



The flag is vibrant symbol of homeland: nationalist traits in school culture in west paulista¹

A bandeira é o símbolo vibrante da pátria: traços nacionalistas na cultura escolar do oeste paulista

La bandera es el simbolo vibrante de la patria: rasgos nacionalistas en la cultura escolar en el oeste paulista

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to discuss the penetration of some nationalist traits in the school culture of the first public educational institutions in the region of the extreme west of São Paulo. The spatial section comprised the municipalities of Presidente Bernardes and Presidente Venceslau, between 1932 and 1960. Through the contribution of Oral History, interviews were carried out with teachers and students who attended the institutions in the period. It also used the references of Cultural History and Regional History. During the 28 years focused on, the State created policies to encourage patriotism that affected schools, showing that the teachers contributed to the dissemination of nationalist elements since school culture incorporated and disseminated various prideful practices.

Keywords: Nationalism traits. School Culture. School Group.

¹ The first part of the title of this article is a badge that was used in the Presidente Venceslau School Group in 1939. English version of the article was revised by Juliana Ribeiro Lima Passos. E-mail: ribeiropassosconsultoria@gmail.com. This work was carried out with support from the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul Foundation - UFMS/MEC - Brazil. Considering that it is a study with human beings, it is important to inform that the research was registered in the Research Ethics Committee of FCT/UNESP, being approved by the opinion no. 270.609 (Plataforma Brasil: CAAE: 12952613.8.0000.5402; Opinion Number: 3.149 .549).

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é discutir a penetração de alguns traços nacionalistas na cultura escolar das primeiras instituições públicas de ensino da região do extremo oeste paulista. O recorte espacial compreendeu os municípios de Presidente Bernardes e Presidente Venceslau, entre 1932 e 1960. Por meio do aporte da História Oral, foram realizadas entrevistas com docentes e discentes que frequentaram as instituições no período. Utilizou-se também dos referenciais da História Cultural e da História Regional. Durante os 28 anos enfocados o Estado criou políticas de incentivo ao patriotismo que incidiam nas escolas, sendo possível constatar que as docentes contribuíram para a disseminação de elementos nacionalistas uma vez que a cultura escolar incorporou e difundiu diversas práticas ufanistas.

Palavras-chave: Traços nacionalistas. Cultura Escolar. Grupo Escolar.

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es discutir la penetración de algunos rasgos nacionalistas en la cultura escolar de las primeras instituciones educativas públicas en la región del extremo oeste de São Paulo. La sección espacial comprendió los municipios de Presidente Bernardes y Presidente Venceslau, entre 1932 y 1960. A través de la contribución de Historia Oral, se realizaron entrevistas con maestros y estudiantes que asistieron a las instituciones en el período. También utilizó las referencias de Historia Cultural e Historia Regional. Durante los 28 años centrados en, el Estado creó políticas para alentar el patriotismo que afectó a las escuelas, demostrando que los maestros contribuyeron a la difusión de elementos nacionalistas, ya que la cultura escolar incorporó y difundió varias prácticas orgullosas.

Palabras-clave: Rasgos nacionalistas. Cultura Escolar. Grupo Escolar.

Introduction

This paper is an excerpt from a doctoral thesis², developed between 2012 and 2016 under the Postgraduate Program in Education of the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) - Presidente Prudente Campus.

The purpose of this text is to discuss how some nationalist elements got into the school culture of the first graduated schools in the extreme west of São Paulo³. With this intention, works relating to the implantation of the first school groups in that region were analyzed, considering several documentary sources in addition to the use of reports from teachers who worked in the cities of Presidente Venceslau and Presidente Bernardes from 1932 (installation of the group schools in both cities) to 1960 (inauguration of the Presidente Bernardes School Group building).

In the research, we used the theoretical-methodological references of Cultural History⁴ and Regional History and we also used Oral History⁵ for the analysis of the interviews. A mapping of probable research participants⁶ was carried out in the archives of educational institutions that once housed school groups. After making the first contact with these people, they were asked to point out new participants and this process continued until the information provided by the reports ceased to present new data, indicating saturation.

Therefore, we aimed at showing how the excessive patriotism practices of exaltation of the motherland were progressively introduced in the daily routine and incorporated in the daily

² The thesis is entitled “As influências do trabalho docente feminino na cultura escolar do extremo oeste paulista (1932-1960)” and was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes) – Brazil. Finance Code 001.

³ This region, also called Pontal do Paranapanema and Alta Sorocabana, has a relatively recent history. The municipalities that make up the time frame of this research had their foundation in very close dates (Presidente Bernardes, in 1923, and Presidente Venceslau, in 1926) due to the arrival of the Sorocabana Railway. Sorocabana's objective was to facilitate the connection between the State of São Paulo and the State of Mato Grosso and, thus, according to Monbeig (1984, p. 197), “the tracks reached Quatá in 1916, Presidente Prudente in 1920, and Presidente Epitácio in 1922. [...] Even before they were hit by the railroad in 1916 and 1917, future agglomerations, such as Presidente Prudente and Santo Anastácio, saw the first pioneers arrive. The settlement would be triggered by the circulation of the first trains, coinciding the dates, with a few months of difference. While in Northwest the tracks had preceded the pioneer, which in other areas had not happened, in Alta Sorocabana, besides Assis, what happened was the synchronism between the march of the settlement and the advance of the railway”. More information about the region can be found in the works: *Historical Scribbles of Presidente Venceslau* (2006), by Inocêncio Erbella; and *Pioneers and Farmers of São Paulo* (1984), by Pierre Monbeig.

⁴ The study was supported more specifically in the categories of representation and appropriation. According to Chartier (2002, p. 17), “the struggles of representations are as important as the economic struggles to understand the mechanisms by which a group imposes, or tries to impose, its conception of the social world, the values that are its own, and its domain”. According to Souza (2000, p. 6), appropriation is the “[...] way in which individuals reinterpret and use cultural models imposed and in circulation at a given moment”.

