


# The Curriculum Proposals of the State of São Paulo in the 1980s: Impacts of a New Expertise for Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The historical analysis of a given curricular production makes it possible to understand how, at a given time, the production of new knowledge occurs, made official in some documents, thus providing references for teaching and teacher education. **Objectives:** The study intends to answer the following question: How to understand the negative criticisms disseminated by the press to this curricular production, in terms of the elaboration of a new teaching expertise? **Design:** This study is a research from a historical perspective. This is a documentary research that has as its source material from newspapers from the 1980s. **Setting and Participants:** The research presents aspects of a curriculum production from the 1980s. Sows the impacts emitted by the newspapers of the time on a curricular production. **Data collection and analysis:** As an empiric of the research, the articles published in São Paulo newspapers are considered at the time of the elaboration of the proposals. Such a question is justified, therefore, because it makes it possible to explain the process of producing new knowledge for teaching based on the actions of experts. **Results:** Going through the actions of the experts shows us that it is fundamental to understand the tensions between the fields present behind the scenes of elaboration. From the tensions, knowledge will be theoretically constructed. **Conclusions** The answer obtained shows the decisive role of the press and the struggles waged for the consolidation of this official curricular document. The curricular documents of a given time govern and provide references for the teaching and training of teachers of that time.

**Keywords:** Curriculum; Expert; CENP; Expertise; Press.

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## A proposta curricular do estado de São Paulo, anos 80: impactos de uma nova *expertise* para o ensino

### RESUMO

**Contexto:** A análise histórica de uma dada produção curricular possibilita compreender como, numa dada época, ocorre o movimento de produção de novos saberes, oficializados em determinados documentos, dando referências para o ensino e para a formação de professores. **Objetivos:** O estudo intenta responder à seguinte questão: como compreender as críticas negativas divulgadas pela imprensa a essa produção curricular, em termos da elaboração de uma nova *expertise* para o ensino? **Design:** Este estudo trata-se de uma pesquisa em perspectiva histórica. Trata-se de uma pesquisa documental que tem como fonte matéria de jornais da década de 1980. **Ambiente e participantes:** A pesquisa apresenta aspectos de uma produção curricular da década de 1980. Mostra os impactos emitidos pelos jornais da época acerca de uma produção curricular. **Coleta de dados:** Como empiria da pesquisa são consideradas as matérias publicadas em jornais paulistas ao tempo da elaboração das Propostas. Tal questão justifica-se, pois, permite explicitar o processo de produção de novos saberes para o ensino a partir das ações de *experts*. **Resultados:** Percorrer as ações dos *experts* nos mostra ser fundamental para compreender as tensões entre campos presentes nos bastidores de elaboração. A partir das tensões os saberes serão construídos teoricamente. **Conclusões:** A resposta obtida mostra o papel decisivo da imprensa e as lutas travadas para a consolidação desse documento oficial curricular. Os documentos curriculares de um dado tempo regem, dão referências para o ensino e para a formação de professores desse tempo.

**Palavras-chave:** currículo; *expert*; CENP; *expertise*; imprensa.

### FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

There are countless studies on curricula. And, in the midst of the large number of these works, there are various themes on the subject. In a work that brings together several current studies on the mathematics curriculum, Godoy, Silva, and Santos (2018) identify dimensions of curriculum studies such as:

(...) the prescriptions within the scope of the governments, the curricular materials produced for teaching, the plans built in the context of the institutions, the public policies related to the curriculum development, the actions developed in educational spaces and the assessments in their various forms, among others (Godoy et al. 2018, p. 14)

Unlike the thematic dimensions mentioned, this study focuses on the knowledge contained in curriculum documents, seeking to understand how they

are prepared. Considering the historical perspective of the treatment of this type of material, this article is interested in analysing the processes and dynamics of the production of new knowledge for teaching and teacher education. Thus, the historical analysis of a given curricular production makes it possible to understand how, at a given time, the production of new knowledge occurs, made official in some documents, thus providing references for teaching and teacher education.

Historically analysing curriculum documents to understand the production of new knowledge involves the use of theoretical-methodological tools that take into account the subjects directly involved in this production: the experts. Such characters are responsible for the systematisation of new knowledge that gain official status in a given curriculum production.

