




Encounters in Theory and History of Education Rencontres en Théorie et Histoire de l'Éducation Encuentros en Teoría e Historia de la Educación



Rethinking Readings About the Past of School and Education Between Worlds Repenser les interprétations du passé de l'école et de l'éducation dans un contexte transnational Reconsiderando las interpretaciones sobre el pasado de la escuela y la educación en un contexto transnacional

Vivian Batista da Silva , Diana Gonçalves Vidal , Ana Laura Godinho Lima
and Bruno Bontempi Jr. 

Volume 25, Number 1, 2024

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1116847ar>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24908/encounters.v25i0.18872>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Faculty of Education, Queen's University

ISSN

2560-8371 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Article abstract

This paper introduces the book *Rethinking Centre-Periphery Assumptions in the History of Education: Exchanges Among Brazil, USA, and Europe*, recently published by Routledge, as a result of the FAPESP Thematic Project No. 2018/26699-4 entitled *Knowledges and practices at the borders: for a transnational history of education (1810-)*. It is structured in two parts. The first part evinces the exchanges established between Brazil and the USA, with a focus on the circulation of subjects and pedagogical models. The narrative starts in 1884 with the trip of Maria Guilhermina Loureiro to the USA and extending to 1960 with the connections between New Education and Modern Architecture. Along the way, it deals with the education debates carried out in the state of São Paulo around the writing of the report *Education in the State of São Paulo* (1903), and the sojourn of Brazilian educators in the Columbia University Teachers College (NY) from 1920 to 1960. In the second part, the circle is widened, incorporating the exchanges with Europe, particularly with France, England, and Portugal. Here we conduct analyses about the circulation of artifacts such as desks, parietal charts, and school manuals, as well as of models of representation such as Pictorialism photography.

Cite this article

Batista da Silva, V., Gonçalves Vidal, D., Godinho Lima, A. & Bontempi Jr., B. (2024). Rethinking Readings About the Past of School and Education Between Worlds. *Encounters in Theory and History of Education / Rencontres en Théorie et Histoire de l'Éducation / Encuentros en Teoría e Historia de la Educación*, 25(1), 351–361. <https://doi.org/10.24908/encounters.v25i0.18872>

© Vivian Batista da Silva, Diana Gonçalves Vidal, Ana Laura Godinho Lima and Bruno Bontempi Jr., 2024



This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Rethinking Readings About the Past of School and Education Between Worlds

Vivian Batista da Silva
Diana Gonçalves Vidal
Ana Laura Godinho Lima
Bruno Bontempi Jr.
Universidade de São Paulo

Abstract

This paper introduces the book *Rethinking Centre-Periphery Assumptions in the History of Education: Exchanges Among Brazil, USA, and Europe*, recently published by Routledge, as a result of the FAPESP Thematic Project No. 2018/26699–4 entitled Knowledges and practices at the borders: for a transnational history of education (1810–). It is structured in two parts. The first part evinces the exchanges established between Brazil and the USA, with a focus on the circulation of subjects and pedagogical models. The narrative starts in 1884 with the trip of Maria Guilhermina Loureiro to the USA and extending to 1960 with the connections between New Education and Modern Architecture. Along the way, it deals with the education debates carried out in the state of São Paulo around the writing of the report *Education in the State of São Paulo* (1903), and the sojourn of Brazilian educators in the Columbia University Teachers College (NY) from 1920 to 1960. In the second part, the circle is widened, incorporating the exchanges with Europe, particularly with France, England, and Portugal. Here we conduct analyses about the circulation of artifacts such as desks, parietal charts, and school manuals, as well as of models of representation such as Pictorialism photography.