⁵ It is worth mentioning some works that the research that gave rise to this paper used as reference: Alberti (2005), Pollak (1992), and, mainly, Thompson (1992). In the book *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Thompson (1992) indicates the existence of three ways of constituting Oral History: the first one uses the reports of a single individual; the second one uses the collection of various life stories; and the last one is called cross-analysis, as the testimonies are used as historical sources and cross-referenced with the other existing sources (documentary, journalistic, pictorial, etc.). In this research, we used the cross analysis since the intention was to analyze the testimonies associated with the other sources collected.

⁶ It was established as a criterion for the selection of participants their direct involvement in teaching and student activities in the first school group of each municipality that makes up the spatial area, between 1932 and 1960. Thus, the teachers and students were prioritized for the composition of the list of deponents.

life of teachers and students, coming from some elements of the school culture of the school groups (the festivities, the school choral and the intonation of the hymns).

The School Culture

Regarding the theoretical framework of studies on school culture, Vidal (2005), based mainly on Chartier (2002), emphasizes that materiality is an important part of the school, but pedagogical relations are processed within the scope of orality, which has an ephemeral characteristic. However, the oral element can contribute to the analysis of the interaction among individuals, with the formality of practices and with cultural objects, constituting their own modes of action that do not fit within the pre-established norms.

In the field of cultural studies, the definitions proposed by Dominique Julia and António Viñao Frago are the ones most commonly used. According to Souza (2000), Viñao Frago's formulation addresses the everyday life of school practices, in addition to exploring the symbolic elements and the materiality of the school. On the other hand, in Julia's perspective, the concept refers more to the cultural transmission of the school. But both authors exhibit a "[...] new look that moves from processes outside the school to the analysis of internal aspects" (SOUZA, 2000, p. 4).

Gonçalves and Faria Filho (2005) emphasize that there is a tendency among researchers to study the inner working of the school, as it is understood that within school institution:

there is a culture in process of formation that, although it may be considered particular due to the specificity of the varied practices of the subjects that occupy this space, it is articulated with other broader cultural practices of society. [...] looking at the school's daily practices is fixed on the silent events of its internal functioning. (GONÇALVES; FARIA FILHO, 2005, p. 32-33).

According to Viñao Frago (1995), the interior of the school provides the individuals who attend it ways of thinking and acting that they will develop both inside and outside the school space. Therefore, time and space are objects of analysis by this author: space is perceived as the place occupied by the school, and time is understood as multiplicity.

For Julia (2001, p. 10), culture can be comprehended as "[...] a set of *rules* that define pieces of knowledge to teach and conducts to inculcate, and a set of *practices* that allow the transmission of that knowledge and the incorporation of this behavior" (author's emphasis). These norms must be analyzed considering the context of their production, their goals, and how the subjects who were undertaken appropriated and practiced them or not.

Hence, Viñao Frago and Julia promoted a shift in the attention that had previously been focused on school's outside and started to study the internal working of the institution. Viñao Frago (1995) has a comprehensive view of school culture, including in his study all the experience and relationships that happen within school.

includes practices and behaviors, lifestyles, habits, and rituals - the daily history of school expertise - material objects - function, use, distribution in space, physical materiality, symbolism, introduction, transformation, disappearance ... - and ways of thinking, as well as shared meanings and ideas. Someone will say: everything. And yes, in fact, school culture is the whole school life: facts and ideas, minds and bodies, objects and behaviors, ways of thinking, saying and doing (VIÑAO FRAGO, 1995, p. 68-69).

The perspectives presented by Viñao Frago and Julia are very close, and, although they are different in some aspects⁷, they indicate that we must pay attention to the norms, practices, materiality, time and school space in order to think that the school cultures discussed here were constructed in the relation between these elements.

The school groups of Presidente Bernardes and Presidente Venceslau were installed in 1932, with the inauguration of Presidente Venceslau's building in 1957 and Presidente Bernardes's building only in 1960. During this period, the teachers started their careers and had to deal with difficulties inherent to the work itself, due to their inexperience, and as they came into contact with the routine in the institutions, they learned and, at the same time, built school cultures, influenced by the state guidelines that guided the formation of childhood with an accentuated nationalist character.

The Nationalisms

The diversity of nationalist strands avoids the determination of a single direction⁸ to guide Brazil's and São Paulo's legislation, which could have been adopted in the time frame. According to Moreira (1998, np), nationalism, between the 1930s and 1960s, emerged as an ideology of the State, being "[...] associated not only with the populism of Getúlio Vargas but also with the developmentalism of Juscelino Kubitschek and reformism of João Goulart, what means to the three most important political orientations of that period". In this sense, it is possible to indicate the existence of three strands of state nationalism, directly related to these political leaders: national populism, national developmentalism and national reformism (MOREIRA, 1998).

Despite the adopted time frame sets the context of the research in the national populism and national developmentalism, the presence of elements of the first one is more evident. A possible explanation for this lies in the fact that "[...] Juscelino's type of nationalism was based on business elite and Brazilian administration, and not a mass movement" (SKIDMORE, 2010, p. 208). Thus, it is symptomatic that there is no resonance of this thought in school groups in western São Paulo in the 1950s, which nationalism was essentially economic (MOREIRA, 1998). According to Skidmore (2010, p. 205), "the government was pragmatic in the execution of its program, emphasizing the growth of basic industries, and deciding to ignore areas such as agriculture and education, which had been nominally included in the Plan of Goals".

In the decades before the emergence of the focused school groups, Nagle (1976) describes the emergence of several nationalist organizations, such as "Liga de Defesa Nacional, Liga Nacionalista do Brasil, Liga Nacionalista de São Paulo, revista *Brazílea*, Propaganda Nativista, Ação Social Nacionalista e revista *A Ordem*". Considering the diversity of nationalist groups, the ideological orientation was not univocal⁹. With regard to Education, in this period,

⁷ Faria Filho et. al. (2004, p. 150) affirm that "Dominique Julia's paper [...] would allow him to incorporate part of the investigation that focuses on school knowledge and curriculum [...]. Antônio Viñao Frago [...] has helped more closely in studies on school spaces and times [...]."