This text is particularly interested in the production of new knowledge for mathematics teaching in the first school years, in the period marked by a rupture with what became known as the Modern Mathematics Movement - MMM. To this end, it analyses historically the “Proposta Curricular para o Ensino de Matemática – 1º. Grau” [Curriculum Proposal for Mathematics Teaching – Elementary School] of the State of São Paulo, made official in 1988. We base this study on the criticisms disclosed by the press on how the *experts* developed new knowledge for teaching mathematics in the early school years. In this way, the text is guided by the question: How to understand the negative criticism published by the newspapers to the elaboration of the “Proposta Curricular para o Ensino de Matemática – 1º. Grau”? The question is, of course, justified, given that the ambience of elaboration of the new proposal occurs in the country’s democratisation period, after two decades of a military regime, with curriculum references imposed by the dictatorship. On the other hand, its answer allows us to elucidate important aspects that participate in the production of new knowledge for teaching, particularly for mathematics, in terms of the work of experts’ work.

## **THE EXPERTS AND CURRICULUM PRODUCTION**

The characterisation of the term expert dates to the 14th century (Porret et al.2013). At that time, an expert is a technical specialist who solves practical problems. On the other hand, at the beginning of the 19th century, according to Peter Burke (2016), the term expert designates a new craft: a person or a group hired by governments to provide advice. Such governmental need was imperative given the task of solving practical problems such as sanitation,

urban planning, or administration of public accounts. These were issues connected to the growth of cities from the century before last.

Dealing with the category of expert, as mentioned earlier, has been going on for a long time, but it remains very current, as historian Peter Burke ponders, mentioning that nowadays, studies on experts and their expertise proliferate, giving as an example the epidemiologists in times of the coronavirus (Burke, 2021, p. 7).

In this text, the term expert is in line with what, more recently, a team of researchers from the University of Geneva, Switzerland, coordinated by Professor Rita Hofstetter, designated as experts in education.

In the mid-nineteenth century, when the national education systems were being constituted, the governments started needing specialised knowledge to manage this new public apparatus. The experts' advice aimed to support decisions to be taken in the school environment regarding the efficiency of teaching, management of students' flow, adequacy of the school to different audiences, organisation of contents, and stages of the pedagogical process, etc. (Hofstetter et al. 2017).

*Expert* and *expertise* are problematised terms in Hofstetter and Schneuwly's (2021) study, specifically dealing with the educational field. For these authors, the indicative of a profession is also indicative of an expertise. Thus, every painter is an expert because he/she has experience and knowledge about paints, how to use them, etc. This is his/her expertise. Likewise, all teachers are experts, insofar as they have knowledge and experience about the struggles of their profession, they have an expertise on teaching. Considering only such considerations, certainly, the mobilisation of such terms would be not very fertile, given that every profession involves experts and expertise. However, for what interests us to discuss in this article, Hofstetter and Schneuwly bring another definition for expert and expertise.

According to the second core of meaning, the expert participates in a procedure that is somehow external to it. This implies five constituent elements of the activity of the expert, i.e.: expertise that here is both activity and result of the activity (and no longer has the meaning of know-how): an explicit demand of a person to intervene in the decision-making process: they are given a mandate to do so; it is not this person, however, who makes the final decision; a plaintiff, agent, body, or person other than the expert, who does not have the experts'

knowledge; this request establishes an expert in a role or status, often remunerated as such; an expertise process - one might say of an expertise to underline the activity dimension, a relatively frequent term in English. This activity is very diversified, according to the fields in which it is requested; it is a result, an expertise, which can also take various forms: a testimony, a report, an expertise, a particular study (Hoffstetter & Scheneuwly, 2021, p. 20-21).

Thus, treating the terms expert and expertise, we consider that the perspective of historical analysis of processes and dynamics specific to the production of knowledge contained in a given curricular document brings out subjects involved in the systematisation of this documentation. Governments institute these people. They give them the authority to prepare curriculum documentation. And, of course, the formalisation of the experts' work, a product of a given government, goes through power games, political analyses, and a whole series of clashes until the final document can be released and taken as a reference for teaching and teacher education.

The historical analysis reveals that, over time, there are changes in the way these experts act, in the way they are summoned by the State, in their attributions, etc. We can mention, for example, that the references for the teaching of mathematics, for the formation of teachers in São Paulo, through the normal schools, are given by the teaching programs elaborated by the teachers of the Normal School of São Paulo (Valente, 2011). Something very different, for example, from what happens in the elaboration of new knowledge for teaching coming from the Brazilian National Common Core Curriculum - BNCC, where the technical sheet to produce this resource lists a myriad of characters and institutions that participated in preparing this curriculum documentation.

In any case, over time, the production of new knowledge for teaching and teacher education takes place in a specific environment built by the experts. That is, the locus of this production is not the academy, the disciplinary fields taking charge of formulating proposals to be made official in teaching. Nor are the schools, the teaching network, which would take care of preparing the curricula for its consumption, with the teachers systematising their own knowledge for their professional performance. Much less are the spaces of the education workers' unions authorised to systematise knowledge for curricular production, which would express the representation of the professional teaching field.

