

BODY EDUCATION, SCOUTING AND MILITARISM (1908-1941)

EDUCAÇÃO CORPORAL, ESCOTISMO E MILITARISMO (1908-1941)

EDUCACIÓN CORPORAL, MOVIMIENTO SCOUT Y MILITARISMO (1908-1941)

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Keywords:

Military personnel.
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Abstract: This work analyzes military influences on Scouting in 1908-1941 based on the body education proposed by the movement. The empirical basis used include literature review mapping contemporary scholars of the history of Scouting, as well as books, theses, specialized journal articles and papers published in the period. Scouting's emphasis on body education was sustained on a process of acceptance and refusal of military tradition in vogue in the early twentieth century, which prevented Scouting from connecting or drawing away from the army.

Palavras chave:

Militares.
Corpo.
História.

Resumo: São analisadas as influências militares no escotismo no período de 1908 a 1941, tendo como base a educação corporal proposta pelo movimento. Além de revisão bibliográfica mapeando estudiosos contemporâneos da história do escotismo, utilizam-se como base empírica livros, teses, artigos de periódicos especializados e de jornais publicados no período. Verificou-se que a ênfase na educação corporal por parte do escotismo se sustentou em um processo de aceitação e recusa da tradição militar em voga no início do século XX, impossibilitando tanto a mera vinculação como o mero afastamento do escotismo em relação ao exército.

Palabras clave:

Militares.
Cuerpo.
Historia.

Resumen: Son analizadas las influencias militares en el Movimiento Scout durante el período de 1908 a 1941, teniendo como base la educación del cuerpo propuesta por el Movimiento Scout. Además, se hace revisión bibliográfica de estudiosos contemporâneos de la historia del Movimiento Scout. Para ello, son utilizadas como fuentes empíricas libros, tesis, artículos en revistas especializadas y en periódicos publicados en el período. Se encontró que el énfasis en la educación corporal por parte del Movimiento Scout se sustentó en un proceso de aceptación y rechazo de la tradición militar en voga a principios del siglo XX, imposibilitando tanto el mero vínculo como la simple independencia del Movimiento Scout en relación con el ejército.

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1 OPENING REMARKS

Youth movements emphasizing the educational value of body practices marked the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century (SOUZA, 2009; ANTIPOFF, 1935; BOURZAC, 2004). Among them, Scouting stood out for spreading quickly over the world, thus multiplying the momentum it experienced in Britain and its former colonies (PARSONS, 2004). The movement arrived in Brazil two years after its emergence and in 1920 it had become a teaching tool in schools in several Brazilian states (GABRIEL, 2003).

Such importance was not lost to Education historians. Herold Junior (2011), Nascimento (2004), Nascimento (2008), Souza (2000 and 2009), Thomé (2006 and 2010¹), Zuquim and Cytrynowicz (2002) comprise a representative set of academic works on the history of Scouting movement in Brazil.

This study joins the above mentioned works and aims at analyzing the relationship of Scouting's body education with militarism in the early 20th century. It seems that Scouting emerged and expanded through a complex movement of acceptance and rejection of militaristic values and their presence in the education of children and young people through body practices. The mere possibility of accepting or rejecting military values with respect to the body and its education was not enough to those who advocated the educational potential of Scouting activities at the beginning of the century.

This paper looks into the period that spans from the publication of *Scouting for Boys* (1908) – Baden-Powell's seminal work on scouting – to his death in 1941. Books, theses, journal articles and newspapers empirically support the reflections.

2 CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SCOUT MOVEMENT AND THE ARMY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Relations between Scouting and militarism show up in interpretations of the history of the movement. In Brazil, Souza (2000) called the educational efforts influenced by the bellicist climate that inflamed the 1910s, 20s and 30 "childhood militarization". He emphasizes Scouting as "yet another expression of militarism and nationalism in Brazilian education" (SOUZA, 2000, p. 105). By militarizing childhood, Scouting would meet many of the educational demands of the period (SOUZA, 2000, p. 116).

Nascimento (2004) also finds similarities between Scouting and military values. Youth would be trained to be "manlier, more able to support military life, better prepared to face a long conflict without losing courage" (NASCIMENTO, 2004, p. 46). Looking at the Brazilian state of Paraná, Witoslawski (2009) sees strong presence of "militarizing practices", one of which was scouting. Hopes of building citizens "supposedly able to protect the country in case of need" would be placed on them (WITOSLAWSKI, 2009, p. 153).