⁸ "The Brazilian history of the 1930-1964 years can hardly be understood in its specificity without considering the then growing and increasingly influential nationalist movement. [...] if nationalism grew and strengthened, its diversity and ideological non-precision was no less evident. [...] The common and, above all, inaccurate vocabulary of nationalism, based on terms such as nation, people and national interests, contributed, however, to the concealment of the differences underlying its diverse orientations" (MOREIRA, 1998, n.p).

⁹ "Nationalism, in the period, was not a phenomenon confined to certain groups or associations. In general, it was not just an attitude against foreign values, institutions and groups, but an attempt to affirm the peculiarities and interests derived from a broader knowledge of the national reality itself [...]. Of course, many so-called nationalist demonstrations of the period were nothing more than patriotic demonstrations, in the sense that they were more verbal and sentimental proclamations than elaborations of a technical nature. They were manifestations of 'patriotism of tours and parades, the uniform inquietation because of rhetorical tickles, apparatus patriotism in

the spread of nationalist traits occurred mainly through the dissemination of textbooks that had a moral, civic and, above all, patriotic content.

The National Defense League, founded in 1916 by Olavo Bilac, Pedro Lessa and Miguel Calmon, had, among its objectives, “to propagate popular and professional education; to spread love to justice and devotion to patriotism at schools; to combat illiteracy” (NAGLE, 1976, p. 45), and, in defending “military service to face external danger, and education in order to combat internal danger – nationalist preaching will focus on training national consciousness” (NAGLE, 1976, p. 46).

Some elements of this League concern would remain for the next decades. In spite of the impossibility of a single definition of nationalism, Almeida (2004) identifies two characteristics that mark the populist aspect:

populist nationalism insisted, in various forms, on the idea of an incipient, incomplete nation, lacking its own identity and, therefore, fragile. The second strong idea alluded to the need for a strong State, endowed with adequate means to integrate all citizens in the national community and thus face the corrosive agents, internal and external, that threatened nationality and sought to prevent its march towards full emancipation. (ALMEIDA, 2004, 102-103).

Considering the complexity of the theme, this paper does not intend to exhaust the discussion on nationalisms, but aims at showing some characteristics that governments have tried to implement in graduated primary schools.

The School Choral and the Hymns Singing

The school choral was one of the auxiliary institutions¹⁰ that were disseminated in São Paulo’s graduated primary schools. It was the choral singing applied to school education, considering that the songs used had pedagogical and moral content.

Initially, in the State of São Paulo, the school choral was intended only for children who attended the third and fourth years of school groups (SOUZA, 2006). In the 1930s, Getúlio Vargas made the school choral mandatory in all Brazilian schools¹¹, taking advantage of the nationalist character of school choral singing and of its means of disseminating values, once only national music were allowed to be performed in rehearsals and presentations. In this sense, the São Paulo State Education Code (SÃO PAULO, 1933) determined:

Art. 90 - In each school group – secondary, professional or normal school, as well as in the Institute of Education –, there will be a school choral, with a maximum of 60 participants chosen annually from among the best musical elements of the establishment.

the medieval and aggressive form of war’; they were manifestations of the educated strata – bourgeois demonstrations – without the necessary of broad popular participation” (NAGLE, 1976, p. 55).

¹⁰ Within the scope of the changes proposed by the pioneers of Escola Nova, were the so-called school auxiliary institutions. In 1936, Almeida Júnior divided them into five categories: institutions of general educational action; agricultural education institutions; economic education institutions; social action institutions; and assistance institutions.

¹¹ According to Horta (2012), it happened in July 1934 through the creation of a general Inspectorate of Emendation Education (*Inspetoria geral do Ensino Emendativo* in Portuguese, expression used at the time to designate “special education”) that instituted the mandatory teaching of Physical Education and singing in public schools, being the latter one also a requirement for primary education. Horta (2012, p. 130) highlights the strangeness of this measure, considering that “this is a rare case of direct intervention by the federal government in primary education programs before 1937”.

Art. 91- Each school choral will hold an audition at least annually, and will only be able to take part in school parties, except with a license from the Department of Education.

§ Single paragraph - School choral music will represent, within school education, the best known in national or foreign music (SÃO PAULO, 1933, p. 13).

However, even with the legal requirement, school choral was not a reality in all groups, especially in the extreme west of São Paulo. The transcript below illustrates the difference between the primary schools graduated from the oldest areas of the State of São Paulo and the groups from the pioneer areas of the researched region. Professor Thereza de Camargo Vieira¹², one of the interviewees for this research, carried out her primary training in the school group of the city of Tietê/SP, from 1935 to 1939, in an institution that had a room reserved for the school choral and had adequate material for singing lessons. When the teacher started working in Presidente Bernardes/SP, in the 1950s, she had to improvise in order to comply with the established norms.

I used to sing in the school choral. There was the room where we got together to sing. In the group where I studied, there was the school choral in the room, there was a piano and the teacher played to teach the children. Not here, as a teacher, for the singing class we used to gather more classes in one room and the same teacher taught the class (THEREZA DE CAMARGO VIEIRA, 2013).

The school choral of the Alfredo Westin Júnior School Group¹³ started to function only in 1957, according to the Map of the School Group: “the school choral of the establishment is in charge of the female teachers Zilah Denari and Zuleika Denari de Oliveira, respectively conductor and assistant. School choral starts on 3/1/57” (SÃO PAULO, 1957). Furthermore, statistics indicated that in 1958 there were 2,171 chorals in school groups in the State of São Paulo (SOUZA, 2006).

However, few teachers reported in the research the existence of the school choral. According to Souza (2006, p. 246), there were school groups that faced difficulties in forming their school choral; some “[...] delegates complained about lack of piano or harmonium for the rehearsals and of specialized teachers and appropriate teaching material”.