In summary, the production of new knowledge for teaching does not occur in universities, nor does it occur in schools, much less in teachers' unions. It takes place in specific spaces, sometimes even institutionalised ones, to constitute true "curriculum laboratories"<sup>1</sup>. And the State is responsible for instituting those who, removed from the professional field of teaching, or universities, are constituted as experts. An expert is thus a person authorised by the governmental education authority to do a practical job: to systematise knowledge for teaching to construct new curriculum documentation.

## **CRITICISM OF A NEW CURRICULUM PRODUCTION**

One of the first events related to the country's redemocratisation in the 1980s is linked to the direct election of state governors. In São Paulo, elected Governor André Franco Montoro held office from 1983 to 1987. After the balloting, a movement sought to change the directives of education in the state. After all, some references in force during the military period changed, and education was considered one of the priority areas of the new São Paulo government.

Montoro took over in March 1983. In July, the Education Forum of the State of São Paulo was created.

Under the coordination of Clarilza Prado de Sousa (CENP) and directed by Maria Amélia de Azevedo Goldberg, the theme "The school we have and the school we want" was debated from the perspective of quality and autonomous schools. A school focused on a technicist and behaviourist pedagogy or a school concerned with constructing knowledge? Constructivist ideas became part of educational discussions and triggered the production of a new curriculum proposal, replacing the Guides. Thus, preparing the Curricular Proposals conducted by CENP began (Finato, 2015, p. 171).

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<sup>1</sup> An example to be used in this article is the case of CENP – Coordination of Studies and Pedagogical Standards. In 1975, the state of São Paulo promoted an administrative reform and developed an organisation chart and the functions of the Coordination of Studies and Pedagogical Standards (CENP), an agency of the State Department of Education. Among the attributions of CENP was to develop curriculum models for the state.

As a place of curriculum development, since its creation, the Coordination of Pedagogical Studies and Norms (CENP) started, in 1985, in São Paulo, with discussions aiming at elaborating a new teaching proposal. The following year brought news of the process of preparing the Curriculum Proposals, through the then-coordinator of the CENP:

The preliminary texts of the proposals related to the different curriculum components, based on discussions with the teachers, are being prepared by the CENP technical teams for the 1st and 2nd degrees and will be released in due course and discussed with teachers and specialists from the state education network (Palma Filho *apud* Martins, 1996, p. 8)

Thus, the first versions of the “Curriculum Proposals of the State of São Paulo – 1<sup>st</sup> degree”. Specifically, in the Curriculum Proposal for the Teaching of Mathematics – 1<sup>st</sup> degree, the Preface of the final version states:

The 1st version of this proposal, prepared by CENP’s mathematics technical team, assisted by Professors Antonio Miguel (UNICAMP) and Nilson José Machado (USP), was discussed with the mathematics monitors in two meetings of 30 hours each (one of which coordinated by Professor Luiz Roberto Dante (UNESP-Rio Claro) to systematise suggestions indicated in the discussions held in each education department (São Paulo, 1991, p. 8).

In 1988, in its third revised version based on the “intense participation of the education network” (Cenpec, 2015, p. 170), the document was disseminated in schools.

This text addresses some of the repercussions that occurred during the movement to prepare the “Propostas”, based on articles published in São Paulo newspapers *Folha de São Paulo* and *Estado de São Paulo*.

We work with the hypothesis that curriculum production is the effort of experts, who systematise and elaborate new knowledge, creating new expertise. With this hypothesis, we question: How to understand the negative criticisms divulged by the press to this curricular production in terms of producing new expertise for teaching? This question is justified, as it explains important aspects of the production process of new knowledge for teaching based on the actions of experts.

The first version of the Curriculum Proposals came to light in 1986. In 1987, a network of debates on the document was created, and access to the work systematised until then by CENP was made public. This year, the São Paulo press published reports calling on authorities to express opinions on the Proposals. Table 1, below, indicates the chronology of the articles related to the new curriculum production, considering the ones published in the two newspapers with the largest circulation in São Paulo.