Keywords: networks, center-periphery, transnational history of education

Reconsiderando las interpretaciones sobre el pasado de la escuela y la educación en un contexto transnacional

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar el libro *Rethinking Centre-Periphery Assumptions in the History of Education: Exchanges Among Brazil, USA, and Europe*, lanzado recientemente por Routledge, como resultado del Proyecto Temático FAPESP nº 2018/26699–4, titulado *Knowledges and practices at the borders: for a transnational history of education (1810–)*. Está estructurado en dos partes. En el primero, lo que se pone en evidencia son los intercambios establecidos entre Brasil y Estados Unidos, con foco en la circulación de temas y modelos pedagógicos. La narración comienza en 1884 con el viaje de María Guilhermina Loureiro a Estados Unidos y se extiende hasta 1960 con las conexiones entre Nueva Educación y Arquitectura Moderna. Se abordan también los debates sobre educación desarrollados en el Estado de São Paulo en torno a la redacción del informe *La educación en el Estado de São Paulo* (1903) y la estancia de educadores brasileños en el Teachers College de la Universidad de Columbia (NY), entre 1920 y 1960. En la segunda parte se amplía el círculo, incorporando los intercambios con Europa, particularmente con Francia, Inglaterra y Portugal. Aquí realizamos análisis sobre la circulación de artefactos como pupitres, diagramas parietales y manuales escolares, así como de modelos de representación como la fotografía del pictorialismo.

Palabras-clave: redes, centro-perifería, historia transnacional de la educación

Repenser les interprétations du passé de l'école et de l'éducation dans un contexte transnational

Résumé

Cet article vise à présenter le livre *Rethinking Centre-Periphery Assumptions in the History of Education: Exchanges Among Brazil, USA, and Europe*, lancé récemment par Routledge, à la suite du projet thématique FAPESP n° 2018/26699-4 intitulé *Knowledges and practices at the borders: for a transnational history of education (1810–)*. Il est structuré en deux parties. Dans la première, ce qui est mis en évidence sont les échanges établis entre le Brésil et les États-Unis, en mettant l'accent sur la circulation des matières et des modèles pédagogiques. Le récit commence en 1884 avec le voyage de Maria Guilhermina Loureiro aux États-Unis et se prolonge jusqu'en 1960 avec les liens entre l'éducation nouvelle et l'architecture moderne. Il aborde aussi les débats sur l'éducation menés dans l'État de São Paulo autour de la rédaction du rapport *L'éducation dans l'État de São Paulo* (1903), et le séjour des éducateurs

brésiliens au Columbia University Teachers College (NY) entre 1920 et 1960. Dans la seconde partie, le cercle s'élargit en intégrant les échanges avec l'Europe, notamment avec la France, l'Angleterre et le Portugal. Nous menons ici des analyses sur la circulation d'objets tels que des pupitres, des planches pariétales et des manuels scolaires, ainsi que de modèles de représentation tels que la photographie pictorialiste.

Mots-clés : réseaux, centre-périphérie, histoire transnationale de l'éducation

Background

At the invitation of *Encounters in Theory and History of Education*, we present the book *Rethinking Centre-Periphery Assumptions in the History of Education: Exchanges Among Brazil, USA, and Europe*, which has been recently published by Routledge. Before dealing specifically with the content of the chapters, we would like to introduce their emergency conditions, as Michel Foucault would say in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, treating it “in the game of its instance.”¹ We agree with the author when he says that

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network.²

What nodes constitute this network? Not wanting to be exhaustive, we intend to indicate some of them, plotted in the reference to FAPESP Thematic Project No. 2018/26699–4 entitled Knowledges and practices at the frontiers: for a transnational history of education (1810 –). Started in 2019, the project arose from a desire of history of education teachers, working in the state of São Paulo, to problematize the findings of historical-educational research in its circumscription to the Brazilian territory, refusing what Martin Lawn appropriately called methodological nationalism.³

The branch of transnational history of education provided tensioning polarized approaches between the center and the periphery or supported by perspectives of transference, in line with other models of analysis such as the international circulation of knowledges and practices, embraced by the researchers of the project, aligned with cultural history. The notion of frontier, as per the title of the project, thus referred to both geographical limits, understood as places of passage and barrier; as well as theoretical

