

CARLOS ALBERTO DINIZ, ROSA FÁTIMA DE SOUZA

SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN THE HINTERLAND
OF THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO: LOCAL POLITICAL POWER
AND FORMATION OF ELITES (MATÃO-SP, 1940 - 1965)

LA SCUOLA SECONDARIA NELL'HINTERLAND
DELLO STATO DI SÃO PAULO: POTERE POLITICO LOCALE
E FORMAZIONE DELLE ELITES (MATÃO-SP, 1940 - 1965)

This paper presents the final results of research work done on the history of the first State Gymnasium of the city of Matão, in the hinterland of the state of São Paulo, in the period between 1940 and 1965, problematizing the action of the local political power in favor of the formation of elites. The study, therefore, focuses on an examination of the creation (on December 31, 1940) and of the institutional changes undergone by Matão State Gymnasium. We adopted, for a better understanding of this object of study, the theoretical framework of the New Political History, Regional History, and Cultural History. The historical study of this public teaching institution highlights the important role played by the municipalities in the expansion of secondary education in Brazil, the social representations about the school, and how the local political actors used it as exchange currency and political strategy for maintaining power.

Questo paper presenta i risultati finali di un lavoro di ricerca sul primo Ginnasio statale della città di Matão, nell'hinterland dello Stato di São Paulo, nel periodo compreso fra il 1940 e il 1965. Il saggio problematizza l'azione del potere politico locale in favore della formazione delle elites. Lo studio mette a fuoco la creazione (31 dicembre 1940) e i cambiamenti istituzionali di questo Ginnasio statale. Per una migliore comprensione dell'oggetto di studio, è stata adottata la prospettiva della New Political History, della storia regionale e della storia culturale. Lo studio storico di questa istituzione di pubblica istruzione chiarisce il ruolo importante svolto dalle municipalità nell'espansione della formazione secondaria in Brasile, le rappresentazioni sociali della scuola e in che modo gli attori della politica locale le abbiano utilizzate come scambio e strategia politica per il mantenimento del potere.

Key words: History of Secondary Education. Local political power. Formation of elites. Middle school course. History of Teaching Institutions.

Parole chiave: storia della formazione secondaria. Potere politico locale. Formazione delle elites. Corsi di scuola media. Storia delle istituzioni educative.

The recent historiography on secondary education in Brazil has focused on two relevant themes: State policies for the diffusion and organization of this basic schooling modality and the history of school institutions highlighting social and educational actors and traces of school culture.

The term secondary education began to be used in the country starting in the nineteenth century to designate the intermediate schooling stage between elementary school and higher education, characterized by the transmission of general culture with the purpose of forming elites, of a propaedeutic character and high social

prestige, in contrast to technical training aimed at preparing the lower classes for the labor market.

Within the educational policies context, studies have highlighted the profound transformations that occurred in secondary education in the mid-twentieth century owing to the expansion and social diversification of students, which resulted in the transition from a school for the elites to one of more popular scope, and of the challenging of humanistic education culminating with a scientific curriculum.

The expansion of secondary education was one of the most striking aspects of these transformations. In a pioneering study about the history of secondary schooling in Brazil, Geraldo Bastos Silva (1969) analyzed the extent of this growth and its implications. According to the author, between 1933 and 1942, the increase in secondary school enrollment in the country went from 66,000 to 199,000 students. In 1952, this number grew to 466,000 students and, in 1961, it reached the 991,000 enrolled students mark, that is, an exponential growth of 47.02%. While in 1933 there were 400 secondary schools with an average enrollment of 166 students per school, in 1965, this number increased to 4,174 schools with an average enrollment of 372 students per school.

This intense and disorderly expansion of secondary schools brought into question numerous problems such as the quality of education, the need for pedagogical modernization and curricular changes, and the role of the State in the democratization of this type of education through the expansion of the middle-school and high-school network.

Data on the unfolding of this expansion process were also analyzed by Jayme Abreu, a technician from the Ministry of Education that presented a detailed study at the Inter-American Seminar on Secondary Education, held in Santiago, Chile, in 1955. An intransigent advocate of the democratization of secondary schooling, Jayme Abreu pointed out in his work the conservatism of Brazilian schools set on the formation of elites and exposing a flagrant antinomy between the prevailing purposes and characteristics of the students that came to have access to secondary schooling in those days.

According to Abreu (1955), in 1954, there were in Brazil a total of 1,771 secondary schools with a total enrollment of 535,775 students, corresponding to 6% of the school population (ages 12 to 18) estimated at 9,100,000. Most of those schools were private initiatives (1,336 schools corresponding to 75.4% of all secondary schools) serving 392,310 students. Public schools, in a much smaller number (435 schools), were maintained, for the most part, by state governments and served 26.8% of the student population. According to the study by Jayme Abreu (1955), most secondary-school students (85.8%) were concentrated in the first cycle (middle school) and only 24.2% of all students were enrolled in the second cycle (high school) denoting the distributive function of the middle school and the predominance of the selectivity and elitism of secondary schooling. Abreu also highlighted the predominance of secondary schools in urban areas and in capital cities of the Brazilian states (616 schools in the capitals and 1,152 in hinterland towns) and the imbalance in the re-

gional distribution of secondary schools, since a large number of them were located in the southeastern region of the country, especially in the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro¹.