**Table 1**

*Articles on the Curriculum Proposal*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Article title</b>
<b>07/28/1987</b>	Folha de São Paulo	Reforma Curricular é discutida e visa não-reprovação [Curriculum Reform is discussed and aims at non-failure]
<b>07/29/1987</b>	O Estado de São Paulo	Currículo das escolas em debate [School curriculums under debate]
<b>07/30/1987</b>	Folha de São Paulo	CENP critica método científico no ensino de ciências [CENP criticizes the scientific method in science teaching] - Chopin acha “salutar” o debate [Chopin thinks the debate is “healthy”] - Geógrafo considera “triste” a proposta [Geographer considers the proposal “sad” ]
<b>08/02/1987</b>	Folha de São Paulo	Projeto da CENP institucionaliza baixo nível de ensino [CENP project institutionalises a low level of education] - Função da escola pública não é segregar [The function of the public school is not to segregate] - Documento possui saudável tom polêmico [The document has a healthy controversial tone] - Proposta reflete visão distorcida do processo de ensino [Proposal reflects a distorted view of the teaching process] - Para técnicos, não se abandona Geografia Física [For technicians, Physical Geography should not be left aside]
<b>09/13/1987</b>	O Estado de São Paulo	Luta de classes, lição na escola pública [Class struggle, lesson in public school]



		- Magistério condena o desvio no ensino [Scholars condemns deviation in teaching]
		- Até a gramática vira forma de discriminar [Even grammar becomes a way of discriminating]
		- Secretário admite conteúdo ideológico [Secretary admits ideological content]
<b>10/01/1987</b>	Folha de São Paulo	Secretário recua e critica propostas da CENP [Secretary retreats and criticizes CENP proposals]
<b>10/15/1987</b>	O Estado de São Paulo	Propostas Curriculares da Secretaria da Educação [Curriculum Proposals from the Department of Education]

The first newspaper report in Table 1 was released, taking into account that the teachers were starting to appreciate the preliminary draft of the Curriculum Proposals. *Folha de São Paulo* wrote a report on curriculum reform. The article was highlighted through the subtitle “Professores mostram resistência” [Teachers resist]. In this report context, the newspaper quoted teachers who expressed dissatisfaction by mentioning that “grammar is no longer taught and there is no longer a right and wrong” regarding the official indication for teachers to take into account the students’ way of expression, their “dialects”. Another highlight, along with the report, was the 9th International Conference on Chemistry Education. The speech of a foreign professor criticising the curricula of secondary courses in chemistry had repercussions, indicating that they were designed for those who would continue studying chemistry in higher education, not approaching the social importance of this knowledge.

It is interesting to note that these two positions the newspaper emphasised showed, on the one hand, the teacher who was in favour of maintaining intact the disciplinary form of grammar teaching. On the other hand, the specialist criticises precisely the disciplinary form of teaching chemistry, indicating that the school objective should be something else instead of training students in these branches of knowledge for higher education. From the cited examples, we can say that the professional field is subsumed by the disciplinary field (the case of grammar); on the other hand, the disciplinary field seems to be interested in the displacement of disciplinary focuses on those that should be the concern of the professional field of teaching, school (the example of chemistry).

Newspaper articles continued monitoring the implementation of the Curriculum Proposals. The day after the first report, on July 29th, 1987, the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* published an article entitled “Currículo das escolas em debate” [School curricula under debate]. The text reaffirmed the concerns with the teaching of the Portuguese language expressed in the version that was being discussed by the teachers. The newspaper highlighted the intentions of the document under discussion to rethink the teaching of this school rubric in terms of considering its learning “in real communication situations”. This is reminiscent of the previous article where a teacher disagrees with the above, showing to be fond of normative grammar teaching. In addition, the report gave details about the discussion of the Proposals: “After taking two years to be structured, with the participation of five hundred teachers of the 1st degree, eight hundred of the second and specialists from USP, UNICAMP, and UNESP, the preliminary project that reformulates the school curriculum is being debated (...) by São Paulo educators”.

Two days after the first article in *Folha de São Paulo* dealing with the São Paulo curriculum reform movement, on July 30th, 1987, the newspaper gave much attention to the theme. In the articles, several subtitles and text frames. The largest of them was entitled “CENP critica método científico no ensino de Ciências” [CENP criticises the scientific method in science teaching]. With the signature of the local report team “Da Reportagem Local”, the text quoted the preliminary curriculum, highlighting the need to change the teaching of sciences because there was “an overvaluation of scientific knowledge to the detriment of other forms of knowledge”. In the criticism outlined by the article of this position, a speech by a CENP representative advocates the proposal under discussion. For him, according to the newspaper, “the current curriculum intends to transform each student into a little scientist, and the new guidelines lead towards a more realistic understanding of the usefulness of science and technology”. It is interesting to associate the CENP speech with that of the foreign expert at the chemistry meeting, quoted in the previous *Folha* report. It is, in fact, the same position: the school curriculum should not be something given by the prescriptive field. Students should not be trained to be either chemists or scientists... However, in the same report, in another text box, under the title “Geógrafo considera ‘triste’ a proposta” [Geógrafo considers the proposal to be ‘sad’], many university professors and renowned intellectuals in national life were called by the newspaper to give their opinions on geography and history subjects. From Aziz Ab’Sáber to Paulo Singer, Eunice Durhan, Carlos Guilherme Mota, and Raquel Glezer, all of them, in one way or another, criticised the changes. Some of those notorious intellectuals were even, it