Nonetheless, the fact that the school choral was not so present in the school culture of the groups of Presidente Venceslau and Presidente Bernardes did not avoid music from being used for patriotic education. It happened because, from 1931 on, Vargas began to use education as a way of extolling patriotism and valuing the Nation.¹⁴ Various patriotic elements, such as the devotion to the flag and the obligation to daily sing the National Anthem, became part of the school routine.¹⁵

¹² Thereza de Camargo Vieira was born on July 10, 1928, in the city of Tietê/SP. She completed her qualification for teaching at the Normal School *Plínio Rodrigues de Moraes*, in Tietê, in 1948. She moved to Presidente Bernardes/SP in 1949 and started working at *Alfredo Westin Júnior* School Group in 1954, where she remained until 1979.

¹³ On July 5, 1951, the First School Group of Presidente Bernardes changed its name to School Group “Alfredo Westin Junior”, by Decree no. 20.610 – D.O.E. of 07/06/1951.

¹⁴ Horta (2012, p. 168) affirms that “the orpheonic singing has been a compulsory subject in the secondary school curriculum since the Reform Movement Francisco Campos in 1931. According to legal requirements, the core of the program was formed by patriotic hymns and songs in order to ‘inspire love and pride for strong and peaceful Brazil’”.

¹⁵ Vargas's nationalization plan considered the state as “[...] the emanation of a people who share the same past and crave the same future, who recognize and feel they are immanent in common traditions and aspirations. In short, the State is the representation of the Nation” (CUNHA, 2010, p. 251).

In this sense, the story of Terezinha Strazzer Tanus¹⁶ (2013), who graduated from Presidente Bernardes School Group, is elucidative, when she emphasizes that the first activity when starting classes was singing several hymns: “We had to sing the hymn, not necessarily the national anthem, there were other hymns: anthem to the flag, anthem... There were several hymns, right? And there was a hymn people used to refer as ‘peasant life’”.

The student did not exaggerate when she said that she had to sing the hymn; in practice, it was a legal requirement. The Education Code of the State of São Paulo (1933) determined in its Chapter VII – Of the Music and Choral Singing Service – that “In the primary course, there will be daily singing in classroom”. In addition to this determination of São Paulo’s legislation, in 1936 singing the national anthem became mandatory because of a federal law¹⁷. Thus, according to professor Maria de Nazareth Miméssi Gonçalves¹⁸ (2013), in the 1940s: “We used to sing the national anthem every day. It was outside the classroom; we used to sing the national anthem and, then, get in.

This practice denotes the intention to form the republican citizen: literate and patriotic¹⁹. In the minutes of the pedagogical meeting held on October 4, 1939, at the Presidente Venceslau School Group, the principal expresses the command for teachers to have patriotic couplets in their rooms:

Teachers should strive to ensure that in the class, in a very visible place, there are couplets, on cardboard, like these: “Whoever is born in Brazil is either Brazilian or is a traitor”, “Keep your grandparents’ Brazil for your children”, “If you are not a reservist, you are not yet Brazilian”, “The flag is the vibrant symbol of the Fatherland”, “The national anthem is the symbolic song of the race”, “The national anthem is the strong song of nationality”, “The national anthem and the flag are the symbols of the greatness of our country and the value of our people”, “The national anthem is the melody of Brazilian dynamism”, “Getúlio is the wonderful expression of greatness of a race”, “The Head of *Estado Novo* is the symbol of national freedom”, “The constitution of November 10 is the implementation of the ideals of Caxias” [...] (SÃO PAULO, 1939, p. 11-12).

Then, the director explains how these couplets should be arranged and also how the teachers should approach them: “These sentences should be written in excellent handwriting and on strips of soft or hard cardboard. On the day it is going to be fixed in the room, the teacher will explain to the students, in very clear language, its meaning” (SÃO PAULO, 1939, p. 11-12).

This imposition of representations to the teachers (who, in turn, should pass them on to the children), carried out by the principal, was a guideline passed on by the Regional Teaching Office, as shown in the Report of the Education Delegate for the year 1940: “We continue to recommend the **DEVOTION TO THE FLAG**, monthly by all groups and

¹⁶ Terezinha Strazzer Tanus was born on March 28, 1928, in the city of Ouro Fino/MG. She moved to Presidente Bernardes/SP in 1930, having started her studies at the Presidente Bernardes/SP School Group between 1936 and 1939. According to her report, she did not continue her studies because her father did not allow her.

¹⁷ The Law no. 259, of October 1, 1936, made the singing of the national anthem mandatory in all educational establishments and associations for educational purposes in Brazil.

¹⁸ Maria de Nazareth Miméssi Gonçalves was born on October 18, 1917, in the city of São Paulo. She completed her studies at the Normal School of the Dominican Sisters of Santa Catarina de Sena, in Amparo/SP in 1936. She moved to Presidente Bernardes/SP in 1937, started her work in the School Group in 1944 and remained until 1959.

¹⁹ In the context of the *Estado Novo*, Education Minister Gustavo Capanema believed that “the important thing in primary school would be the transmission of the ‘patriotic feeling’, in the style ‘Why am I proud of my country, flag, hymn etc.’, as noted by Capanema’s own fist” (SCHWARTZMAN; BOMENY; COSTA, 2000, p. 210).

schools, including municipal and private ones" (RELATÓRIO..., Presidente Prudente, 1941, p. 30, author's emphasis).

The exaltation of national symbols was present throughout the curriculum. All disciplines were anchored in a larger objective that crossed them, namely, the construction of a civilization²⁰. And this nationalist trait was not exclusive to education in the Vargas Era, but it was a hallmark of Brazilian education during the 20th century.

Subjects such as Geography, History, Physical Education, Moral and Civic Education, should develop a sense of patriotism and nationalism in children; they should contribute to the moral formation of the people and, ultimately, to the construction of nationality. This emphasis on nationalism spanned the 20th century, packed with different ideologies and fueled by different interests (SOUZA, 2006, p. 87).

