

## HISTORY OF TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCES: situating the debate

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The growing concern of the scientific community in understanding the history of teaching Social Sciences has been significant in recent years, considering the researchers from both Social Sciences and Education. This expanding interest is evidenced by several indicators, including a) the persistence of Working Groups from this topic at the main events in the area; b) the significant increase in academic production dedicated to the topic through theses, dissertations, articles in journals, books and collections.

However, if on the one hand these indicators, as well as the dossier now published by the *Revista Brasileira de História da Educação* (RBHE), reflect the growing recognition of the importance of understanding the history of teaching Social Sciences, on the other, they shed light on the need of bringing social scientists closer to historiographical *praxis* and the broad universe of research in the History of Education.

Such data point to the fact that this movement is recent and incipient within the field of Social Sciences, and the need for dialogue among sociologists and historians in general – and with historians of education, in particular. The latter, in fact, have been involved for decades with the history of educational knowledge and practices, intellectuals, teaching, teacher training, curricula, disciplines, subjects, culture and school materials, among other characteristic themes that mark the trajectory of both this journal and the Brazilian Society of History of Education that edits it.

Aiming to contribute to the debate, as well as to conduct the fields closer together, we bring to the public the dossier “History of Education and the teaching of Social Sciences” (2024), which presents six interinstitutional articles by Brazilian and foreign researchers who seek to offer a diverse and comprehensive approach on the topic, considering the plurality of sources, analyzes and the institutional diversity of the authors. We also seek to place readers of the aforementioned dossier within the set of debates on the History of Social Sciences teaching in Brazil.

Certainly, one of the challenges in thinking about the organization of an issue dedicated to the history of teaching Social Sciences at RBHE refers to the place that this subject occupies, located at the interface among three distinct spheres of knowledge. Even though most of our authors come from Sociology, it is worth highlighting that this is not a Sociology dossier of Sociology teaching – yet the sociological perspective is inevitably on the horizon –, it is a number thought at the interface among Sociology, History and History of Education.

It should be mentioned that the predominant methodological approach in studies on the history of teaching Social Sciences, especially in the context of school Sociology, stands out for its emphasis on a narrative constructed from legal and institutional frameworks, as well as the contributions of intellectuals prominent in the battles for the inclusion/exclusion of this knowledge in school curricula.

In this context, it is observed that this narrative is often shaped by current educational legislation, by the institutional dynamics that permeates the educational environment, by the production of specific school manuals and by the recognition of key figures, often the authors of introductory manuals to Sociology.

Therefore, we know that there is a lot to advance, to know and to learn from the historians of education who, more than two decades ago, embarked on the movement to reinterpret and reevaluate the country's educational past. Rather than simply accepting established narratives – as is the case with many sociologists who turn to the history of sociology teaching – these historians of education sought new ways of looking at traditional objects of study, such as books, documents, institutions and pedagogical practices, in order to discover new explanatory perspectives and new objects of analysis.

The historians explored conventional assumptions and new lines of inquiry that ultimately provided a richer and more complex understanding of the historical development of education in Brazil. This included the analysis of previously neglected sources such as personal records, letters, diaries, and visual materials, as well as the application of new methodologies and theories to examine existing data under a different perspective.

By adopting this stance in the construction of a now consolidated field of research, historians of education in Brazil shed light on aspects of the educational past that were underestimated, ignored, or distorted, thus contributing to a more complete and accurate comprehension of the history of education. This approach also opened space for critical reflection on the implications of the educational past for contemporary and future challenges faced by the Brazilian educational system.

In this way, we seek to get closer to this field of knowledge by considering the set of research that has been published on the topic of the history of teaching Social Sciences in Brazil, highlighting the following aspects: a) there is a predominance of two time frames in the research, covering the period from 1925 to 1942<sup>1</sup> and the year 2000. In both cases, the presence of school Sociology in the secondary education curriculum emerges as a crucial variable to understand this predominance; b) most

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1 It is interesting to note that this is a period also of great relevance in debates about the history of education in Brazil, because as Catani and Faria Filho (2002) pointed out, the First Republic is one of the periods analyzed with greater intensity by researchers. This also reflects the fact that Sociology was introduced into the Brazilian school curriculum through federal legislation, precisely in a period of intense disputes surrounding an educational project for the nation.

research focuses on the teaching of Sociology at school, with little exploration of the teaching of Anthropology and Political Science<sup>2</sup> within higher education; and c) the literature review is the most common methodology adopted, standing out as a recurring approach in investigating the history of teaching Social Sciences (Bodart & Cigales, 2019). In general, such research explore the ideological aspects present in Sociology manuals produced by representatives of certain intellectual groups, including the social places they occupied and the content they convey in their works.