This approximation of Scouting to patriotic and military educational efforts in the early 20th century has also been criticized. Nascimento (2008) rejects the way scouting is historically analyzed, "identified as a nationalist militaristic movement in Brazilian

¹ THOMÉ, N. **Escotismo**: caminho para novas emoções: apreciações sobre o Movimento Escoteiro enquanto prática educativa. Caçador-SC: Author's edition, 2010.

education” (NASCIMENTO, 2008, p. 7). He points out Baden-Powell’s resistance to the standardization of body movements typical of the army (NASCIMENTO, 2008, p. 11).

Listing “bad influences” on Scouting, Thomé says: “Historically, we have seen that attempts to change and/or adaptations of the method have not worked” (2010, p. 125). For the author, there would be an educational core designed by Baden-Powell and which had been misrepresented. He points out Nazi-fascism in its militarist facet as inconsistent with Scouting as he believes it was originally proposed.

The same debate can be seen in scouting analysts from other countries. Scharagrodsky (2011), focusing on the performance of Enrique Romero Brest (1873-1958), notes that the Argentine educator sees Scouting as assumed in same light of school battalions and military gymnastics: practices harmful to Argentina’s needs for educational modernization at the time.

Focusing on Europe, Springhall (1971, p. 128) notes that in the first decades of the 20th century there were stances favorable to propositions that sought to “strengthen imperial defenses”, with bellicist corollaries. However, from 1920 on, Baden-Powell would have dealt with “waves of virulent pacifism and anti-militarism”. Springhall (1971, p. 148) uses the following arguments to assert military dependence on Scouting: bureaucratic organization of the movement, full of military features; existence of an educational tone and another markedly political one within Scouting, the latter being seen as more visible and attuned to the confrontational atmosphere of the first two decades of the 20th century.

Making it clear that the choice between being a militarizing movement or not was not consistent with Scouting’s ambitions, Warren (1987), in turn, shows that during its emergence and expansion, the movement dealt with a wide range of educational aspirations. For this reason, it had to be “*responsive to that spectrum of values if it was to survive and grow*” (WARREN, 1987, p. 948), given the disparity of stances seeking to think British and European realities at the beginning of the 20th century.

Springhall (1987) criticizes Warren (1987) about what would be a misguided advocacy of Scouting reduced to “individual character training for practical good citizenship” rather than “training for future soldier” (WARREN, 1987, p. 934). Summers, in turn (1987, p. 943) notes that the feeling of anxiety over the vulnerability of the British Empire was present in different strata of the population. Reflecting on the consequences of that circumstance over the development of Scouting, she says:

Military metaphors and models, did not, indeed, wholly overwhelm secular liberal discourses of individual rights; but they certainly came close to usurping the terrain occupied by earlier religious discourses of duty, responsibility and community. The scout movement, as conceived in Baden-Powell’s writings and as realized by its members, could not escape this pervasive influence (SUMMERS, 1987, p. 943).

Crotty (2009) converges towards that stance by noting that education was a problem made even more urgent by the international conflicts that happened or were emerging in the period. Regarding scouting and appropriations of it, Crotty (2009) states that: “[...] it seems clear that while some boys and parents were attracted to Scouting because of its militarist messages, others saw the movement as being primarily about the development of ‘manly independence’ and a love of the healthy outdoors” (CROTTY, 2009, p. 79).

3 WAR, ARMY AND MILITARY VALUES IN QUESTION: THE CONTEXT OF SCOUTING'S EMERGENCE

In the world that unfolded at the turn of the 20th century, the role of war and armies became an important issue. For Audoin-Rouzeau (2013): “[...] while the 20th century was the century of war, it was also when the warring fact lost value in the West” (p. 241). After all, “powerless before the intensity of shooting” (p. 240), “the soldier’s body is similar to meat exposed at the butcher shop’s counter” (p. 241). This practical issue related to improving war equipment marked a “distance between its own ethos and values of the civil world in peacetime” (p. 240).

For this reason, despite “cultivation of hatred” (GAY, 1995) at that time, there were stances when “presumptuous man in gaudy uniforms, spitting a bellicose rhetoric, became the preferred targets” (GAY, 1995, p. 117).

In Brazil, Izecksohn (2013) shows that, even with a renewed interest in the military institution in the first decades of the 20th century, the army adapted to the demands of the time by “reconsidering” its “service in society” (p. 294). There was a social focus on the “perverse effects of militarization” (p. 297), which gained visibility in the unstable international context of the First World War. This led the army to be associated with “emerging manliness patterns, notions of hygiene and appreciation of exercise, seen as antidotes against vices and diseases” (p. 297).