In this sense, all teachers and students interviewed have memories about the daily practice of chanting hymns. As it was a way of stimulating nationalism, the hymns, especially the national one, were sung every day with the children, as Professor Maria de Nazareth says: "We used to sing the national anthem every day. It was outside the classroom, the national anthem was sung and then we used to get in. [...] I taught how to sing the national anthem, anthem to the flag; at the time of the 32 revolution, the São Paulo anthem" (MARIA DE NAZARETH MIMÉSSI GONÇALVES, 2013).

This feature that music acquired at school was part of the imposition of a representation of the nation's greatness which was disseminated by the State and applied to school groups. This was even provided for in the Constitution when Vargas enacted Decree-Law no. 4,545 of September 4, 1942, which provided for the form and presentation of national symbols. In Article 20, it was stated that the execution of the national anthem should take place "when the National Flag would be raised, in public or private establishments of any branch or educational level, at least once a week".

However, despite being a practice that lasted several years, the appropriation of this representation was something individual (CHARTIER, 2002) and that, therefore, was beyond state control. This can be verified in the words of who was the target of these representations, the students. Zelmo Denari²¹, who studied in one of Professor Maria de Nazareth's classes, remembered how the classes started:

At the time, before getting in, everyone used to sing the national anthem and, then, recited poetry. A poem by Coelho Neto: "Brazil, in this house of Education and teaching, we constantly think about you, your past of glories, your present of healthy achievements and your glorious future. May you, beloved country, remember these children who greet you". It was a pain, right!? I decorated it. My brother and I recited (Mr. Zelmo says in a joking tone) together, I say: "Brazil..."; and he says: "In this house ..."; and our women already leave the table saying that they are "fed up" with these patriots (laughter).

²⁰ According to Schwartzman, Bomeny and Costa (2000, p. 19), "In those years, when there was still no talk of underdevelopment and dependence, but of backwardness and civilization, it was believed that, through education, the moral character and the professional competence of citizens would be formed and that this would determine the future of the Nation".

²¹ Zelmo Denari was born on September 19, 1935, in the city of Presidente Bernardes/SP. He studied at the Presidente Bernardes School Group between 1942 and 1946, took the junior high school in Presidente Prudente/SP and completed college of Legal and Social Sciences at the University of São Paulo (USP) in 1959.

That was it, it was possibly because of the [II] [World] War. Getúlio's nationalism, who is a great figure that I admire so much, but maybe he thought he needed it. Awaken nationality, the pride of being Brazilian. He knew that (ZELMO DENARI, 2013).

As it was seen, in addition to the hymns, poems that referred to the patriotic sentiment were also part of the daily school work. Even with this literary reinforcement, Zelmo's report shows an appropriation of the content strictly in its form, as the graduate recalled a complete excerpt of Coelho Neto's poetry. Julia (2001) argues that just as teachers do not accept everything imposed on them from outside, students also exercise a certain resistance to what they dislike²². Thus, the nationalist message contained in the daily intonation of hymns and in the recitation of poetry not only ceased to be assumed by Zelmo but became a reason for mockery, being taken as "patriot".

Thereafter, Zelmo stated that he believed that the transmission of this nationalist content was linked to Vargas' claims to power. Thus, despite the efforts of the State and the school to work on collective memory (RIOUX, 1998), the graduate shows in his act of remembrance that the past is not static, acting on it in the present (GALZERANI, 2004) when affirming who understood the motivation for this exacerbated nationalism.

In addition to this nationalist content that was intended to pass on to future generations, the practice of daily hymns was an element that contributed to the organization of the study routine. This is because in addition to signaling to children that, from that moment on, class of the day would begin, the teachers used songs as a way to calm down their classes, as reported by Professor Maria Aparecida Lotto de Olyveira²³:

Always from 12:30 to 4:30. There was the break, before getting in [class, children] sang the hymn. They lined up. They sang the hymn or they sang a little song. When the class was very noisy I started singing in my classroom for the little ones. They became quiet (MARIA APARECIDA LOTTO DE OLYVEIRA, 2013).

This strategy of the teacher shows how school culture is constructed in everyday life based on appropriations of the norms. According to Julia (2001), despite all the discourse that intends to carry on the influences that the external environment has on the school and the representations that are imposed to define the institution and frame the teaching performance, teachers have freedom of action, dictating the directions within the scope school and, more specifically, within their classroom and with the class for which they are responsible. For this reason, "[...] school is not the place for routine and coercion and the teacher is not the agent of a didactic that would be imposed on him/her from outside" (JULIA, 2001, p. 33).

Professor Maura Pereira Estrela²⁴ affirms that she knew most of the hymns and that she also tried to vary during the week with other types of music:

²² According to Julia (2001, p. 36-37), "[...] there is a youth culture that resists to what it is intended to inculcate: spaces for games and children's cunning defy the disciplinary effort. This children's culture, in the anthropological sense of the term, is as important to be studied as the work of inculcation".

²³ Maria Aparecida Lotto de Olyveira was born on May 2, 1927, in Jaú/SP, where she also completed her studies at the Escola Normal Livre "São José", in 1946. She moved to Presidente Bernardes/SP in 1947, started her work at the city's School Group in 1949 and retired in 1978.

²⁴ Maura Pereira Estrela was born on February 12, 1930, in Assis/SP. She completed the Normal course in Tatuí/SP, in 1949. She moved to the city of Presidente Venceslau/SP in 1950, started her work at "Dr. Álvaro Coelho" in 1952 and retired in 1981.

And I had to sing the national anthem every Saturday, the anthem to the flag, the anthem of Independence, I knew it by heart, huh! The [hymn] of the Republic, the “you can already” (“já podeis” in Portuguese)... I don't know if you all know it, the [hymn] to the flag was: “Hail beautiful tassel...” (“Salve lindo pendão...” in Portuguese).

During the week, we used to sing the most popular songs for children, [song] in a circle. But everyone had to sing! Everyone had to know! (MAURA PEREIRA ESTRELA, 2013).

