that the physical network of educational establishments in the region was composed of 501 school units, of which 177 (35.32%) were public and 324 (64.67%) were private/confessional. At the national level, the data show that of the 3,003 secondary schools in Brazil, 2,161 (71.96%) were funded by the private sector and 842 (28.03%) by the public sector. This represents a set of statistical indicators that show the singularities, disparities and the need for historical research on the processes of expansion, interiorization and democratization of this level of education in different regions of the country.

As seen earlier, the state of Santa Catarina was characterized by its small public secondary education network (DALLABRIDA, VIEIRA, 2020; 2021). It began to expand primarily during the first half of the 1960s, due to a set of state-level public policies. In this context, large high schools were built and put into operation in the main cities of Santa Catarina. These include the *Instituto Estadual de Educação* in Florianópolis and the *Colégio Pedro II* in Blumenau. Some of these school buildings were monumental, given the goal of massifying public and free secondary education. However, we reaffirm that at that period in time, the education system in Santa Catarina was characterized by the predominance of private Catholic confessional education, and, therefore, attended part of the middle classes and social groups in

rural areas of the state (DALLABRIDA; VIEIRA, 2020). With this observation, we highlight the observation made by Dallabrida (2011, p. 156) who states that,

It can be considered that the creation of the first public and free junior high schools, providing both scientific and classic courses, contributed to starting the “quantitative democratization” of secondary education, but the configuration of the secondary school subfield, marked by the massive presence of private and confessional schools, excluded the great majority of Santa Catarina’s adolescents from the formal school system. (DALLABRIDA, 2011, p. 156).

A similar phenomenon took place in Rio Grande do Sul. According to Elomar Tambara, Eduardo Arriada, and Giana Amaral, “unquestionably, the South of Brazil, and Rio Grande do Sul in particular, became a hotbed of religious vocations that nourished with nimbleness the needs of the higher ranks of these congregations and religious orders” (2021, p. 294). The authors provide a considerable list of Catholic, Lutheran, Adventist, Methodist, Anglican and Jewish institutions that contributed to meeting the growing demand for secondary education (2021, p. 295 et. seq.).

Deriving from this issue, we find a fruitful debate on the so-called “quality of education”, with sources that sometimes point to the importance of private networks reaching places that the government had still not been able to reach, while at the same time this seems to have had a negative impact on the “quality” of what was taught. The public network, with the exception of the model institutions and those that were better equipped, also faced a series of obstacles, especially in the initial moments of expansion, when there was a precariousness of material conditions and human resources to attend to secondary school youth. The next topic explores some possibilities for reflection and more in-depth investigation.

Needs for investments in teacher training and working conditions

This appears to be a pertinent dimension that deserves to be explored in future studies, articulating it with the argument on “quality of education” previously indicated. The expansion of secondary education in the time frame of the project is articulated with a series of issues that have become more evident. One of them refers to the debate about teacher training, both through the constitution of a legal apparatus to ensure investment in secondary school teacher posts, and also through the issues that cut across the training of these teachers (creation of training institutions, investments in curricula and in teaching “methods and techniques”, among others). To illustrate the argument, it is possible to highlight the case of Santa Catarina, where one can see the relationship of the secondary education expansion process in the state with the creation of the first higher education institutions, among them: the Federal University of Santa Catarina (*Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina - UFSC*), in 1960; and the University of the State of Santa Catarina (*Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina - UDESC*), in 1965. Standing out Rio Grande do Sul is the *Colégio de Aplicação*, part of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - UFRGS*), which, in the mid 1950s, started to operate as a “space of pedagogical practice for the students of the university’s degree courses” and that, although it was a “late implementation of a federal-level decision”, the “Junior High School was consolidated, becoming the current *Colégio de Aplicação* of the UFRGS with general recognition in the community” (TAMBARA; ARRIADA, AMARAL, 2021, p. 298-299).

Moreover, even “equipping” the (new) institutions with material and human resources appears to us to be a challenge that was not immediately solved in that scenario of the 1950s and 1960s. We understand that such normative instruments, in the case of the state of Paraná, can be allocated under two totally articulated categories:

a) Political and administrative (re)organization of secondary education: the creation of a secretariat body and the embryonic organization of an education system (which would only be put into effect in 1964), in addition to the establishment of free secondary education, seem to denote the presence of the state as one of the protagonists with regard to secondary education (in Paraná), as a result of an expressive growth in the number of public institutions;

b) Creation and organization of a public teaching career: issues related to competitive examinations to fill vacancies, creation of job posts and management of careers and functions related to school administration are important marks in this set of laws and decrees the study found.

By way of conclusion

Finally, it must be highlighted that the challenging exercise of organizing and consolidating data, arguments and “historiographical rhetoric” in a text that intended to be a comparative exercise was a task of immense responsibility. Despite the possibilities of reinterpretation that the material compiled here presents, we are aware that, rather than a point of arrival, this text is a starting point, announcing results and ponderations that shed light on existing academic productions, and that, mainly, point to gaps that exist, inviting and instigating continuity of research and reflections.

When establishing the areas of comparison that made it possible to identify similarities and contrasts in the processes of secondary education expansion in the Southern Region, we emphasized population growth and interiorization as vectors of this expansion. Therefore, rather than pointing out that this phenomenon marked the increase of a physical network of secondary schools in Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul during the 1950s and 1960s, we can affirm that this process was also closely related to other Federative Units, as pointed out in the works of the collection organized by Eurize Pessanha and Fabiany Silva (2021). Their research indicates to us, for example, particularities in relation to the noteworthy government (state and/or municipal) investment in the creation and expansion of schools, as it is the case of Paraná, São Paulo and Pernambuco, as well as the more numerous actions of private and/or confessional institutions, as occurred in Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais.

In the same way, when seeking to understand the processes of secondary education expansion, research related to teacher training, the legal and normative apparatus, curriculum (re)organization, teaching “methods and techniques”, among other aspects, is announced as a possibility, especially when one considers the flexibilization and diversification contained in the 1961 Law of Directives and Bases (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases - LDB*) (BRASIL, 1961)⁵. Generally speaking, these (and other) issues can serve as a horizon for the exercise of comparing the research done regarding each state, attempting to perceive analytical distances and similarities in the sequence of investigations. Comparative knowledge of the realities in the

⁵ We consider flexibility and diversification to be certain possibilities announced in the 1961 LDB, which indicates, for example, in Art. 44, that “Secondary education admits a variety of curricula, according to the optional subjects that are preferred by the education establishments”, as well as in Art. 104 that states “The organization of experimental courses or schools will be allowed, with their own curricula, methods and school periods, whereby for the purposes of legal validity, their operation shall depend on the authorization of the State Education Council, with regard to primary and secondary courses [...]”.

states that make up the Southern Region, has made evident the historical diversity that, in the scope of secondary education, can be noted in this article, giving contours to the marks of secondary education expansion.

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