Sant’Anna (2013) notes that, as a result of First World War developments, the “heroic spirit” (p. 258) had “lost its ancient dramatic character and its glory days” (p. 258), leading to the “need to unite masculinity to courage” (p. 258). This union would not be realized in the soldier’s figure, but in the “image of men used to the roughness of forests” (p. 252). Therefore, acceleration of urbanization led to the perception that urban people were “devoid of courage, as if their lives were always safe and predictable” (p. 252). From that perspective, nature became the primary locus to look for the human profile needed in that context, rather than the usual search for that man in the battlefield.

On the other hand, Melo (2013) shows that the Paraguayan War played an important role regarding many educational aspects in Brazil. The conflict highlighted “domestic weaknesses” concerning “preparation of citizens to serve their country as needed” (MELO, 2013, p. 120). Therefore, military metaphors were recurrent in the decades that followed the conflict. An example of the way society was conceived with military models and parameters with respect to body education can be found in the diagnosis of the social situation articulated by Fernando de Azevedo (1894-1974) to discuss the “poetry of the body”:

Let us not fool ourselves. The fight persists, not from the international point of view, not the fight by arms, but the bloodless inter-individual fight, the fight of spirits and powers without truce or quarter, and which is now the way to act par excellence; furthermore, the brain needs muscle more than its own arm charged with a great effort (AZEVEDO, 1915, p. 34).

Defining the place of war and the army in society was also important in philosophical terms. In the meantime, enjoying intellectual notoriety in the early 20th century, William James (1842-1910) published *The moral equivalent of War* [1906]. James opposes wars, stating that “[...] I look forward to a future when acts of war shall be formally outlawed as between civilized peoples” (JAMES, [1906], p. 16). Although “[i]nnumerable writers [were] showing up the bestial side of military service” (JAMES, [1906], p. 6), he did not ignore that “[m]ilitarism is

the great preserver of our ideals of hardihood, and human life with no use for hardihood would be contemptible” (JAMES, [1906], p. 9). He sought a “moral equivalent of war” that caused the “martial type” to be formed without the need for war:

[...] the conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, unstinted exertion, and universal responsibility, which universal military duty is now teaching European nations, will remain a permanent acquisition when the last ammunition has been used in the fireworks that celebrate the final peace (JAMES, [1906], p. 23).

Such considerations lead us to think about the reasons that caused this devotion to moral and physical hardihood to impact not only philosophical musings, but also directly educational perspectives. This instilled Pierre Bovet’s (1878-1965) admiration for Scouting. Besides translating *Scouting for Boys* into French and writing a book laudatory to Baden-Powell (BOVET, 1921), in 1917 he published *L’instinct combatif* (2007), analyzing child and adolescent psychology. Seeing games and children disputes as manifestation of instinctively fighting human nature, he said:

Combat is useful to the species, to the designer, in the eyes of all, to the fittest in order to perpetuate the race, and allow them to do so. Combating demands acceptance of suffering and of causing suffering; the enjoyment of combat is closely linked to the pleasure of risk: to him who is thrown into the fray, his or others’ pain may not appear as absolute evil; on the contrary, the taste for blows given and received are an integral part of the fighting instinct (BOVET, 2007, p. 132).

This “acceptance of suffering and of causing suffering” increased pressure to give a strong moralizing content to the search for a “more natural life” (BAUBÉROT, 2004), leading to “emphases on education for toughness, with military frequency” (OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 93). Crotty (2009), when addressing educational consequences of that context, argued that discourses and practices aimed at that moralizing approach to nature hardly departure from military motives in their logic:

International fears about the softening effects of modern life, imperial fears about the future of the British Empire and the rise of Germany, and more localized fears produced a more masculinized ideal of manliness. Qualities such as physical hardihood, “character”, aggression and, increasingly from the start of the 20th century, military capability, came to predominate over earlier, more feminine attributes (CROTTY, 2009, p. 81).

As explained by Crotty (2009), the bellicist context stressed the “military capabilities” of the body thought as forming not only soldiers already active or future contingents, but also the general public. These elements collected in History, Philosophy and Pedagogy support Baubérot’s (2004) observation at the turn of the 20th century about efforts for achieving a society where health, beauty and human force, so far typical of the mighty warriors of the past, could manifest themselves in “small battles” of daily life. In the context that made this initiative into ambition, body education and Scouting gained their importance.