In this context, it is important to highlight that the teaching of Sociology did not have (and does not have) a uniform meaning, thus presenting variations over time and space. In a more substantive way, the Sociology that was introduced in Brazilian schools during the First Republic and at the beginning of the so-called New Republic is distinct from the one that began to gradually occupy school curricula after the redemocratization process in the 1980s (Oliveira, 2013), which reflected, for example, in variations of discourses that sought to legitimize its offer (Azevedo & Nascimento, 2015).

Notably, understanding the processes of transformation of meanings that Sociology began to assume over time demands a more comprehensive reflection on the transformation of the Social Sciences in its broadest sense, including teaching it in the university.

Some research has highlighted the multiplicities of paths in teaching Sociology, whether when seeking to observe the meanings given by Social Sciences graduates (Cigales et al., 2019), by students (Leal & Yung, 2015), by official documents (Lima, 2018), as well as by textbooks (Engerroff & Oliveira, 2019) or even curricular disputes (Cigales, 2019; Pereira, 2015; Silva & Bodart, 2019; Lima, 2018). The disputes over the definition of the meanings of the Sociology from schools have been explored in order to present support for understanding the process of institutionalization of Sociology, including the process of relative autonomy of the field of Sociology in relation to the Brazilian educational field in general (Engerroff & Oliveira, 2019; Cigales, 2019; Oliveira, 2023).

Thus, the article entitled “Sociology gets expelled from school: the Capanema Reform of 1942 and the disputes of the Catholics over the subject in Brazil”, by Thiago da Costa Lopes (2024), explores the exclusion of Sociology as a mandatory subject from the curriculum of secondary schools after the Capanema Reform of 1942, and highlights the disputes taken up by Catholic intellectuals around scientificity and the

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2 Care must be taken here to avoid falling into anachronisms, since the delimitation of Social Sciences in higher education during the process of creating the first degrees in the area was more comprehensive, including disciplines today considered related to Social Sciences in Brazil, such as such as History, Geography, Demography, Economy etc. It is also worth highlighting some research carried out on the teaching of Social Sciences in higher education based on the actions of certain agents, as in the case of the analysis that Meucci (2015) carries out regarding the performance of Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987) at the University of the Federal District (UDF), or what Oliveira (2019, 2023b) does about teaching Arthur Ramos also at UDF and abroad, at the *Louisiana State University*.

contours to be assumed by Social Sciences in Brazil. In the literature specialized in the clashes between secular Sociology and Catholic Sociology we find a set of research (Cigales, 2019; Cigales & Oliveira, 2024; Oliveira & Gatti Junior, 2019), but without focusing on the aspects that led to Sociology being excluded from middle school and complementary courses in 1942.

The second article in the dossier, entitled “Old social science textbooks for elementary schools: the Ariosto Espinheira collection”, authored by historian Antonia Terra Calazans (2024), enriches studies on the history of textbooks by analyzing a collection developed from a Social Sciences curricular program for the initial years. This collection was implemented in Rio de Janeiro in the 1930s, amid debates to reformulate the principles of national education. Calazans analyzes the contents of the collection, which, according to the author, were directly associated with the Brazilian context, marked by the process of urbanization, economic modernization and import substitution, which directly impacted the production of textbooks in Brazil, especially after the Great Depression, as Hallewell (2017) indicated.

We also highlight the article “Evaluation of learning in Sociology discipline for the Complementary Course: Reflections based on textbooks from 1930s and 1940s”, authored by Welkson Pires and Lucas Matheus Lima (2024), which investigates school manuals aimed at complementary preparatory courses for higher education that circulated in Brazil in 1930s and 1940s. This article contributes to the understanding of evaluation processes in the teaching of Sociology in the first half of the 20th century. Furthermore, it opens a relevant focus of analysis: the teaching-learning objectives contained in Sociology during the examined period.