1 Michel Foucault, *A arqueologia do saber*. Rio de Janeiro, Forense-Universitária, 1986, p. 28.

2 Idem, p. 26

3 Lawn, M, Um conhecimento complexo: o historiador da educação e as circulações transfronteiriças. *Revista Brasileira De História Da Educação*, 14(1[34]), 127-144, 2014.

limits, signaling to epistemologies built on power relations established internally in the historical-educational field, but also between the sub-areas of the educational field, and in the confrontation with other fields of knowledge in the humanities, inside and outside Brazil.

In this reflection, we were guided by the readings of Michel de Certeau, in *The Writing of History*, when he states that historiography is an operation that is produced at the confluence of an institution, a practice and a writing,⁴ and of Pierre Bourdieu, when he discusses the scientific field, noting that its functioning generates and supposes a specific form of interest, constitutes an authority and is based on games of power legitimized by symbolic effectiveness.⁵

Therefore, the educational knowledges and practices aimed by the project, in addition to establishing a dialogue with the international production in the history of education, are situated in dialogue with other disciplines, constitutive of the educational arena, such as teacher training, school administration, didactics, as well as with related disciplines, such as psychology, economics, statistics, architecture, etc.

In the lessons of Roger Chartier,⁶ Milton Santos,⁷ and Anibal Quijano,⁸ we find other supports to carry out this research program that, taking the “glocal” as a reference, granted relevance to the peripheries and refused the epistemologies of the north, whether European or American. In this line, two metaphors figured as important. The first, enunciated by Serge Gruzinski, associates the work of the historian with that of the electrician, busy reestablishing the international and intercontinental connections that national historiographies have disconnected or hidden, blocking their respective frontiers⁹. The second metaphor comes to us from Sanjay Subrahmanyam when he suggests an inversion in the reading of the actions of the Portuguese Empire in Asia when referring to the tail that wags the dog.¹⁰

Thus, the project was organized into four axes, namely: 1) digital archives and libraries: history of books and reading; 2) subjects and artifacts: movements and traces; 3) innovation and tradition: fugues and counterpoints; 4) didactic material for public education and teacher training. Each of these axes is coordinated by two researchers

4 Michel de Certeau. *A escrita da história*. Rio de Janeiro: Forense-Universitária, 1982.

5 Pierre Bourdieu. Le champ scientifique. Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales, n. 2/3, jun. 1976, p. 88-104.

6 Roger Chartier. Micro-história e globalidade in: *A história ou a leitura do tempo*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2009, 53-59.

7 Milton Santos. Por uma outra globalização: do pensamento único à consciência universal. São Paulo, Record, 2000.

8 Aníbal Quijano. A colonialidade do saber: eurocentrismo e ciências sociais. Perspectivas latino-americanas. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, 2005.

9 Serge Gruzinski. Os mundos misturados da monarquia católica. Topoi, Rio de Janeiro, mar. 2001, pp. 176.

10 Sanjay Subrahmanyam. Comércio e conflito: a presença portuguesa no Golfo de Bengala, 1500–1700. Lisboa: Edições 70, 1994.

from the Faculty of Education at the University of São Paulo and has the collaboration of researchers from other institutions in São Paulo and abroad.

The time frame covers the period from the beginning of the 19th century to the present day. Its initial milestone was the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Rio de Janeiro, the moment of implementation of the first royal press in Brazilian lands and of initiatives that would lead to the first general law of primary education, of 1827, and the creation of secondary and higher education, in addition to the first teacher training schools. It presents the appropriations, exchanges, shares and exchanges of knowledges and actions at the international level that have since been processed, seeking to understand how this symbolic universe inscribed marks of innovation in the different traditions that constituted and have composed the knowledges and educational practices still today.