The concentration of secondary schools in the state of São Paulo was remarkable ever since the 1930s. As the study by Schwartzman et al. (2000, 206) shows, in 1939 there were 629 secondary schools in Brazil, of which 530 were private and 99 public. Nearly a third of the schools were in the state of São Paulo (196), which was also home to almost half of the country's public schools. Two decades later, this prominence still held. In 1964, there were 4,775 secondary education courses in Brazil, 1,632 courses in public schools (34.2%) and 3,143 in private schools (65.2%), of which 3,886 were first cycle – middle school – courses (81.4%). The state of São Paulo had the largest secondary education network in the country (24% of the existing courses), of which 684 were in public schools (59.6%) and 463 in private schools (40.4%). Of these courses, 884 were in the first cycle (middle school) corresponding to 77% of the secondary courses and 263 of the second cycle, or high school (23%) (Brazil 1964).

As pointed out by Diniz (2017), it was in the state of São Paulo that the largest and fastest expansion of public secondary education occurred in Brazil between the 1930s and 1970s. During the First Republic (1889-1930), the local governments of the state of São Paulo invested in the expansion of primary education and maintained only three state middle schools: one in the capital, one in Campinas, and another one in Ribeirão Preto. Starting in the 1930s, the expansion of the public secondary schools in that state was intensified, and 58 schools were created between 1932 and 1947 and 474 between 1947 and 1963².

What are the social, cultural, economic, and educational repercussions of this accelerated expansion of secondary schooling opportunities? What social actors and political forces were involved in this process? How did the pedagogical modernization policies implemented by the State reverberate in those newly implemented public schools? How did the schools deal internally with the education expansion policies? These and other questions have been problematized by historical investigations on school institutions, which have highlighted the political game involved in the creation of public secondary schools and the transformations in the school culture. (Perez 2006; Dallabrida and Carminatti 2007; Diniz 2012; Souza, Valdemarin and Zancul 2014).

¹ Between the 1940s and 1960s, Brazilian education was structured as follows: primary education (offered by different types of schools covering 3 to 5 years of duration), secondary education (7 years of duration), technical education (offered in four areas: agricultural, commercial, industrial, and normal) and higher education. The reform of secondary education established in the country in 1942 (Organic Law of Secondary Education, Decree-Law No. 4,244, of April 9, 1942) divided the secondary level into two cycles: the first, called middle school, a single general education course, with the duration of 4 years. The second cycle, lasting three years, comprised two parallel courses – the classical and the scientific (Souza 2008).

² Here we take into account the period from March 14, 1947 to January 31, 1963, covered by 04 state governments: that of Adhemar Pereira de Barros; that of Lucas Nogueira Garcez; that of Jânio da Silva Quadros; and Carlos Alberto Alves de Carvalho Pinto.

This study aims at analyzing the role played by the local political power in the creation and diffusion of public secondary schools in the hinterland of the state of São Paulo, based on the historical reconstruction of Matão State Gymnasium, from 1940 to 1965, covering the first phase of existence of this institution, that is, from its creation (1940) to its operating license under the name Education Institute (1965), later renamed Professor Henrique Morato Education Institute. Taking as a reference the study carried out by Diniz (2012), the study also examines the descriptions made by the press about this school and its contribution to the formation of the local elites. For this study the following sources were used: *A Comarca*, the local newspaper; the Minutes of the Municipality of Matão; the Decrees, Ordinances, and Public Notices of that city; the Reports of the General Census of Brazil produced by IBGE between 1940 and 1964; the Educational Legislation; and the processes that gave rise to the Bills of the Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo.

Among these research sources, *A Comarca* newspaper stands out. As several authors have pointed out (Darnton and Roche 1996; De Luca 2006; Campos 2006), the importance of using newspapers in historical research is justified by the wealth of information they provide, since newspapers follow events as political-ideological actors and constitute a social and cultural practice.

A Comarca newspaper was founded on January 4, 1925, by the brothers Augusto and Ítalo Ferreira, with the purpose of «working on behalf of the creation of the Matão Judicial District». (*A Comarca* 1925).³ The weekly publication (circulated on Sundays), became the representative of the producing social classes of the municipality, becoming in the 1930 and 1940 decades a vehicle of support and propaganda of *Estado Novo*⁴.

The creation of the first middle school in the city of Matão: secondary schooling for the local elite

The history of the Matão State Gymnasium began in 1940 with the creation of the municipal middle school. The process of turning this school into a state teaching institution reflected the many facets of the political game in force in the State of São Paulo during the *Estado Novo* regime, showing evidence of the maneuverings between the Federal Intervener and the local oligarchies⁵.

³ Comarca designates the territorial jurisdiction of the exercise of the jurisdiction of a Judge. Matão was elevated to Judicial District only in 1954. See note published in the *A Comarca* newspaper on January 3, 1954 (*A Comarca* 1954).

⁴ In January 1944, the paper became bi-weekly, circulating on Sundays and Thursdays. When the newspaper was created in 1925, Ítalo Ferreira belonged to the Matão Democrat Party, a local dissident of the hegemonic Republican Party in the state of São Paulo and representative of the interests of coffee growers. Ítalo Ferreira was mayor of Matão between 12/31/1945 and 04/15/1947. In 1962, José Candido Ferreira, Benedito Calau, and Habib Gabriel became owners and directors of the newspaper.

⁵ *Estado Novo* is the name attributed to the dictatorial administration of Getúlio Dornelles Vargas between the years of 1937 and 1945, marked by a strong political centralization of the federal government. During that period, the

As was happening in other municipalities of the state of São Paulo, the municipal mayor of Matão, José Bartholomeu Ferreira⁶, invested in the creation of a municipal middle school with the intention of later transferring the school to the competence of the state government.

Distant about 310 kilometers from the capital city, São Paulo, Matão was located in the so-called Araraquarense zone, one of the three pioneer occupation zones of the territory of the state of São Paulo in the early twentieth century. Accompanying the spread of coffee plantations towards the west of São Paulo, this part of the state was tributary to three railroads: Douradense, Paulista, and Araraquarense, and was characterized by rapid population growth and by Italian immigration (Love 1982).