seems, nostalgic for the academic normative references at school – Ab’Sáber, in geography, complaining about the absence of physical geography; Raquel Glezer, in history, complaining about the way of treating ancient civilisations, eliminating many of these themes. Everyone seemed used to the idea of transposition: the university normative fields needed to be in schools.

On the same newspaper page, in the report, a new text box appeared with the title “Chopin acha ‘salutar’ o debate” [Chopin thinks the debate is ‘healthy’]. In a small text, the newspaper transcribed the favourable opinion of the then state secretary of education regarding the intense ongoing debate on the new curriculum proposal. It is worth highlighting the political rhetoric used by the secretary when he stated that the last word in debates and curriculum changes would be given by teachers, “who deserve the trust of the entire community”... If this statement were to be considered true, despite the controversies between CENP specialists and authorities in the academic fields, it would have a decisive vote on the finalisation of the curriculum proposal, the professional field of teaching, the teachers.

After three days of discussions about the preliminary curriculum in the São Paulo state education network (July 27, 28, and 29, 1987), having collected the criticisms and observations of the teachers who participated in the analysis of the draft, CENP began preparing the final version of the proposal. At the same time, after following the discussions and calling on the opinion of university professors about the document being debated in schools, the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, summarising its previous reports, published on August 2nd, 1987, an article under the resounding heading title of “Projeto da CENP institucionaliza baixo nível de ensino” [CENP project institutionalises low level of education]. It was, in fact, the newspaper’s opinion about the curriculum change movement proposed by CENP. The newspaper’s text was signed by its assistant editor for education and culture, who considered that “the contempt with which the department of education treats teaching finds support in the populism of teachers and entities that participated in the development of the project, under discussion in the state network”. The newspaper was contrary to “the emphasis on contesting the current standards of the 1st and 2nd Degrees, present in all CENP proposals (...)”. The columnist lined up all the negative criticisms from the academic fields, given by representatives that the newspaper itself chose, about the proposals on history, geography, science, Portuguese and even mathematics. For the latter, the article criticised the proposal by mentioning that the document put up for discussion by CENP “privileges the student’s knowledge of the contents” and “the option for the ‘historical path in the re-elaboration of mathematical knowledge’”, which would lead to a lack of

initial concern with the formal mathematical language, seen as something wrong from *Folha*'s point of view.

On the same page where *Folha de São Paulo* issued its opinion on the proposal discussed in the education network for curriculum reformulation, there was a secondary text box signed by Professor Oswaldo Frota-Pessoa, author of books for teachers, such as the work *Como Ensinar Ciências* [How to Teach Science]. Frota-Pessoa, using non-academic-teaching language, and closer to pedagogical practices, signed an article entitled “Documento possui saudável tom polêmico” [The document has a healthy polemical tone]. In summary, he gave a favourable judgment to the proposal, indicating that a document of this nature is more valuable because it “influences more the subject imparted than the teachers’ style”. Which, in our view, is a revealing opinion that a curriculum document is more a reference of knowledge than regulations that standardise teachers’ opinions and ways of being in their craft. In this sense, among several elements that he highlighted as positive in the proposal, he remarked that there were happy innovations such as “specifying contents by cycles without separating them by series”. Such innovation, however, would not be supported by teachers later, and the final version of the curriculum proposal began to indicate contents by series, as mentioned in the preface of the document in its final version: “In this version, the contents are presented in a series, meeting the request of teachers in the reports of the Education Departments” (São Paulo, 1991, p. 8). Frota-Pessoa also indicated something important from the point of view of what would be adopted in the future: beyond the discrimination of teaching contents, it should be important to specify suitable activities to be used in pedagogical practices. In current times, teaching resources, such as the *EMAI – Educação Matemática nos Anos Iniciais do Ensino Fundamental* [Mathematics Education in the Early Years of Elementary School], from the São Paulo state network, present in their index only activities and sequences for pedagogical work. There is no longer a listing of mathematical contents.