The book, object of this presentation, consists of eight chapters, in addition to an introduction and a conclusion. In each chapter, other texts, other phrases weave new links and nodes in this network, revealing complicities between the authors, but also signaling tensions in forms of approach and interpretation and in the selection of the analyzed themes. It gathers the results of research carried out with Axes 2 and 3, mentioned above. However, before addressing the structure and content of the book, it seems relevant to address the perspectives articulated in these axes.

Axes 2 and 3 of the Project: Knowledges and Practices at the Frontiers

The axis “Subjects and Artifacts: Movements and Traces” highlights the movements through geographical borders, focusing on the circulation of people, knowledges, practices and artifacts as a fundamental dimension of the modes of configuration assumed by the modern school, its teaching methods and practices. In the analysis of transnational movements, individual or collective, official or unofficial, we seek to overcome the paradigm of import or influence of regions recognized as *loci* of progress over nations considered dependent or backward. In addition to the interpretations that took the European and American experiences as “lessons to be learned,” we can narrate and interpret other modes of international relations, characterized either by reversals of roles or points of departure and arrival, or by appropriations, hybridities and creative reinventions and attentive to the national realities, to the problems to be solved and to the intrinsic characteristics of educational systems, albeit in their most embryonic times.

The research covers a wide range of experiences, which includes trips of subjects who observed, compared, appropriated and, in their returns, sought to transmit knowledges and practices considered successful, effective or modern in view of reforms of the education systems, or the school organization of the countries from which they departed. In addition to participation in congresses or pedagogical exhibitions, it is important to know the motivations and results of exchanges between people from fields

of knowledge converging with or related to education and transactions between professionals from different areas, interested in pedagogical or commercial issues related to education.

International circulation even refers to the material universe of the school, looking into the processes related to artifacts and their agents. From pencils to school desks, from textbooks to wall boards, from individual boards to school notebooks, an entire circuit of production and consumption was constituted, interlinking and connecting subjects, schools, governments, industries. This circuit involved industrial projects and products; imports and exports; catalogs and advertising vehicles; purchases and transfer of objects and furniture, which, due to their quotidian presence, played a role in the practices of teachers and students. With regard to retracing the material circuit of schools, the endeavor also implies the location and treatment of sources that testify to commercial transactions, such as purchase lists or item lists of warehouses of the Inspectorates of Instruction, libraries and schools; import guides; patent registrations; catalogues of exhibitions and companies. The objects themselves can scarcely be found in schools, but alternative traces can reveal past school practices, due to the movement of appropriation of pedagogical theories and models, in addition to the tense effectiveness of educational reforms.

Thus understood, the circulation establishes networks on local, national or international scales, not only by initiative of prominent educators or reformers, but also by teachers, principals and teaching inspectors, whose discreet trajectories deserve to be explored, for their fundamental role in mediating everyday school life. The historical investigations also extend to the trajectories of journalists, physicians, politicians, businessmen or attorneys who, having their corresponding proficiencies, were present and took part in these processes.

The analysis of transnational movements enables unveiling the complexity of school material culture in several dimensions, from the normative level of education systems and schools to scientific and pedagogical knowledges and the daily routine of teachers and students. The matter becomes particularly evident in the period comprising the last two centuries, in which Brazil took part in an intense global transit, either due to economic and political reasons, or in the sense of the search for pedagogical models and artifacts, fostered and propitiated by events such as the World Exhibitions or by intellectual networks and organizations such as the New Education Fellowship.

Therefore, this approach involves the debate about the forms of internationalization, as well as the ways to build intelligibilities for multilateral relations. The interpretations that focus their emphasis on the action of nation-states in the global diffusion of the educational ideology, signaling the process of internationalization of reference societies,

as suggested by Schriewer,¹¹ allows for the addition of new perceptions to the diffusion countermovements.¹² By focusing on the dissemination conducted by non-representatives of the state, as well as on the protagonism of centers not recognized as diffusers and on the not-always-conscious appropriations of the cultural models distributed, the analyses problematize the scope and effectiveness of the agencies and powers of the states, feeding the interest in the complexity of the arrangements and in the porosity of the borders, conceived as contours permeable to the circulation of subjects, models and artifacts.