According to the 1940 Census, the municipality had 22,907 inhabitants (11,625 men and 11,282 women) of whom 19,013 (83%) lived in the rural area and 3,894 (17%) in the urban area. About 45%⁷ of this population was illiterate, of which 25% were in the 10 to 19 age group and about 25% between 20 and 29. We also saw that in the 7 to 14 age group 1,096 were boys and 1,059 girls who knew how to read and write, that is, 24% of the total literate citizens; among the 15 to 19 year olds, this number decreased to 711 males and 666 females, a total of approximately 16%⁸.

The continuing modernization of the municipality was reported several times in *A Comarca* in the 1940s. In issue No. 751 of April 29, 1940, the columnist of the newspaper listed the public services that would deserve the attention of the mayor during that year:

The first public service of great importance that will deserve the attention of the Mayor this year is city pavement.

[...] Still this year, the renovation of the city's sewage network will be initiated, in view of the great urban transformation that is taking place. [...]

[...] The extensive urban renovation program also includes the complete restructuring of Praça da Bandeira, destined to become a most appreciated public space. The new underground illumination service will be built, with artistic globes and iron columns identical to those of Barão Square in Rio Branco. The aisles of this new garden will also be paved with "petit pavet". (*A Comarca* 1940b).

President of the Republic appointed Federal Interveners to govern the states and they, in turn, appointed the Municipal Mayors, seeking to guarantee the aspired political centralization, typical of the authoritarian regime that was established. At the same time, the Constitution of 1937 vetoed the operation of the legislative branch throughout the country, both at the municipal level (i.e., city councilmen), as well as state (state legislators in Legislative Assemblies) and national (federal deputies and senators in the National Congress). See: <http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-tematico/estado-novo>. Accessed in 28 December 2017.

⁶ José Bartholomeu Ferreira served as mayor of the municipality of Matão three times: from October 19, 1930 to November 5, 1930 (with Leolino Malachias and José Borgonovi in a Governing Board); from November 5, 1930 to April 13, 1931; and from April 26, 1939 to December 31, 1945.

⁷ In our opinion, the municipality of Matão at the time was most probably considered a small municipality, compared with the population of neighboring cities such as: Araraquara: 67,724 inhabitants; Campinas: 124,940 inhabitants; Catanduva: 40,769 inhabitants; Jaboticabal: 40,296 inhabitants; Jaú: 44,178 inhabitants; Ribeirão Preto: 79,783 inhabitants; Santos: 165,568 inhabitants; São Carlos: 48,609 inhabitants; Sao Jose do Rio Preto: 74,359 inhabitants. Cf. IBGE 1950.

⁸ In calculating this percentage we did not take into account: 3,390 inhabitants who did not declare being educated and another 3,508 under the age of 5 years.

It is worth mentioning that all these improvements carried out in Matão's urban area were financed by a local economy based mostly on activities related to agriculture, livestock farming, and forestry. This economy boosted the creation of transformation industries to support agricultural activity. In the wake of this development, local trade expanded and, in the early 1940s, Matão already had more than two hundred commercial establishments and three banks.

As far as education is concerned, the municipality had only primary schools at the time, notably the State Primary School, founded in 1911 (currently, José Inocêncio da Costa State School), and elementary schools in the countryside⁹.

Responsible for the creation of the middle school in the municipality, Mr. José Bartholomeu Ferreira was sworn in as mayor on April 29, 1939, by appointment of the Federal Intervener of the State of São Paulo, Dr. Adhemar de Barros (Matão, 1930-1949). Too much notoriety was conferred on the figure of the Municipal Mayor, after all he was "the right arm" of the Governor in the municipality:

[...] the Municipalities began to feel the comforting influence of the *Estado Novo*, and to-day they are integrated in the closest communion.

In Matão, the work of assimilating the new Brazilian reality could find no one better or more dedicated than the Mayor, since he has been invested with the highest functions. With the prestige of his authority, he fares confidently along the paths drawn by the modernizing idea; and for the sake of his conviction he has been putting all his energies to the test, whose fruits, in this first year of government that is about to end, are capable of attesting, in the municipal sector, to the excellence of the regime. (A Comarca 1940d).

We can see in the excerpt above, representations valuing of the Mayor's performance corroborated by the newspaper. As Chartier (1985, 17) reminds us: «The representations of the social world thus construed, while aspiring to the universality of a diagnosis founded on reason, are always determined by the group interests that forge them. Hence, for each case, the necessary relationship of the speeches uttered with the position of those who use them».

Thus, we can see that the representation of the political power of the Municipal Executive branch, intended for the community of Matão, was vested in him mainly as regards the execution of public works to urbanize and modernize the municipality, notably: the paving of public roads, the implementation and/or expansion of the sewage network, the conservation of the roads that connected the urban area to the rural areas, the creation of the Middle School and the Municipal Arena, among others. In the first decades of the twentieth century, there were a small number of public and private secondary schools in the hinterland of the state of São Paulo, which is why the implementation of educational institutions of this type in the municipalities was seen as a sign of progress and prestige, an achievement for the town.

In 1940, there were 270 municipalities in the state of São Paulo and only 26 pub-

⁹ In addition to the Public School, there were two more public schools: one in the District of Dobrada and another one in the District of São Lourenço do Turvo. At the beginning of the 1940s, the rural area had the *A Comarca* newspaper (Edition n. 751), with 11 isolated state schools, providing primary education only.

lic middle schools, considered as institutions of excellence as regards the quality of the teaching. Therefore, the building of an official middle school and/or high school was, for the municipalities of the hinterland, a privilege; getting a school was a symbol of social distinction, a representation that fed the demand for secondary schools in that state of the federation as well as all over the country.