4 SCOUTING, BODY PRACTICES AND MILITARISM IN BADEN-POWELL WRITINGS

At age 19, Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941) joined the military, leaving it at 51 to devote himself to lead the Scout movement he had founded. As we study his ideas, we observe that in his long path there are ambiguities that correspond to the conflicting demands of different vectors, which were important to consolidate his proposal. While denying proximities between militarism and Scouting, Baden-Powell believed that body attributes would be worthless if they did not have an

explicitly military purpose: “We ought really not to think too much of any boy, even though a cricketer and footballer, unless he can also shoot, and can drill and scout” (BADEN-POWELL, 1908, p. 321).

He justified that by stating that the appeal to “be prepared” for war did not occur because of “blood thirst”, but rather to help prevent the horrors of the conflict from being “brought on to our own homes, our women and children” (BADEN-POWELL, 1908, p. 342). At the time when conscription was being discussed in England, Baden-Powell (1929) expressed his opposition to militarism behind the proposal. The main point was that military methods would not be in accordance with the need to modernize education: “to offer the old style of imposed instruction seems neither complimentary nor complementary to the modern educationists’ methods, nor in keeping with the needs of the times” (BADEN-POWELL, 1929, p. 18).

Continuing his thought, Baden-Powell (1929) explains that the bases of modern pedagogical theories and scouting would be the same. He saw them as linked to meeting the particularities of each of its members. And this despite scouting’s use of collective practices such as “troops”, parades etc. He did not see that as a paradox, because marching was not used because it was considered a disciplinary activity, as it was seen in the army. He advocated its use only to make the group move in a more organized way. After all, other attributes were more important than synchronizing movements: “When I see a Troop drill well but fail to follow a trail or cook its own food I recognize that the Scoutmaster is not much good as such” (BADEN-POWELL, 1929, p. 25).

Another boost to distance Scouting from militarism came from the military origin of the first leaders of the movement. Indeed, *Scouting for Boys* (1908) was criticized for its militaristic tone. Still in 1929, Baden-Powell defended himself of that charge:

It is true that the Movement has an old General as the head of it, and a goodly number of ex-officers in its ranks. [...] Further, most of them, like myself, have seen something of the horrors of war; they know the suffering and cruelty that war involves, and they do not want to see war occur again (BADEN-POWELL, 1929, p. 26).

Parsons (2004, p. 54) explains that this need existed for two reasons: escaping the bellicism of the time, criticized in various social segments, and avoiding an explicit link of the original nucleus of Scouting with any religious orientation. The aim was to make the Scout proposition to be welcomed in different contexts sympathetic to educational initiatives that extolled the importance of a more peaceful world, without, however, giving up the formation of “manly men” in case they were needed. That is, although there is an environment characterized by martial imminence, “public opinion” was very receptive to pacifist messages, but that, at some points, aligned itself to the bellicose atmosphere that prevailed in society and that gave social life a belligerent feature (PARSONS, 2004). Careful to deal with that ambiguity, Scouting gained wide acceptance.

Therefore, even if Baden-Powell devoted himself more to the movement’s direct educational face over the years, in one of his last writings the “be prepared” tone – not without ambiguity – was again under the urgency of conflicts” [...] Scouts make themselves strong and active and healthy so as to Be Prepared when they are men to be able to do good work towards making their country successful and prosperous” (BADEN-POWELL, 1939, p. 105-106).

5 MILITARY PRESENCE IN BODY PRACTICES OF BRAZILIAN SCOUTING

In Brazil, the emergence of “school scouting” in the 1920s established a dialogue between different views on their connection with the debates on modernization of the educational world,

hostile to the military influence that could exist in schools. That influence was often assumed to be something outdated regarding “modern pedagogy”.

Lourenço Filho (1897-1970) participated in the investigation on education conducted by Fernando de Azevedo in 1926. In answering the question about hygiene education, he advocated the need for Scouting. However, he stressed the need for “*true Scouting rather than ‘parade’ Scouting*” (LOURENÇO FILHO, 1957, p. 105). (emphasis added).

The military characteristic was visible in groups existing at the time. In Guarapuava, PR, a newspaper published a poem laudatory to Scouts’ posture, march and parades, with an explicit military tone: “They pass by in correct rows/Gentle Scouts Battalion!/The haughty, erect heads.../It’s clear: they are distinct, orderly” (VILLAS BÔAS, 1929, p. 4). In the 1930s, in a small ad published by São Paulo’s newspaper *Folha da Manhã*, its editors acknowledged receiving a copy of a magazine edited by local scouts: “We received the first issue of ‘*O escoteiro*’, published by the Modelo Scout group, which brings many contributions of great interest to the *worthy class of young soldiers*”²(emphasis added).