Thereza Vieira, a student in 1935, became a teacher in 1948 and in the 1950s began her career as a teacher in the west of the State of São Paulo. In the case of this teacher, it is also possible to identify the effects of national populism stimulated by Vargas. Recalling the period in which she completed her basic training in the city of Tietê/SP, between the 1930s and 1940s – being, therefore, under the aegis of Capanema's educational policies –, Thereza reported the strategies for the formation of citizens who praised the homeland:

I remember that in my time, in order not to miss students, the class that had fewer absences during the week had a small flag raised inside the room. It was an award. I remember that once I was sick and they picked me home, otherwise we wouldn't win the flag (THEREZA DE CAMARGO VIEIRA, 2013).

Adherence to the national cause, starting from children education, was an effective tactic. This is evident in the case of the aforementioned teacher, in which it is possible to notice how the representations imposed by the State about nationalism and patriotism were appropriated by the teaching staff of the school group that shaped them, transforming them, in this specific case, into practices that stimulated, at the same time, nationalism and school attendance.

The way Thereza had learned to exalt her country during her primary and middle school in Tietê/SP, she started teaching according to the manner recommended by Vargas from the moment she arrived at Presidente Bernardes. In this way, the teacher affirms that children's preparation for the parties involved “mainly the national anthem, the anthem to the flag, the Proclamation of the Republic anthem, and everyone used to sing. In the past, before getting into classes, everyone had to sing the hymn” (THEREZA DE CAMARGO VIEIRA, 2013).

Therefore, as will be shown in the subsequent topic, singing hymns was also part of another relevant dimension of school cultures: the festivities.

The festivities

Since the period of the First Republic, school groups from São Paulo were one of the main institutions responsible for forging national memory through a series of symbolic practices, among which national festivals represented a great help (SOUZA, 2006). Because of that, directors received state support for the celebrations, including the “[...] closing party of the school year, followed by an exhibition of schoolwork, a celebration of the day of the trees and animals, the school anniversary, in addition to civic celebrations on national dates” (SOUZA, 2006, p. 263).

After the end of the republican period, the festivities were expanded: “In the 1930s and 1940s, the calendar of school parties was expanded to include other celebrations such as ‘Semana da Criança’, ‘Semana de Caxias’ and ‘Semana da Pátria’” (SOUZA, 2006, p. 263).

Miguel Omar Barreto, regional education delegate, in his report about 1940, he described the initiatives taken in Presidente Prudente region in relation to civic festivals:

We deal with parties as means of publicizing LINGUA PATRIA and we will now deal with party concerning its civic purpose.

Arousing the interest of students' parents at school parties, previously prepared, has been our concern. Unfortunately, the lack of popular songs, adequate poetry and the deficiency of music teaching in the Normal schools have partly embarrassed our campaign of making parties perfectly. The goodwill and civic ardor of some group directors have made up for the shortcomings mentioned above and we are pleased to see these educational establishments achieving the DESIRED END (REPORT..., Presidente Prudente, 1941, p. 16, author's emphasis).

Still on this theme, the regional delegate of education also reported the existence of parades:

We are frankly enthusiastic about high school parades.

It is noteworthy the interest that arouses children in a parade on Feast Day. They appear with their clothes in order, hair, nails and shoes well maintained, often two or more hours before the scheduled time.

We have organized several parades for students from urban schools and have already gotten together, as Mr. Dr. INTERVENTOR and dr. GENERAL DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT had the opportunity to observe, all the children of the city of Presidente Prudente in a demonstration of the development of teaching in this distant place of SÃO PAULO.

Parades are very useful and of real value (REPORT ..., Presidente Prudente, 1941, p. 17, authors' emphasis).

In this sense, it is interesting to mention the report by Terezinha S. Tanus. The student from the Presidente Bernardes School Group described the preparation of the girls for the parades in celebration of Independence Day and the Proclamation of the Republic Day, endorsing what was described by the regional teaching delegate.

On September 7 and November 15, we used to have parades. Even then, at that time, some girls were chosen to have a special participation on the parade. So, instead of wearing the normal skirt of the uniform, they made shorts in the same navy blue color, with a white shirt, and paraded with that. But they were separated from the others. The others in uniform and them in those shorts (laughs).

However, the parade had music band, because here there was a conductor and there was a band. It was very beautiful (TEREZINHA STRAZZER TANUS, 2013).

Hence, Professor Miguel Omar Barreto emphasized that all civic celebrations were done by school institutions in the region of Presidente Prudente:

All the NATIONAL DATES were celebrated festively by the establishments in the Region.

The programs have always included literary, singing and sport presentations. THE DAY OF THE HOMELAND, SEPTEMBER 7, deserved special affection for all schools, with brilliant celebrations taking place.

We continue to recommend monthly DEVOTION TO THE FLAG by all groups and schools, including municipal and private ones.

In the majority of the School Groups in the District, the delivery of the diplomas at the end of the course constituted solemn festivities, with the organization of graduation boards, solemn session, etc., in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm and healthy patriotism²⁵ (REPORT ..., Presidente Prudente, 1941, p. 30, author's emphasis).

The graduation pictures mentioned by the regional teaching delegate were very common in the extreme west of São Paulo. According to Souza (2006), from the 1940s onwards, the graduation board started to be used to register the conclusion of the fourth year of primary school, which included the portraits of all the students, containing their names in captions, as well as the photographs of the teachers who taught in the last year and the principal.

These pictures also carried a symbolic charge, usually with the representation of some graphic element that mentioned the material culture of the group or even illustrations that referred to patriotism. It was also common for the principal's photograph to be larger than the teachers and students' ones, trying to convey an idea of order, of hierarchy.