One year into this administration, *A Comarca* newspaper printed, in April 1940, a report on the Mayor's administration, praising him, and associating the aura of his good administration directly with the Vargas' regime:

For a year – since April 26th, 1939 – spearheading the destinies of the Municipality of Mattão is this distinguished citizen, this rare administrator persona, Mr. José Bartolomeu Ferreira. [...] On the threshold of a new phase of promising accomplishments in every sector of public life, the moment is more than conducive to a retrospective, to an appreciation of the work of the great governor of Mattão in the first year of his administration, upon whom, in the shadow of the *Estado Novo*, set off one of the most relevant cycles of our administrative History. [...] As soon as he took office, all the most important problems of the administration came to be resolved with determination. Mattão owes its current Mayor, in this relatively short period of his administration, an extensive amount of important accomplishments, performed in the various sectors (A Comarca 1940b).

Once more, basing on the the analysis of representation by Chartier (1985), we note the way through which the discourse of the newspaper directs itself to the matonense elite highlighting, once more, the figure of the Mayor.

In this edition, the columnist of the newspaper briefly explained the mayor's future projects, mentioning the creation of a Municipal Middle School for the first time in the written press: «There appear as services of invaluable merit and importance among his cogitations, the creation of the Municipal Gymnasium, an indispensable need that has long been felt among us [...]». (A Comarca 1940b).

At this point, what strikes us is the intention to create a middle school in a city with a population where 45% were illiterate, and of that percentage, 25% were in the age group between 10 and 19 years or age, instead of expanding primary education in the municipality with a view to reducing its deficit. Possibly, the mayor's preference for the official middle school has to do with meeting the expectations and/or pressures of a social stratum and/or group and can, therefore, be understood as a political strategy to guarantee his popularity among the local elite.

It can be inferred from the news published in the local press that the support requested by the mayor to the state government was a strategy to create the state middle school in the near future. For example, in the story printed on the front page of *A Comarca*, on the December 1, 1940 edition entitled *The Return of Mr. Municipal Mayor*, the columnist highlighted the successful negotiation between the mayor and the state intervener.

In an interview, he told us that he hopes to build, in the beginning of next year, the “Dr. Adhemar de Barros” Municipal Gymnasium, for he obtained from the head of the state government and other authorities full material and moral support for the new school build-

ding, as well as for all the other aspirations of the people of Matão. We also learned that His Excellency Dr. Adhemar de Barros will personally preside over the inauguration ceremonies of the Gymnasium [...] (A Comarca 1940c).

The privileging of Matão to the detriment of other municipalities of the state of São Paulo, which had greater economic representativeness and superior demand for secondary-school students, is a sign of the political interests of the local and state Executive Branch, mostly interested in the maintenance or the expansion of power. At the local level, the mayor probably wished to last among the local political leaders, who, for the most part, fit in with the local elite, thus seeking those improvements to the municipality that would directly or indirectly benefit them, including economically. As for the Federal Intervener Adhemar de Barros, he privileged in many circumstances the municipalities of the interior of São Paulo to secure and/or better his position vis-à-vis his electorate, aiming at maintain his power within the state, but also with an eye to the federal sphere, especially the presidency of the Republic: it suffices to recall here that Adhemar de Barros, after being Federal Intervener, also governed the State of São Paulo between 1947 and 1951, and again from 1963 to 1966¹⁰.

Seen as a sign of progress and modernity, the school building demanded – above all by the middle class and local elites – would at first resolve the difficulty of access to secondary education, and thus it politically benefited the municipal and state governments, seen as benefactors of the local population.

We also confirmed that, before the definitive creation of the Municipal Gymnasium, the Mayor went back to the city of São Paulo to settle the last details with the State Executive branch, as stated in the December 29th edition of the local weekly newspaper. (A Comarca 1940a). Thus, on December 31, 1940, based on Decree-Law No. 42, the Mayor created the Municipal Gymnasium:

Art. 1 - A Municipal Gymnasium is created in this city, whose installation will be done in due time, obeying the provisions of the federal teaching legislation. (Matão 1940, 265-265v).

It is no accident that the school was named “Dr. Adhemar de Barros” in honor of the State Intervener who had appointed the mayor and favored the creation of the middle school in the municipality. The inauguration of Matão Municipal Gymnasium took place in March of 1941.

A Comarca covered the event, highlighting the relevance of the school for the education of the youth of Matão and for the progress of the city.

On the 25th – Tuesday – one of the most important events in the history of the municipality of Matão will be recorded; an event that will mark the dawn of a new cycle of progress and

¹⁰ Adhemar de Barros exercised his functions in the São Paulo Executive Branch until June 5, 1966, the date on which the then President of the Republic, Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, revoked his term and suspended his political rights, a justified attitude based on the ideology of the military regime. Adhemar de Barros left the country on June 7 of that same year and died in Paris on March 12, 1969. See: <http://www.fgv.br/cpd/doc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/ademar-pereira-de-barros>. Accessed in 6 May 2017.

a vitalizing influx of activities in all sectors for our beautiful city: the beginning of classes at the Municipal Gymnasium.

This is a memorable day by all means; the day Mattão witnesses the opening of its first secondary education institution, offering the youth the most brilliant and comforting prospects; and at the same time testifying that our municipality is in no way out of tune with the upbeat pace that drives São Paulo and Brazil in the conquest of their high destinies.