In the axis "Innovation and Tradition: Fugues and Counterpoints," the theoretical-methodological considerations on the meanings and effects of crossing geographical borders are broadened through their articulation with reflections on temporal frontiers, in particular, with ideas related to tradition and innovation, backwardness and progress. Throughout the nineteenth century, the issue of evolution became central in the natural and social sciences, and the development of individuals, as well as social progress, were considered from the evolutionary perspective, which sought to apprehend the differences between human groups and individuals in terms of a greater or lesser degree of civilization and development.

In the field of education, the issue was incorporated as a direct relationship between the natural laws of human development and the history of societies.¹³ The idea of the evolutionary genesis of human intellect was, in practice, transposed to the ideal division and sequence of educational degrees in the graded school model,¹⁴ later, the new school movement supported its criticism of the contents and methods of the traditional school on the statement that the main objective of the school would no longer be to transmit knowledge, but rather to promote the development of students. Against the pedagogical tradition, the movement advocated the renewal of teaching methods, based on scientific knowledge about child development, with a view to modernizing society.

Although reformist discourses commonly present the argument of an absolute opposition between the traditional and the modern, in which the former would represent conservatism and backwardness, historical research on knowledges and practices have shown that the school simultaneously has a commitment to tradition—by seeking the

11 Jürgen Schriewer . Estados-modelo e sociedades de referência: externalização em processos de modernização. In: Novoa, António & Schriewer, Jürgen (ed.) A difusão mundial da escola. Lisboa: Educa, 2000, p. 103-120.

12 Diana Vidal. A invenção da modernidade educativa: circulação internacional de modelos pedagógicos, sujeitos e objetos no oitocentos. In: Cláudia Engler Cury, Serioja Cordeiro Mariano. (ed.). Múltiplas visões: cultura histórica no oitocentos. João Pessoa: Editora Universitária da UFPB, 2009, v. , p. 39-58.

13 S.J Gould, S.J. A falsa medida do homem. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2003; M.C.G Gerken and C.H.S Gerken. Desenvolvimento humano: história, conceitos e polêmicas. São Paulo: Cortez, 2010.

14 Carlos Monarcha. Escola Normal da Praça. O lado noturno das Luzes. São Paulo: Editora da Unicamp, 1999

dissemination of a cultural heritage and to innovation—by intending, through the training of new generations, to prepare the future. School culture is a good example of the coexistence of traditional practices, such as controlling the attendance of students and assigning scores to their work, and other very recent practices, such as the incorporation of new technologies into the curriculum. In certain historical configurations, there can be varied combinations of “old” and “new” elements composing school cultures, in histories that intersect or that have followed in parallel for several generations.

It makes sense to seek, from a historical and non-teleological perspective, the description and interpretation of the ways in which it was manifested, for example, the commitment of educators to preserve the traditional knowledges and practices they learned in their training and professional practice, and what were the criticisms directed to this tradition and these educators, who supported discourses and initiatives for the renewal of educational programs and teaching methods, often inspired by experiences from other nations or articulated with transnational networks. The ways in which the criteria of judgment were historically and transnationally formed and diffused in terms of innovation and tradition, advancement or delay that enabled comparing and hierarchizing school systems, institutions, knowledges, practices and subjects makes it possible to oppose the discourses and initiatives of individuals and groups that militated for the renewal of systems, schools, and educational theories and teaching methods, to oppose the dissent and resistance in defense of the conservation of values, curricula, routines, uses of space and pedagogical and administrative procedures.