Closing the report, the newspaper showed a text box summarising its criticisms of the changes. The article is entitled “Isto é reforma curricular” [This is curriculum reform]. The newspaper placed phrases taken from the curriculum document for greater impact on the readers, inducing them to criticise the work carried out by CENP negatively. Below, we list most of these phrases:

- *There is an overvaluation of scientific knowledge, to the detriment of other forms of knowledge (Curriculum Proposal for Teaching Science and Health Programs – 1st Degree)*

- *The child who comes to school already masters their language (Curriculum Proposal for Teaching the Portuguese Language – 1st Degree)*
- *The claim to educate future scientists is totally inadequate (Curriculum Proposal for Teaching Science and Health Programs – 1st Degree)*
- *The retreat to the past dispenses with the survey of all its aspects; it should provide only the study of those related to the problem (Curriculum Proposal for the Teaching of History – 1st Degree)*

The sentences summarise points of criticism made by representatives of the academic fields already mentioned above, called upon to give statements to *Folha*. Those people were concerned with non-continuity elements of academic knowledge that should be taught in basic school. Actually, the new curricular proposal, when criticising the overvaluation of scientific knowledge, meant nothing more than questioning whether the school and each of its curriculum headings would form the future linguist, mathematician, chemist, geographer, etc. This is more explicitly stated in the phrase that indicates the inadequacy of educating future scientists. Certainly, too, and this will be revealed later, there were tensions between the choices made by CENP to assist in its work by convening university representatives. Those professors from university units who were left out were critical of the curriculum document.

On that same day, August 2nd, 1987, a Sunday, *Folha de São Paulo*, seeking to further reinforce the criticism of the new proposal, on page “Caderno de Educação e Ciência”, opened space for Cláudio Weber Abramo’s remarks, presented as editor of economics of the paper but with the indication that it was the opinion issued by a “graduate in mathematics and postgraduate in philosophy of science”. Weber Abramo was renowned for his work in journalism and the presidency of the NGO Transparência Brasil. In the article, his name and opinions were mentioned regarding his academic background – mathematical training and philosopher of science – indicated as a specialist in the subject, authorised to judge the new curriculum proposal. In the article, “Proposta reflete visão distorcida do processo de ensino” [The proposal reflects a distorted view of the teaching process], Weber Abramo made criticisms such as:

The “Proposal” follows the current pedagogical trend of considering that learning mathematics (like any science) takes

place centrally through the “active participation of students in discovering” the ideas of this discipline. (...) The authors understand that geometry, for example, is properly introduced to 1st-grade students through concrete experience with real-world objects. They propose that one should “start from the manipulation of objects, the recognition of the most frequent forms, the characterisation through properties, the transition from relationships between objects to the chaining of properties, and only at the end of the journey approach a provisional systematisation, to be developed in the 2nd Degree”. (...) No philosopher of science subscribes to the notion set out in the “Proposal”. (Folha de São Paulo, 1987, p. A27).

The extended excerpt mentioned above highlights the writer’s place of speech: the academic field of science, of mathematics. Thus, the curriculum proposal, cited between quotation marks by Weber Abramo to give a negative connotation to this new curriculum expertise, should deal with teaching, moving away from the discussions and knowledge elaborated nationally and internationally by the educational field, reduced by the author, in our understanding, to the mention of “current pedagogical trend”.

More than a month after the previous *Folha* report, on September 13th, 1987, the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, in turn, gathered in a full-page article, “Caderno Educação”, several blocks of text about the curriculum proposal. The tone of the various texts was only one: the ideological content of the new curriculum proposal for teaching history. Heading the report is the title: “Luta de classes, lição na escola pública” [Class struggle, lesson in public school], written by journalist Moacyr Castro. The title already shows us where the text leads. The presence of discussions on the labour market, exploitation, and prejudices, among other themes, leads the columnist to conclude, with the help of Professor Circe Bittencourt, from the College of Education at USP, that only the worker as an agent of history is emphasised, “assuming class society as the basis for teaching the subject” (*O Estado de São Paulo*, 1987, p. 28). After this, another report frame appears, with the title “Magistério condena o desvio no ensino” [Scholar condemns the deviation in teaching] without indicating authorship. The keynote of the text remained the same: the ideological character of the proposal. The report lists excerpts with testimonials from teachers against the CENP document. Another text box, on the same page, under the title “Secretário admite o conteúdo ideológico” [Secretary admits the ideological content], brings a reproduction of the speech of the teaching

authority, who fended off by reinforcing the idea that “These are only proposals, which will not be adopted in the next year. They are subject to many alterations, have not yet received the scholars’ suggestions, have not been discussed in all education departments, and are, for the time being, only to be debated by society as a whole”. The end of the text informs that professors from the different academic areas of the geography, history, and literature courses at USP were summoned as specialists for review, leaving out of the debates the professors from the College of Education of USP. Coordinator Teresa Roserley justifies this choice, saying that “those work more directly with the essence of the subjects”. Thus, we understand better the tension created between the academic fields and the educational sciences in discussing the proposal. We also understand why the newspaper opened space only for professors of teaching methodology of the College of Education to express their criticisms of the curriculum document for the different subjects, above all, those considered with ideological bias: history, geography, and Portuguese language.