The extraordinary importance of this enterprise cannot be overemphasized (A Comarca 1941b).

After completing the creation of Dr. Adhemar de Barros Municipal Gymnasium, the state government began to subsidize it in keeping with the provisions of the São Paulo State Education Code of 1933 (Decree No. 5,884, April 21, 1933). The regulation of subsidies granted to municipal middle schools is another indication of the actions taken by the municipalities of São Paulo in favor of the diffusion of secondary education in this federation unit in the decades of 1930 and 1940.

According to the Code, the São Paulo government could subsidize the municipalities of the State that maintained secondary teaching institutions for a period of five years, provided they met the following conditions:

- Operating in a municipal building with appropriate hygienic and pedagogical conditions;
- Furniture and teaching material in sufficient amounts and entirely suitable for teaching;
- Respectful administration and teaching staff;
- Observing the state legislation on official schools in all that was applicable to them;
- Being in operation for at least two years (São Paulo 1933, 151).

In the February 2, 1941 edition, *A Comarca* newspaper reported the terms of the state subsidy to Matão Municipal Gymnasium:

[...] obtained from the great governor of São Paulo the valuable subsidy of \$50,000 annually.

It was thus confirmed the high prestige of the Mayor among the highest governmental spheres, and the special attention and consideration that Dr. Adhemar de Barros dedicates to the cause of instruction. (A Comarca 1941a).

The activities of the newly established teaching institution began on March 25, 1941 in the premises of the first Public Primary School, with two classes: first and second years of middle school, with students who had passed the admission exam, in addition to those who came transferred from other schools.

Studying at Matão Municipal Gymnasium was seen as a source of pride, a feat for both students and their families, giving them a certain social “status” vis-à-vis the local community. Held by the citizens as an icon of progress, belonging to the student body of this teaching institution was seen as a challenge, given the existing selection, owing to the limited number of vacancies offered and the strictness of the admission exams. Moreover, this institution remained for many years the only public secondary education alternative in town.

Analyzing the enrollment records and students’ files, we found that in 1941 the

school had only two years of middle school, and the second year had only eight students, data that may reinforce the hypothesis that prior to the founding of the Gymnasium, most children living in Matão, especially school-age children, attended only primary education, with the main purpose of learning to read and write, not furthering their studies, probably to assist in activities involving the family budget, or in other cases, because they did not have the financial means to attend secondary education in other municipalities, such as Araraquara, São Carlos, and Ribeirão Preto.

Another important aspect considered in our analysis is the origin of the students, i.e., the place where they resided¹¹:

Table 1 - Place of Residence of Students Enrolled in 1941

<i>Place</i>	<i>Student Total</i>
Matão - Urban Area	43
Matão - Suburban area	-
Matão - Rural Area	08
District of Dobrada	02
District of São Lourenço do Turvo	-

Source: Files kept by Prof. Henrique Morato – Students' Files

From the data presented in the table above we can see that approximately 80% of the students enrolled in the middle school, in the year 1941, resided in the central area of the city – a reduced and concentrated area – that drew together the several functions necessary for the operation of the urban nucleus, i.e., public administration, church, commercial buildings, banks, services and entertainment enterprises.



Figure 1 - Urban Area of Matão (Central) - 1950.

Source: House of Culture of Matão.

¹¹ In order to define the number of students living in the urban and suburban areas of Matão, we compared the addresses of the students with Decree Law n. 31 of February 19, 1940, published in the edition of *A Comarca* newspaper of March 10 of the same year, which outlined the urban and suburban perimeters of the Municipality's headquarters and the districts of Dobrada and São Lourenço do Turvo.

This information may suggest that the students who attended Matão's middle school in their early years were probably the children of merchants, farmers, professionals, public officials, etc., that is, children from more up-and-coming social classes, greatly reinforcing the selective character attributed to secondary education at the time¹².

From Municipality to State: political power and institutional transformations of the Matão Gymnasium

The resonances of national politics in the municipalities can be observed in the way the newspaper, *A Comarca*, sought to present its readers with a political scenario favorable to the Getúlio Dornelles Vargas' administration, insisting on the formation of a public opinion – the “popular voice” – appreciative of the current system, making *Estado Novo* synonym to “national organization”, recognizing its president as a protagonist, and as coadjuvants the popular masses that supported him and as antagonist any citizen who did not share the collective opinion. In this way, the ties between the mayor of Matão and the dictatorial political Vargas regime were over and over emphasized by the newspaper: «The existence of our Gymnasium is one hundred percent the work of our Mayor, who, as a good nationalist and as an administrator truly integrated in the *Estado Novo*, created in the history of our land Renaissance era coadjutants – the JOSÉ BARTHOLOMEU FERREIRA ERA.» (the author's italics, *A Comarca* 1944)¹³.

In 1942, the process for the construction of a building to house the Municipal Gymnasium began. On February 8, 1942 was laid the founding stone of the building:

Today, when Matão's inhabitants are jubilantly watching the laying of the founding stone of our Gymnasium, it would be opportune to recall, step by step, the brief and victorious history of this extraordinary initiative, which, notwithstanding, cost the Mayor herculean preparation and organization efforts [...].

It will undoubtedly be the most important building in the city, a monument with modern architecture, elevating its concrete pillars on the top of the pleasant hill of Matão and forming with other beautiful public and private buildings, like the Mother Church, the Charity Hospital, the Primary Public School, a harmonious ensemble.

Today we will witness the laying of the founding stone; and in a few months, God willing, we will have its dedication. (*A Comarca* 1942).