In this approach, therefore, historical time is not exhausted on the past-present-future axis, but encompasses different durations, permanencies and accelerations. Thus, there is a new examination of the logic of the relations between center and periphery, commonly marked by an analogical representation either on the temporal plane, between past-backwardness and future-progress, in which the industrial nations of Europe and the United States appear associated with progress, and those of the periphery, with backwardness; or on the geographical plane, with the representation of the global north as developed and the south, as underdeveloped, which ratifies the civilizational divide embedded in the great narratives of the West.

It is within the scope of the reflections carried out by researches associated with the two axes that the book *Rethinking Centre-Periphery Assumptions in the History of Education: Exchanges Among Brazil, USA, and Europe* was developed. The chapters are organized so as to give visibility to these issues as will be seen in the next item.

Contents and Structure

Anchored in inspirations arising from the metaphor of networks, the book interweaves a series of themes, sources and theoretical and methodological references that lead to rethinking the exchanges carried out in different times and spaces in the construction

and appropriation of the school model. The texts reveal various strands followed in a period that spans two centuries, in which Brazil serves as a point of departure and of arrival for the analyses of circuits that, intertwined within the national borders, stimulate the reflection about international transits, hybridizations, and appropriations in a process of transnational circulation of subjects and artifacts, in which pedagogical and social models and knowledges are not excluded. In this exercise, the objects of study are spatially, historically, and epistemologically *de-* and *reterritorialized*.

To give visibility to these ongoing studies, this volume is structured in two parts. In the first, what is put in evidence is the exchanges established between Brazil and the USA, with a focus on the circulation of subjects and pedagogical models. In the second one, the circle is widened, incorporating the exchanges with Europe, particularly with France, England, and Portugal.

The first chapter, entitled “Trajectories of the Loureiro de Andrade Family In Childhood Education: An Analysis From the Perspective of the Transnational History of Education,” by Vinicius Monção, aims to analyze the teacher training of Maria Guilhermina Loureiro de Andrade (1842-1929), a relevant teacher in the Brazilian context, who in her career connected Brazilian pedagogical ideas with those from the United States of America. Between 1883 and 1887, the teacher stayed in New York City on her own resources to study at the New York Seminary for Kindergartners in the Model Kindergarten created by Maria Kraus-Boelté and John Kraus.

The second chapter, entitled “Showing Advances to the World: *Education in the State of S. Paulo* (1903). Report at Brazil’s Exhibition in St. Louis,” by Bruno Bontempi Jr., concerns Brazil’s exhibition during the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, in St. Louis, in 1904. It focuses on the representation of the state of São Paulo in its relationship with Brazil, which was proclaimed in the *Education in the State of S. Paulo* report. It also points out Brazil’s connection with the global power center. The analysis indicates that the discursive and curatorial rhetoric of the Brazilian Commission was effective in diluting regionalisms in favor of the image of unity, as well as in persuading interlocutors that, even if the country could not aspire to a central place, it had at least left the “primitive” remnants in the past, characteristic of the peoples that occupied the most peripheral areas in the geography of civilization.

The third chapter, entitled “From Brazil to the United States. From Teachers College, Columbia University, to the World: Appropriation, Production, and Circulation of Ideas in the Field of Education,” by Rafaela Rabelo, discusses the motions of Brazilian educators who at some point attended the Columbia University’s Teachers College in New York. Around 120 Brazilian students attended Teachers College between the 1920s and 1960s. Some were enrolled in postgraduate programs or simply attending short courses, while others included the institution in their study mission itineraries. The case studies explored in the chapter highlight that the exchanges were multidirectional and the existence of multiple centers.

The fourth chapter, entitled “New Education Movement and Modern Architecture: Brazil and USA Connections Between 1930 and 1960,” by Ana Laura Godinho Lima and Ana Gabriela Godinho Lima, analyzes the approximations among the Escola Nova movement discourses and Modern Architecture Elementary Schools projects in Brazil from the 1930s to the 1960s. It intends to ponder on how these discourses and architectures have been impacted by the modern idea that the incorporation of scientific knowledge in the citizens’ education, as well as in city planning and architecture, would allow overcoming the perceived backwardness of the Brazilian society when compared to those of the United States of America and other European countries. The focus is directed at the exchanges of ideas and references relating to school architecture between Brazilian and North American educators and architects.