*Folha de São Paulo* continued to cover the implementation of the new São Paulo curriculum proposal. In an article published on October 1st, 1987, signed by Laura Capriglione, assistant editor for education and science at the newspaper, the text began with the following words:

The curriculum reform proposals presented in July by the Coordination of Studies and Pedagogical Standards (Cenp) for discussion by the teachers in the state education network are under checkmate. This time, the criticisms do not come from intellectuals or teachers in public schools in the 1st and 2nd Degrees [elementary and high-school levels]. Now it is the Secretary of Education of the State himself (...) who invests against the reform (...) (Folha de São Paulo, 1987, p. A18).

The keynote of the article, bringing excerpts from an interview with the educational authority, showed the Secretary of Education’s criticism of CENP, of the proposal. Pressured by the repercussions amplified in a given bias by the newspapers, especially by *Folha de São Paulo* and *O Estado de São Paulo*, Chopin de Lima went public to disavow CENP and its experts in an article named “Secretário da Educação recua e critica propostas da Cenp” [The secretary of education retreats and criticises CENP proposals]. History and geography were the most discussed subjects. Regarding history, the most sensitive component to political and ideological debates, according to *Folha de São Paulo*, the secretary of education said:

I think whoever prepared the history curriculum did not do it for the network. It was intended to be a doctoral thesis. It is out of our reality, and the teachers say it. Besides the ideological connotation – which is really a problem –, the network, the teachers, and the instruments are not qualified to make it possible. (...) We need a good curriculum for our reality, our faculty, our students. Anyone who wants to do a doctoral thesis deserves to be most praised. But this is not a university (Folha de São Paulo, 1987, p. A18).

The political pressure on the secretary, accelerated by the press, perhaps explains his change of tone in relation to previous testimonies where he considered that the movement of discussions and debates was healthy so that a viable proposal was being decanted. In his last speech, as seen, the representative thus disavows all the work carried out by his teams of *experts*.

On the commemorative date of the Teachers' Day in 1987, October 15th, the last report listed in this text subsidises an analysis of the impacts that were made public by newspapers in São Paulo. This time, it is an article published in *O Estado de São Paulo*. Published in the readers' letters section, the newspaper seems to have disclosed in full a long missive sent by professor Rodolfo Ilari, of the Linguistics Department of UNICAMP, under the title "Propostas Curriculares da Secretaria da Educação" [Curriculum Proposals from the Department of Education]. This was, perhaps, the first opportunity in which, among the journalistic articles published about the curriculum proposal, the readers could have contact with experts that participated in the development of the CENP proposal. And this contact came through a letter from readers, not the newspaper's initiative. Professor Ilari revealed his role as a consultant to CENP for the Portuguese language. In addition, he sought to vehemently refute the criticism in the article published by *O Estado de São Paulo* on September 13th, 1987. One of the points mentioned by the specialist concerned the accusation of discrimination attributed to the Portuguese language programme. In the professor's words:

School grammar is one of the many ways to systematise linguistic activity, and you only systematise what you know. When the teacher does the grammar of the cultured variety in classes that do not master it, grammar indeed becomes a form of discrimination. Even worse when the teacher adopts purist attitudes and becomes an arbiter of the vernacular towards



students who only know a socially discredited variant. (O Estado de São Paulo, 1987, p. 33).

Beyond that point, Ilari highlighted the work of the experts in CENP, rejecting the statement in the previous report, which, taking the testimony of a professor at the College of Education, attributed the preparation of the proposal, all of it, to UNICAMP. The expert rules out that the university should be the school “tutor” –in the UNICAMP professor’s words. From his point of view, “if the Portuguese language proposal ‘reflects’ UNICAMP, it is only because the team that wrote it, instead of basing it on any pedagogical theory out there, decided to assume a conception of language and draw its pedagogical consequences” (O Estado de São Paulo, 1987, p. 33). Perhaps it is possible to infer from Professor Ilary’s last statement that the academic field of linguistics engenders its own school form, without the need for any pedagogical theory...