The secondary school representation as an attribute for social differentiation is affirmed repeatedly by the *Comarca* newspaper, imposing a naturalization of the education hierarchy,

¹² We searched the students' files for information on their parents' profession, but unfortunately, we did not find any information in this regard, since none of the forms used in that period requested such information.

¹³ In *A Comarca* newspaper, we noticed the existence, between the years of 1937 and 1947 (with the exception of 1939, because we did not find that year's editions), of several reports about the former president Getúlio Dornelles Vargas.

that is, reaffirming the distinguished position of this level of education reignig in Brazil at that time.

The construction of the definitive building of the Municipal Gymnasium, as seen in Figure 2, was left to the Municipal Government of Matão. In 1947, the building, land, and furniture were donated to the state.



Figure 2 - Facade of the Matão Municipal Gymnasium building, 1945.
SOURCE: Files kept by Prof. Henrique Morato.

Everything suggests that the Mayor had negotiated with the Federal Intervener the building of the school with a view to transforming it into a State Middle School in the near future. However, the maintenance of the middle school was costly for the municipal coffers, even with the partial subsidy granted by the State. The strategy followed to overcome this obstacle culminated in Decree-Law No. 76¹⁴ of April 18, 1944, authorizing the private sector to lease the Municipal Gymnasium for a period of 10 years, through a public bidding process.

The Anglo Latino School of São Paulo won the bid according to Notice No. 109¹⁵, and took over, on July 5 of the same year, the administration of the teaching institution. At the same time, the local Executive Branch continued to act jointly with the State Executive Branch, from that time on with the support of a political agent that resurfaced with the end of the Vargas era – the state deputy – which will play a fundamental role in the expansion of secondary education from then on:

The third important fact for Matão is the expected taking over of the Municipal Gymnasium by the state. At this very moment we are writing this story, the situation is the following: upon request of the Mayor, in a letter addressed to the Federal Intervener, zealously defended by Dr. Valentim Gentil and resolutely supported by Mr. Ruy Barbosa Baptista Pereira, both worthy candidates for the position of state deputies in the next elections, Ambassador José Carlos de Macedo Soares signed, on the 9th of the current year, a bill creating the Matão

¹⁴ See Matão 1943-1954. (v.2). Decree published in *A Comarca*. Edition n. 966, of April 23, 1944.

¹⁵ Notice n. 109 of the Municipality of Matão to comply with its Decree-Law n. 76, approved by Resolution n. 2.681 / 43 of the State Administrative Council, published in editions n. 978, 979, 980, 981, 982 of *A Comarca*.

State Gymnasium. This project was sent to the State Administrative Council and is expected to be approved in the next few days. Once this fact is consummated, we can state, in complete fairness, that Matão is to be congratulated. The population of Matão ended the year 1946 and began the year of 1947 facing the best prospects, a breath of progress and happiness for the whole municipality. (A Comarca 1947).

It seems that the transfer of the Municipal Gymnasium's administration to the private sector would be a way for the Municipal Executive branch to ensure the operation of this teaching institution. Bearing in mind this hypothesis, we must take into account the short period of 2 years and 7 months elapsed – from the beginning of the Anglo-Latino College operation, with a lease on the Municipal Gymnasium for 10 years – until the enactment on 10 February 1947 of State Decree-Law No. 16,871, incorporating the Municipal Gymnasium¹⁶ to the State, in the following terms:

Art. 1 - The Matão State Gymnasium is created, according to the federal legislation on secondary education.

Art. 2 - The establishing of the institution created by art. 1º, depends on the donation to the State by the Municipality of that city, of land, building, and premises of the local Municipal Gymnasium. (São Paulo 1947).

However, the process of transferring secondary education to the state would come as a counterpart to the municipality benefitting from it. As we pointed out in a previous study:

[...] of the 58 official middle schools created between 1930 and 1947, 55 had the participation of the municipalities in order to exist, that is, 95% of the total number of schools created, thus translating the effectiveness of the proposed educational policy, in conformity with the desire of the municipalities that saw in secondary education a pressing need for the sake of local socio-economic development or in order to meet the demands of social groups that perceived the value of the school as an element of social differentiation. (Souza and Diniz 2014, 237-238)

In 1950, three years after the transformation of the Municipal Gymnasium into the State Gymnasium, this teaching institution began to function as the Normal School and State Gymnasium of Matão¹⁷. In May 1958, Deputy Francisco Scalaman-dre Sobrinho, linked to the PTN – National Labor Party – asked the Legislative As-

¹⁶ It should be noted here that at that time the school received a new name, Matão State Gymnasium. We did not find any document explaining why the name of the patron of the Municipal Gymnasium, Adhemar de Barros, was removed. Based on the mapping carried out by Diniz (2017), we noticed that according to the legislation on the creation of a middle school, the institution did not receive any name other than the name of the place where it would be built. The name of a patron for the school was given later, by a State Executive Branch decree. This is the case of Matão State Gymnasium that is in accordance with this not inexplicit rule.

¹⁷ Cf. São Paulo 1950, it should be clarified here that the implementation of the Normal Course adjacent to the State Gymnasium took place after the incorporation of the Free Normal School since 1948, which operated in the facilities of the Matão State Gymnasium, although not subordinated to this institution due to the fact that it was managed by all its teachers in a cooperative-like system, but under the counseling of the Mayor.

sembly of the State of São Paulo to establish the second cycle of secondary school in the State Gymnasium adjacent to the Normal School of Matão, through the formulation of Law No. 738/1958. However, the transformation of the middle school into a high school offering the two cycles of secondary education (middle school and high school) was only authorized in 1961 (Law 6,173 of July 14, 1961). In 1964, negotiations to transform this teaching institution into an Education Institute began, a proposal led by state deputy Leonardo Barbieri. The following year, the people of Matão welcomed the creation of yet another high-level public education institution in the city – the Education Institute¹⁸ established by Law No. 9,179 of December 13, 1965.