In the article entitled “Profile of the Pedagogical Evaluation Committees of Sociology Textbooks of the National Textbook Program from 2012 to 2018”, Rafaela Reis Azevedo de Oliveira, Thiago de Jesus Esteves and Katuscia Cristina Vargas Antunes (2024) explore agents that until then had not been observed: the book evaluators of the National Textbook Program (*Programa Nacional do Livro Didático*, PNLD). These are important subjects of analysis, as they are the ones who evaluate and choose the works that will make up the catalog of that program. According to the authors, identifying the profile of the works' evaluators makes it possible to highlight their professional and academic identities, which in the adopted period (2012-2018) demonstrate a close relationship with the broad area of knowledge of Social Sciences.

Although not turning to the Brazilian experience, but French, Igor Martinache (2024) in “School subjects as fields in (trans)formation: the case of the introduction of Economic and Social Sciences in French secondary education (1965-1985)” invites us to understand the social agents who competed, in France, for power over the conformations of the school curriculum. We highlight that some works about the reality of sociology teaching in that country have already been published in Brazil previously (Martinache, 2021), mainly through the translation of texts by French

authors (Chatel & Grosse, 2014; Vitale, 2015; Troung, 2019; Serre, 2020), in addition to carrying out comparative analyzes between two distinct realities (Maçaira, 2017; Martins & Fraga, 2021). The French case is especially interesting to compare with Brazil as it allows us to think about the different arrangements that Social Sciences can take on in the school curriculum. While in France Sociology is linked in secondary education in the Economic Sciences, in Brazil it is associated with Anthropology and Political Science.

In the article entitled “Themes, methodologies, and cores of meaning: a content analysis of the scientific production of the Master's Degree in Social Sciences for Secondary Education”, by Tatiane Moura, Patricia Bandeira de Melo, Rodrigo Vieira de Assis and Alexandre Zarias (2024), we observe the focus on academic production on the teaching of Social Sciences using sources for the course conclusion works of a professional master's program. Even though it is an analysis of the present time, it proves to be a relevant examination to understand the history of Social Sciences teaching in Brazil, especially in the field of teacher training, a topic so dear to educators.

In Brazil, several studies have been carried out with the purpose of analyzing academic production on the teaching of Social Sciences in a more current time frame, thus contributing to the comprehension of the dynamics related to this scientific production in recent history. Some dedicated themselves to examining dissertations and theses ( Handfas, 2011; Bodart & Cigales, 2017; Antunes & Alves, 2018), articles in journals in the area of Sociology (Oliveira & Melchiorretto, 2020), dossiers (Brunetta & Cigales, 2018), articles in working groups at events (Röwer , 2016; Oliveira, 2026; Cruz, 2022), books and collections (Eras, 2015), as well as groups and lines of research (Neuhold , 2015).

Returning to the arguments presented in the articles that make up the dossier, we can observe some issues that contribute to a reflection on the (sub)set area in a broader way, especially on historical research into the teaching of Social Sciences.

Lopes (2024), seeking to elucidate the reasons that led to the exclusion of sociology from the school curriculum in 1942 and to discuss the impact of the disputes waged by Catholic intellectuals in this process, used the analysis of historical documents such as opinions, reports and correspondence, in addition to bibliographic review on the topic. The use of documents available in the Gustavo Capanema Archive stands out.

Among the various sources that have been mobilized in Brazil, there are school activities (Bodart, 2015), school manuals (Meucci, 2000; Brito, 2012; Cigales, 2019; Lima, 2018), newspapers (Bodart & Marchiori, 2021), school programs (Lima, 2018), scientific journals (Neuhold, 2023) and legislation (Machado, 1987). In this sense, we have come strongly closer to the *praxis* of historians from the education field.

We will find in the articles by Calazans (2024) and Pires and Lima (2024) the use of school manuals as historical sources to think about the teaching of Social Sciences. In the case of Calazans (2024), the methodology adopted includes the analysis of the

materiality and content of Social Sciences textbooks for elementary schools produced in the 1930s, which was carried out in order to understand how the educational ideas of the time were incorporated – or not – into teaching practice. Pires and Lima, in turn, analyzed five Sociology textbooks published in the 1930s, focused on Complementary Courses, from a historical-educational perspective, which they did through curricular documents and educational legislation of the time.

The authors did not fail to highlight the importance of contextualizing the analyzes of school manuals in light of educational legislation and current curricular documents, which had already been highlighted by Bodart and Pires (2021) regarding Social Sciences textbooks when proposing a analysis methodology that considers internal and external aspects of the works.

In this search for a renewal of questions and research objects, Oliveira, Esteves and Antunes adopted a stimulating methodological approach when exploring the guides of the National Textbook Program (PNLD) with the purpose of understanding aspects of the didactic works and characterizing the profile of the commission evaluator.