In order to illustrate, there are below some of these pictures, which are still affixed today on the walls of the former Presidente Venceslau School Group (currently E.M.E.F. "Dr. Álvaro Coelho"):

Image 1: Graduation board of Presidente Venceslau School Group (1939)



Source: EMEF collection "Dr. Álvaro Coelho"

²⁵ It is interesting to observe that the speech of the regional teaching delegate, mentioning a "healthy patriotism", was in line with the nationalist plans that *Estado Novo* had for primary schools, as expressed in the interview that Getúlio Vargas gave to the press in April of 1938: "The federal initiative, for greater dissemination of primary education, in compliance with the precepts of the New Constitution, will proceed intensively and quickly, extending itself to the entire territory of the country. It will not be considered enough only to teach as many people as possible to read and write, but also to spread equal principles of civic and moral discipline, in order to transform primary school into an efficient factor in the formation of the character of new generations, giving them directions of healthy nationalism" (VARGAS, 1938, *apud* HORTA, 2012, p. 159).

Image 2: Graduation board of Presidente Venceslau School Group (1948)

Source: EMEF collection “Dr. Álvaro Coelho”

Firstly, it is possible to observe the increase of the number of children completing primary school when 1939’s picture is compared to 1948’s picture, what shows an increase in the demand. Another element that stands out is the structure and distinct ornamentalations that each board had: in the year 1939, as only 25 children graduated, in addition to their names, the cities which they came from are spelled out, indicating that the municipality was formed by immigrant families; finally, on the board of 1948 there are representations that refer to the exaltation of the country.

Despite all the pomp and rigor of the final exams (throughout which approved students would appear on the graduation board) during the First Republic, during *Vargas Era* they were sometimes even questioned. At least, in the Presidente Prudente region, the regional education delegate believed that these final exams were not so important:

The final exams happened without impediments, and almost all the municipalities competed with the conduction we requested.

Our opinion is that final exams in school groups are unnecessary.

Students’ achievement should be assessed by monthly tests and averages on the bulletins.

In isolated schools, the difficulty is even bigger in the implementation of timetables due to the gathered classes. (RELATÓRIO..., Presidente Prudente, 1941, p. 36).

As it is possible to see, in addition to asserting that the final exams were unnecessary, Miguel Omar Barreto also warned about the difficulty found to carry out the tests in isolated schools. This criticism may have been motivated by the expansion of the school network, which prevented all institutions from being properly inspected.

But if the exams started to be questioned, the same did not happen with civic parties. Lila Aoshi²⁶ reported that the school group parade was an event of great importance in Presidente Bernardes, in the late 1930s, as there were no other institution that could promote such a celebration:

They had parades. My brother, when he was a young man, he was at the Tiro de Guerra and his group paraded. In the past, the parades were more lively than today. Fantasies were even made for the parade. As there was only the primary [in the city], there was no Gym, so it was an event (LILA AOSHI, 2013).

The responsibility for organizing the celebrations invariably fell to the teachers, as expressed in the statements of the teachers who worked between the 1930s and 1960s in the Alta Sorocabana region. According to Professor Maria de Nazareth, “everyone sang the national anthem, raised the flag, all civic dates were celebrated. The teachers rehearsed together with the children, sang, they all went in a neat, organized line”. The teacher also affirmed that “she taught to sing the national anthem, anthem to the flag. At the time of the revolution of 32, she [taught] the São Paulo anthem” (MARIA DE NAZARETH MIMÉSSI GONÇALVES, 2013).

In fact, preparation for civic celebrations took place throughout the year, in view of the requirement to sing the national anthem daily in graduated primary schools. And this permanent formation of civic and patriotic values practiced in school groups, took on the appearance of spectacles on the main commemorative dates (September 7, November 15 and on the municipalities' anniversary), a time when teachers, students and the direction of the school institutions exhibited to society the bases on which their work of building the nation was based.

In Presidente Venceslau, Professor Bernardina Aredes de Araújo²⁷ remembered the patriotic effusiveness of the director of the School Group “Dr. Álvaro Coelho”, Adamastor de Carvalho:

There were a lot of parties, and especially here Mr. Adamastor loved a party. For him, anything was a cause for celebration, with parades and everything. In all the Groups I was in, there was fanfare. September 7 was a colossus! It was on the street and everyone had to go with their class. The teachers organized the class, he gave the command and then we went on. He used to go with us, he liked it (BERNARDINA AREDES ARAÚJO, 2013).

Silvia de Carvalho Maximino²⁸ also emphasized the greatness of the parties and the enthusiasm with which Adamastor de Carvalho, her brother, conducted them: “In my brother's time it was a big party! He made it and the teachers took part. There was a celebration in the group and it was very good at that time”. Moreover, Silvia stressed that the teachers worked for the events, exemplifying which task was assigned to them: “He did it at the end of the year, we took part in parades. I drew, made the posters” (SILVIA DE CARVALHO MAXIMINO, 2013).

²⁶ Lila Aoshi was born on January 24, 1929, in Presidente Bernardes / SP. She studied at the Presidente Bernardes School Group, between 1936 and 1940. After the Gym, she joined *Fundação Escola de Comércio Álvares Penteado*, in São Paulo, where she took the Accounting course. Returning to Presidente Bernardes/SP, she attended the Escola Normal, becoming a teacher.

²⁷ Bernardina Aredes de Araújo was born on September 12, 1919, in Duartina/SP. She completed her studies in Normal Education at *Colégio Sagrado Coração de Jesus* in Agudos/SP, between 1936 and 1939. She moved to Presidente Venceslau/SP in 1946, where he taught at the city's School Group until 1948.

²⁸ Silvia de Carvalho Maximino was born on September 6, 1928, in Itapetininga/SP. She completed her qualification for teaching at *Escola Normal Peixoto Gomide* in her hometown, in 1947. She moved to Presidente Venceslau/SP in 1948 and started working at *Dr. Álvaro Coelho* in 1952, where she remained until 1978.

Professor Arthuzina de Oliveira D’Incao, evoking the memory of how the parades took place, offered a description of the celebrations that Adamastor de Carvalho led:

And the parade was formed. The national flag was opening it. On its left or behind, the *paulista* (the honor guards were improved by us!). Then the fanfare came (which we had always considered reasonable). As time went by, even some beacons appeared. Right after there were the students. In rows of four, class by class. Each one controlled by their respective teacher. We started with the most advanced classes and ended with the early ones (first years). [...] After everybody was formed, he, Adamastor, put himself in front of the parade, in a martial position, inflated with pride. A deserved and holy pride, we must recognize (D’INCAO, 1982, p. 69).