Once again, *A Comarca* newspaper reported the episode praising the performance of regional political actors: Deputy Leonardo Barbieri and Councilman Laert Tarallo Mendes (who would become Mayor of Matão in 1968):

As everyone knows, our main educational institution, by Law 9,179, of 12/13/65, was transformed into an Education Institute.

This is due to the effort, first, of Mr. Leonardo Barbieri, who introduced the bill to the Legislative Assembly for consideration and was able to see it approved and sanctioned; second, to the dynamic intervention of the councilman Prof. Laert Tarallo Mendes, who followed all the steps of the project from end to end in the Legislative Commissions and presented to the Technical-Legislative board the documentation and the essential elements for its sanctioning.

Rejoicing over the event, this newspaper acknowledges the effort of the two illustrious men [...].

Everything is on the right track, so let the extension of the building begin. (*A Comarca* 1966).

Over the years, the Matão public middle school, which until then served a very small number of students, mainly children from families with a higher purchasing power compared to the families that lived in the peripheral areas of the municipality, saw an increase in attendance in the first cycle of secondary education. Considering the years 1941, 1950 and 1965, we can see a vertiginous growth of 751% from 1941 to 1965 in the number of vacancies offered following the accelerated expansion of the public secondary education that occurred in the state of São Paulo in that period. Despite this expansion, in the mid-1960s, access to secondary education in the municipality of Matão remained restricted to a small number of school-age adolescents, since among the population aged 10 to 19, only 63% of children aged 10 to

¹⁸ In the state of São Paulo, the Education Institute was initially created by the Education Code of 1933 as a complex and comprehensive institution for the education of teachers, with the following purposes: a) to train primary teachers, secondary school teachers and inspectors; b) to maintain improvement and dissemination courses for the members of the teaching profession; c) provide primary and secondary education to students of both sexes in establishments that allowed the observation, experimentation and teaching practice by the candidates to the teaching profession. (São Paulo 1933). Between 1933 and 1950, only the Caetano de Campo Education Institute, in the capital city, was in operation in the state. From 1951, the expansion of education institutes in the hinterland of São Paulo began, and by 1967 the state had 120 establishments of this type. For an in-depth study on these institutions, see: Labegalini 2009.

14 were students, and this percentage dropped drastically to 27% in the 15 to 19 age group, which shows a very low rate of access to high school (second cycle of secondary education).

As we attempted to demonstrate in this paper, the creation and institutional transformations of the first middle school of Matão show how public schooling was the target of political forces serving the interests of the local elite, the Executive branch, and the political actors of the state legislature.

Final Considerations

The history of the Matão public middle school allows us to understand the intricate political game implied in the creation and institutionalization of secondary schooling in the hinterland of the state of São Paulo in the mid-20th century. During the *Estado Novo* regime (1937-1945), as a result of the prohibition of the operation of the Legislative branch – State Legislative Assembly and Municipal Councils – the state and local executive branches became responsible for the implementation of public policies, including the creation of secondary education schools. In the state of São Paulo, the first wave of public secondary education expansion occurred in a period of national political recession, between 1932 and 1947, when the state government of the state of São Paulo built 58 public middle schools, most of them (55 schools) with matched funds from the municipalities, that is, through the donation of buildings, land, and furniture to the State.

In this way, based on previous studies on the demands and needs of the population for secondary education, we verified the lack of specific criteria to guide the creation of an official middle school in a given municipality. The study of the Matão Gymnasium shows the extent to which the individualistic political bargain prevailed in the 1930s and 1940s. Nevertheless, in the subsequent period of redemocratization of the country (1945-1964), the political game became more complex, and from then on, the action of state deputies working jointly with the local leaderships (mayors and councilmen) to enable the expansion of public secondary education.

This study also highlights the role played by the local press in strengthening and disseminating representations of the current political regime at the federal level. It is also worth mentioning how the press reiterated the representation of the public middle school as a school of excellence, praising its contribution to a small part of the population of Matão.

Finally, we reaffirm the importance of the historical study of school institutions in order to broaden the understanding of the political history of education in São Paulo and Brazil. The regional focus and the look into institutions reveal the strategies, disputes and rivalries that marked the creation, establishment, operation, and institutional changes made to public schools. Therefore, this way of reconstituting the history of education denaturalizes not only the school, but also the action of the State power in the educational field shedding light, on the one hand, on the clientelism typical of

Brazilian politics and pointing out, on the other hand, the mishaps of the democratization of secondary education in the country, highlighting the numerous obstacles that hindered the access of young people from lower social levels to secondary education in the past, the repercussions of which are still much felt in the present.