We also find, in the article by Moura *et al.* (2024), a qualitative and quantitative analysis of part of the academic production in the (sub)set area of Sociology teaching, which adds to other research with different sections and analysis variables. This type of examination contributes to understanding the dynamics of this (sub)set area, especially highlighting the increase in the volume of work in the last decade, including the diversification of themes.

As for the theoretical basis that has been adopted in analyzes of the history of teaching Social Sciences in Brazil, there is a predominance of Field Theory, which “has oxygenated the research agenda on the history of teaching Sociology and provided the topic with a promising theoretical-methodological treatment” (Bodart & Tavares, 2021, p. 50). This may reflect the predominance that Bourdieu occupies in the field of Sociology of Education in Brazil, as well as in the field of History of Education itself (Catani & Faria Filho, 2002).

Even though research on the history of teaching Social Sciences goes beyond the scope of this dossier, it is interesting to note some elements present here that highlight certain effects in this area. The most evident is the centrality of the textbook in analyzes of the history of Social Sciences teaching.

We recognize that school manuals and introductory books on Sociology are fundamental historical sources for understanding content and pedagogical intentions, especially when dealing with distant periods. Furthermore, another prominent methodological approach to understand these elements related to the teaching of Social Sciences is the analysis of documents produced by teachers and students, as done by Bodart (2015), when exploring evaluative activities applied in a school in 1935, and the legislation, as used by Machado (1987).

On the other hand, we understand at least since the 1990s, studies related to school culture and, above all, those aimed at the history of school subjects, have greatly boosted knowledge about the practices and representations of institutionalized knowledge and about the everyday uses of/in textbooks. Precisely for this reason, we understand that one of the greatest challenges faced by those who focus on the history of teaching Social Sciences from now on is precisely to appropriate the vast bibliography produced on the subject of *school culture* within the field of History of Education, in order to incorporate the rich discussions about the meanings of textbooks beyond the idea of mere “edited curricula”, which is still present in the history of Social Sciences teaching (Julia, 2001; Escolano Benito, 2011; 2017; Chervel, 1990; Souza-Chaloba, 2000).

We observed a trend in the research undertaken by sociologists who continue to use school manuals to investigate curricular aspects and teaching practices in different historical periods, often disregarding the *uses* of these artifacts by the school community itself. On the other hand, it is noted that, although there are multiple periods of interest, the most frequent excerpts are concentrated in the first half of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century. Specifically, the period following the inclusion of Sociology in the National Textbook Program (PNLD) stands out. We highlight here again the relevance of the analysis of the period between the First Republic and the New Republic for the field of History of Education, so that research on this period has a strong connection with what has been debated in the Brazilian educational field recently.

Notably, research on the history of Teaching Social Sciences is not limited to such aspects, with special emphasis on studies about the creation of the first Social Sciences courses (instances of teacher training), as well as the agents involved in this process. Perhaps it is worth reflecting that many of the studies that are part of this debate are often not understood as analyzes of the teaching of Social Sciences, even if they focus on acknowledging the trajectory of teachers and teacher training courses.

It is also worth highlighting that the issues presented here also represent another moment in the (sub)set area of Sociology teaching, as there has been a growing refinement of the theoretical and methodological tools adopted. If, to a large extent, we found, until the mid-2000s and early 2010s, a continuous replication of certain statements about the history of Social Sciences teaching<sup>3</sup> without due consultation with the archives, with the reproduction of hypotheses with little basis in documents and the massive use of non-problematized bibliography, we can currently observe a genuine

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3 Takagi (2013) stresses this issue by indicating that theses and dissertations on Sociology teaching repeatedly reproduced a chapter on the history of Social Sciences teaching, even though no empirical or analytical progress was demonstrated in this debate. For the author, this could either demonstrate a certain lack of knowledge of previous production, or a need to seek a certain legitimacy for her object of study.

effort to approach empirics, at the same time that we have sought to question with greater complexity the very events that demarcate the history of the field.

What seems relevant to emphasize is how studies of the History of Social Sciences teaching have expanded in recent years, which has contributed to consolidating the (sub)set area of Sociology teaching, whether through the exploration of new sources and new empirical fields, whether through new theoretical and methodological approaches. Continuous advancement in this area requires the recognition of debates that have already been conducted recently and greater dialogue with the theoretical-methodological contributions of History, especially the History of Education, in order to encourage the development of new agendas and fertile dialogues.

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