The teacher also stressed that, even facing adversity, the graduation ceremony was still celebrated by the group director, however in improvised ways:

One year there was even a circus that passed through here for the delivery of diplomas. – In the arena, the table for the authorities. Also the students, accommodated in chairs, flanking the improvised crosswalk, from the audience to the table. – It had a tone of picturesque! Old things. But they reflect the spirit of a fighter (D’INCAO, 1982, p. 68).

Professor Maura Pereira Estrela (2013) evoked the memory of the time when she participated in organizing the parades, emphasizing that the celebrations of the city’s anniversary were the greatest ones:

At *Álvaro Coelho*, we used to have the city party on September the 2nd! About the parade? It was the [school group] *Álvaro Coelho* who presented it! This [teacher] Therezinha [from Granville Ponce Carvalheiro] was one of those who knew how to paint posters [...] and she was always the one who made them. In our parades, the [School Group] *Álvaro Coelho* used to shine! All classes offered girls to present a goal at the front. On September 7, it was the army [that presented]. But on September 2, it was more beautiful. All schools took part and Mr. Adamastor obliged all students to participate, the whole line, forty, fifty, and the teacher looking after beside students.

According to the report of professor Maria Aparecida de Lourdes Fontana Pardo²⁹, the celebration of national holidays involved all schools in Presidente Bernardes:

On September 7, it was the celebration. It was for all schools, but we had to prepare it. I usually directed the national anthem. If it was Independence Day, I was responsible for the independence anthem. If it was Republic Day, it was the Republic's anthem. [...] we did group reading and there was much students participation, they recited, it

²⁹ Maria de Lourdes Fontana Pardo on August 30, 1934, in Presidente Bernardes/SP. She attended *Escola Normal* “Fernando Costa” Teaching Institute, in Presidente Prudente/SP, from 1951 to 1953. She was admitted to the state teaching career in 1955 and taught at “Alfredo Westin Júnior” School Group from 1960 to 1979.

wasn't reading, it was recitation. Even today I still know the poem I recited. *While I was a student of the group, I used to recite and, when I became a teacher, I taught the songs so many times that I have learned the texts.* (MARIA APARECIDA DE LOURDES FONTANA PARDO, 2013, our emphasis).

It is interesting to observe that these festivities were practices that had a long-lasting effect on school culture. This can be attested in the last excerpt of the speech of Maria A. de L. F. Pardo, who, having attended *Presidente Bernardes* School Group as a student, in the 1940s, used the same texts and songs learned at that time with her students when she became a teacher at the same institution.

This way, celebrations of which the groups were part built not only the school culture of the institutions, but also fulfilled the function of being a kind of showcase through which the State exposed the conduct it expected from society, disseminating patriotic values and, at the same time, indicating which memories should be preserved.

Conclusion

Based on the examples presented throughout the article, we sought to present an overview of the diffusion of some nationalist traits in school groups in the far west region of the State of São Paulo. With this intention, some elements of the organization and work routine present in the documentary sources were highlighted and, mainly, reported by the professionals and by the students in their interviews.

We tried to show how teachers took over the representations that circulated in the school environment and meant to frame their actions. The penetration into the intricacies of daily work made it possible to reveal the work performed by the teachers, that means, how their teaching practice was carried out using what had been learned at *Escola Normal* and making the necessary adaptations to the context of the extreme west of São Paulo.

According to the testimonies of the teachers, the school choral was not an institution of great success in groups of the region, because of the need for an adequate structure for its practice, something that the institutions' buildings lacked. However, in addition to having learned in their training the pedagogical use of choral singing, these teachers were instructed and encouraged by legislation and by Education authorities to chant the hymns and other songs that referred to the exaltation of the country, as part of a nationalization plan and moral formation of the people.

Nationalization policies focused on teaching action both at the state level, with the São Paulo State Education Code (1933), and at the federal level (such as, for example, Law No. 259, of 1936, and Decree-Law No. 4,545, of 1942), disseminating representations that intended to shape teachers' daily work. Some of these representations were taken over and worked on by some teachers (as in the case of Professor Thereza de Camargo Vieira, who learned to exalt the country during her primary education and continued with her nationalist work when she became a teacher), directors (such as the work of Adamastor de Carvalho on civic festivals), and teaching delegates (with the recommendation of the "devotion to the flag").

However, even with this work of inculcating representations, appropriations did not always occur as planned, what was expressed by Zelmo Denari, who recalled the nationalist traits of his formation as "patriotic".

The diversity present in the way each educator appropriated the representations imposed on them indicated different actions taken by these women. The state discourse proclaimed certain attitudes, disseminating representations about teachers' work, which was often restricted to a prescriptive character, without a material support. This situation forced

teachers to improvise in order to comply with legal requirements, which, in the specific case of this article, referred to the conduct of the school choral, the singing of the hymns and the preparation for the festivities.

Therefore, it is possible to state that teachers effectively participated in the construction of school cultures, both internally and externally of the school environment. They worked intramurals with music as part of the formation and the representation that were imposed by the State, in the dissemination of patriotic activities within the context of populist nationalism. If the songs internally contributed to daily teaching work, festivities were the public demonstration of pride. Through the festivities, teachers publicized their school activities; it was at the parades that teachers and school groups educated the population, displaying the rites, the historical characters and, consequently, the behaviors that the State expected of everyone.

Finally, school groups represented a privileged place both to form childhood and to disseminate representations to the population, indicating which memories should be preserved, which ones should be dispensed with, and even what behaviors were expected. Thus, in the interweaving between practices and norms, teachers contributed to the mentioned institutions in order to incorporate in their school cultures the nationalist and patriotic character required by the State, appropriating representations about the nation and spreading them based on their limitations and potential.

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