Bibliography

- A Comarca. 1925. *A Comarca*, ed. 1, p. 1, January 4. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1940a. *Definitivamente resolvida a criação do Gymnasio*, ed. 786, December 29. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1940b. *Município de Mattão: homens e cousas do passado, num breve retrospecto histórico – como se vem processando, através de pouco mais de quatro décadas, a evolução das nossas possibilidades economicas e sociaes – o actual surto de progresso do município e seus principaes factores*, ed. 751, April 29. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1940c. *O regresso do sr. Prefeito Municipal*, ed. 792, December 01. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1940d. *Um anno de governo municipal*, ed. 751, April 29. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1941a. *Ginásio Municipal*, ed. 791, February 02. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1941b. *Gymnasio Municipal “Dr. Adhemar de Barros” de Matão*, ed. 798, March 23. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1942. *Um dia festivo para a população matonense: será assentada hoje a primeira pedra do edificio do nosso Ginásio Municipal*, ed. 843, February 08. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1944. *Ginásio Municipal Dr. Adhemar de Barros. Os primeiros frutos da feliz iniciativa do sr. José Bartholomeu Ferreira*, ed. 937, p. 1, January. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1947. *Matão está de parabéns*, ed. 1.131, January 12. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1954. *E o sonho se realizou...*, ed. 1.483, p. 1, January 3. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1962. *Para novos fins outros caminhos*, ed. 1911, p. 2, September. Matão.
- A Comarca. 1966. *Instituto de Educação*, ed. 2.070, January 08. Matão.
- Abreu, Jayme. 1955. “A educação secundária no Brasil (ensaio de identificação de suas características principais).” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, 23, 58: 26-104.
- Brazil (Country). 1964. *Sinopse estatística do Ensino Médio 1964 / 1963*. Brasília: Ministério da Educação e Cultura. Serviço de Estatística da Educação e Cultura.
- Campos, Raquel Discini de. 2009. *Mulheres e crianças na imprensa paulista (1920-1940): Educação e história*. São Paulo: Editora Unesp.
- Chartier, Roger. 1985. *A História cultural entre práticas e representações*. Lisboa: Difel.
- Dallabrida, Norberto, and Carminatti, Celso. 2007. *O tempo dos ginásios. Ensino secundário em Santa Catarina (final do século XIX – meados do século XX)*. Campinas: Mercado de Letras.
- Dallabrida, Norberto, and Souza, Rosa Fátima, orgs. 2014. *Entre o ginásio de elite e o colégio popular: estudos sobre o ensino secundário no Brasil (1931-1961)*. Uberlândia: Edufu.
- Darnton, Robert, and Roche, Daniel, orgs. 1996. *Revolução impressa: a imprensa na França (1775-1800)*. São Paulo: Edusp.

- Diniz, Carlos Alberto. 2012. *A educação secundária no interior paulista: estudo histórico sobre o Ginásio de Matão (1940-1965)*. PhD diss., Universidade Estadual Paulista.
- IBGE. 1950. *Recenseamento Geral do Brasil de 1940: Série Regional Parte XVII – São Paulo, Censo Demográfico*, t. I, II, III. Rio de Janeiro.
- Labegalini, Andréia Cristina Fregate Baraldi. 2009. *A formação de professores nos Institutos de Educação do Estado de São Paulo (1933-1975)*. Marília: Unimar, São Paulo: Arte & Ciência.
- Love, Joseph. 1982. *A Locomotiva. São Paulo na federação brasileira (1889-1937)*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.
- Luca, Tania Regina de. 2006. “História dos, nos e por meio dos periódicos: trajetórias e perspectivas analíticas.” In *Fontes históricas*, edited by Carla Bassanezi Pinsky, 111-153. São Paulo: Contexto.
- Matão (City). 1930-1949. *Livro de Atas de Sessões da Câmara Municipal*. Matão: Câmara Municipal.
- Matão (City). 1943-1954. *Registro de Leis, Decretos, etc., de 06/12/1943 a 30/12/1954*. v. 2. Matão: Câmara Municipal.
- Perez, Maria Isabel. 2006. *História de uma instituição pública de ensino secundário: implicações da democratização do ensino na cultura escolar*. PhD diss., Universidade Estadual Paulista.
- Pessanha, Eurize Caldas, and Gatti Junior, Décio, orgs. 2012. *Tempo de cidade, lugar de escola. História, ensino e cultura escolar em “escolas exemplares”*. Uberlândia: Edufu.
- São Paulo (State). 1933. *Decreto n. 5.884, de 21 de abril de 1933. Código de Educação do Estado de São Paulo*. São Paulo: Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo.
- São Paulo (State). 1947. *Decreto-lei n. 16.871, de 10 de fevereiro de 1947. Dispõe sobre a criação de um Ginásio Estadual*. São Paulo: Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo.
- São Paulo (State). 1950. *Lei n. 684, de 12 de abril de 1950. Determina que passem a funcionar como colégio os ginásios estaduais de São Roque, Andradina e Igarapava, e dá outras providências*. São Paulo: Diário Oficial do Estado.
- São Paulo (State). 1958. *Projeto de Lei n. 738, de 1958*. São Paulo: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado de São Paulo.
- São Paulo (State). 1965. *Lei n. 9.179, de 13 de dezembro de 1965. Transforma em Instituto de Educação o Colégio Estadual “Prof. Henrique Morato”, de Matão*. São Paulo: Diário Oficial do Estado de São Paulo.
- Silva, Geraldo Bastos. 1969. “A Educação Secundária (perspectiva histórica e teoria).” *Atualidades Pedagógicas*, v. 94, São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional.
- Souza, Rosa Fátima de. 2008. *História da organização do trabalho escolar e do currículo no século XX (ensino primário e secundário no Brasil)*. São Paulo: Cortez.
- Souza, Rosa Fátima de, Valdemarin, Vera Teresa, and Maria Cristina de Senzi Zancul, orgs. 2014. *O Ginásio da Morada do Sol: história e memória da Escola Estadual Bento de Abreu de Araraquara*. São Paulo: Editora Unesp.

Souza, Rosa Fátima de, and Diniz, Carlos Alberto. 2014. "A articulação entre Estado e municípios na expansão do ensino secundário no estado de São Paulo (1930-1947)." In *Entre o ginásio de elite e o colégio popular: estudos sobre o ensino secundário no Brasil (1931-1961)*, edited by Norberto Dallabrida and Rosa Fátima de Souza, 213-251. Uberlândia: Edufu.