The fifth chapter, entitled “Kaleidoscope of Images in Exchange: The Pictorialism Movement in the Promotion of Photographic Education and Photographic Production,” by Rachel Duarte Abdala, points out the pictorialism movement, which emerged in the late 19th century in France and England, quickly reached the United States and then Brazil, peaking in the first two decades of the 20th century. This article aims to analyze the educational function of the pictorialism movement from the production of pictorial photographers and the aesthetic education promoted by camera clubs in Brazil, Europe and the United States. The spread of pictorialism and its intense visibility promoted by different strategies, besides the sharing of ideas and practices among groups of photographers, going beyond national borders, can characterize pictorialism as a school in the broad and open conception of school in its philosophical and informal character.

The sixth chapter, entitled “Rethinking the Center-Periphery Relations in History of Education: Network Archaeology and School Material Culture,” by Wiara Alcântara, focuses on the archaeological theory of networks, investigating and tracing the nodes and links of human and non-human networks in the process of world diffusion of the modern school in the 19th century. The text deals with the reverse circuit of the school desk and the circulation of an American school desk model, not as a specific product, but as a concept, an idea laden with meanings. Through the “Statistical Maps of Commerce and Navigation of the Port of Rio de Janeiro,” it examines the re-export movement of other school objects, such as materials for teaching natural sciences. Both the displacement of the idea-product and the re-export movement point to the directions and polycentric relationships that marked the worldwide diffusion of the modern school and its materiality.

The seventh chapter, entitled “For a Polycentric History of Education: The Brazilian School Museum between Brazil, Portugal, and France (late 19th century)” by Diana Gonçalves Vidal, deals with the Portuguese migration to Brazil during the latter half of the 19th century, focusing on the 1850s and 1860s, when José d’ Oliveira Lopes started his saga. The chapter is interested in the circulation of people between the two sides of the Atlantic and explores the creation of the school and pedagogical museums in the

1800s, seeing them as necessary didactic support for the implementation of the method of object lessons. The focus is on the circulation of pedagogical models and on the circulation of cultural objects. This text reflects on how to situate the center and the periphery in the studies in which the circulation is the focus of analysis within the scope of a transnational history. Therefore, it argues for a polycentric history of education.

The eighth chapter, entitled “From Place to Place: Connections and Ruptures of Luiz Alves De Mattos In the Educational Field (From the 1920s to the 1960s)” by Vivian Batista da Silva and Keila da Silva Vieira, aims to examine the circulation Luiz Alves de Mattos and his books for teachers had on national, international, and transnational dimensions. “From place to place” is not only the movement that refers to physical and geographical spaces but also the social spaces in which Mattos built in his career. It is the result of connections made from the 20s to the 60s with institutions, groups, and individuals specialized in education in Brazil and in the world, especially in the United States and Argentina. His itineraries constitute a kind of “reverse circuit” because his work is not a mere copy of North American references. It is possible to escape the limits of interpretations that believe in the “transfer” of knowledge from one place to another.

Over and above that, our purpose was to problematize the very operability of the categories of “center” and “periphery” in the analysis of the movements of circulation and appropriation of pedagogical models and ideas between countries. Firstly because they presuppose the existence of fixed and univocal relationships that start from the supposed center towards the regions perceived as peripheral, with no margin for examining the reverse circuit. Secondly, they elude the perception of those territories as transitory and resulting from historically shifting geographic and symbolic constructions. Lastly, they ratify the violence of the processes of exclusion based on the attribution of subalternities brought about by a historiographic narrative in education that presents itself as the reference.

We hope that the book contributes to a broad and fertile debate that has been developing in the field of the history of education.