In any case, this last report reveals the tensions between the academic fields and the struggle of the universities’ specialists called to collaborate with the CENP team. In the case of the Portuguese language, on one side, UNICAMP; on the other side, having not been invited to participate, some professors at the College of Education of USP. As already mentioned, the coordinator of CENP justified her preference for advice from academic fields to the detriment of education specialists.

## CONCLUSIONS

The curriculum documents of a given time rule, provide references for teaching and teacher education at that time. They must be considered as knowledge that has been systematised and that represent milestones of an era. Unlike taking them in a reified, objectified way, as data from the educational system, it will be necessary to study how they have been constructed. The study of its development leads us to understand the dynamics of the production of new knowledge for teaching and teacher education. That knowledge is not systematised in universities nor organised in the professional field of teaching. The documents are the products of the work of experts.

Going behind the scenes of curriculum production is an arduous task. The context of developing new proposals brings into play many individual and institutional stakeholders. On the other hand, the final version of a curriculum document, with an official seal, guiding teaching and teacher education, should be seen as the closing of debates and consultations at a given moment, consolidated by the distribution of the new curriculum proposal to schools.

What teachers and the school community will do from this is a question that this text will not address. Not even the article bothered to compare the preliminary versions and the final version. The intent here was to answer the question: How can we understand the negative criticisms divulged by the press to the São Paulo Curriculum Proposals of the 1980s regarding the production of new expertise for teaching?

There are, among many, two aspects to consider when trying to answer the question. The first is a general one, visible from the empirical references used for this article: newspaper articles. We realised that the role of the press was decisive in galvanising those dissatisfied with the proposal preparation process and its results. It is emblematic the absence of testimonials from the CENP experts, with only its representative being heard: the secretary of education in São Paulo. Pressured by the media, he disqualified an entire process developed by his own department advisors. The newspapers did not give voice and opportunity to the experts, and selected their own experts to judge the proposals. Such specialists, in most cases, were linked to academic fields and institutions and departments that did not participate in the debates during the development of the new curriculum. Still: with these testimonies, the newspapers, through their representative editors, issued their own opinion, not endorsing the process or the product obtained in the curriculum reorganisation movement after the military regime.

Another aspect, let us say, more internal to the curriculum proposal, refers to the dynamics of the development of new knowledge for teaching and teacher education consolidated in a given official curriculum document. There were many forces at play, many tensions. The analysis of this group of very diverse interests to understand the criticism conveyed by the press during the development of the São Paulo Curriculum Proposal, can be done from the location of the stakeholders and the places from which they speak. And here the concept of *field*, used throughout the text, without greater attention being paid to it, deserves to be mentioned. As Pierre Bourdieu rightly points out, “(...) the scientific field, like other fields, is a field of forces endowed with a structure, and also a field of struggles to conserve or transform this field of forces” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 69).

In the very movement for the preservation and consolidation of a given scientific field, it must be able to take the reins of its socialisation, understood as ways of disseminating its theoretical-methodological perspectives, in addition to the education of its future members. This is how it becomes possible to understand the interference of academic fields in schools. For external

consumption rhetoric, the academic fields want to see science taught in schools. From the point of view of analysing its own preservation, it is necessary to consider socialisation. Thus, the chemistry present in the curricula was criticised by experts in unmistakable terms that not all students will be chemists; it is necessary to teach an “other chemistry” that does not meet the dirigisme of the university academic field. On the other hand, the same occurs for criticisms of geometry teaching in schools placed in the proposal: How to understand intuitive school forms? In summary, the academic fields were averse to saying that “the claim to educate future scientists is totally inadequate” to quote the Curriculum Proposal for Teaching Science and Health Programs – 1st Degree.

But the situation is even more complex. To consider the CENP experts, as is typical of the nature of the work of those specialists in promoting new expertise, a dialogue must be built between the professional field of teaching and the academic fields. The development of the new proposal promoted dialogues with the professional field of teaching through discussions with more than a hundred participating teachers. It also resorted to university advisory, privileging academic fields directly linked to school subjects to the detriment of university specialists in education. We believe that the negative criticism in the newspapers resulted from the space the media gave to the discontented with the proposal, some professors who were not called upon to give an opinion, some of them belonging to academic fields or who were critical of the new teaching knowledge for different school subjects.

## **AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS**

Both authors conceived the problem developed by the text. Both were also responsible for obtaining and researching the material in research sources. Both performed a joint analysis of the research data. There was a partnership in all stages of the preparation of the article.

## **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The data that support this work are under the custody of the authors of the article and can be made available at the request of other interested parties for a period of five years. It is possible to consult directly the newspapers that constituted empirical material for the preparation of the text through the bibliographical references of the article.

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