From articles published in the Army Journal’s *Revista de Educação Física*, analyzing education, Physical Education and Scouting, it is also possible to reflect on the proximity and distance of Scouting in relation to the army and militarism.

In the magazine, Enéas Martins Filho, perhaps surprisingly, presented ideas opposed to militarization of the Scout movement. Before advocating separation of Scouting and militarization, Martins Filho (1935) promoted the importance of the movement, relating it to its military origins. He said that the great invention to be attributed to Baden-Powell would have been the use of his military experience to “turn those same methods” with a view to training and educating young people who were “worthy of the greatness and traditions of their race” (MARTINS FILHO, 1935, p. 38).

Despite this emphasis on Baden-Powell’s military experience in its educational aspect, Martins Filho notes that the presence of militarism weakened Brazilian Scouting. He notes that such military influence on scouting did not exist either in Germany or in Italy, that is, at the epicenter of bellicist interwar climate (MARTINS FILHO, 1935, p. 38).

In the same magazine, Gabriel Skinner noted that the joy seen in a “scout troop” did not explain to those unfamiliar with scouting what it would really be, much less the benefits it provided to youth. The main ignorance about it would be expressed in the difficulty to circumscribe what the movement was: “We do not infer from that, however, that Scouting is simply ‘sportsmanship’ or, as others think, simply *semblance of militarism*” (SKINNER, 1935, p. 29) (emphasis added).

Skinner (1935) shows awareness of broader educational debates and of dilemmas and limits not only of pedagogical structures but also of pedagogical thinking. He did attribute to the education of the time an inherited bookish character of a longstanding tradition that should be refuted. It was being opposed by many educators, but with little success so far. For this reason, says Skinner (1935), Baden-Powell designed Scouting practices, evaluated as contrary to “the education system and bookish education, to the taste of austere schools even today” (SKINNER, 1935, p. 39).

In addition to seeing Baden-Powell as the author of educational advances with less bookish teaching practices, Skinner (1935, p. 39) is blunt in defending scouting pedagogy, writing it in capital letters, as if to boast aloud an unquestionable truth, but one that was hardly considered by his contemporaries: “SCOUTING, WE CAN SAY, IS THE CONSUBSTANTIATION

² *Folha da Manhã*, April 28, 1934.

OF MODERN PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCE”. That was how scouting was emphatically described for allowing children to “use every instinct” (SKINNER, 1935, p. 40). The recognition of “instincts” happened because the movement covered not only the moral and intellectual dimensions, but for its great attention to the body. That was Baden-Powell’s “novelty”: “We have therefore an entirely ‘new’ educational medium, since all the qualities that should adorn the individual fully educated by systematic development are asserted here in the most positive way” (SKINNER, 1935, p. 40). Oliveira (2012) helps us to think about Skinner’s (1935) stance by calling it the “rhetoric about children’s ‘natural’ growth and development, so dear to emerging experimental psychology, one of the longest-lasting emphasis on pedagogical imagination” (SKINNER, 1935, p. 93) that included not only educational ideas that arose and criticized the existing school, but also initiatives such as scouting.

In 1933, Desjardins, an important leader of French Scouting, published an article advocating its practice as “a method of general education, which also covers body development” (DESJARDINS, 1933, p. 25). In addition to relating scouting with Physical Education, Desjardins (1933) explained that its importance would be sustained on its influence on moral education. He said that “the child’s character is greatly influenced by the functioning of the body [...]” (DESJARDINS, 1933, p. 25). From this perspective, child psychology would be respected: “Children only perform usefully what pleases them, what their personalities have consciously accepted” (DESJARDINS, 1933, p. 25). Desjardins’s (1933) remarks about Scouting are also underscored by the awareness that its presence would confront the predominance of a moral education that “often nullified the lesson of practical achievements” (DESJARDINS, 1933, p. 25). A close relationship is outlined between Scouting, body education, and education.

Even assuming Scouting as an opportunity to develop “all the child’s living forces”, Skinner (1935, p. 40) regretted that while Scouting brought together “efforts of parents and teachers”, it was not expanding more intensely: “It’s a shame that it is not known and practiced in Brazil by primary, secondary, normal and higher education teachers as has been happening in the world’s major civilized centers” (SKINNER, 1935, p. 40). Skinner’s (1935) complain warns us that the strength with which Scouting’s proximity to pedagogical modernity was advocated could not find so strong an echo in reality. Helena Antipoff (1935), for example, showed that, differently from that approximation desired by Skinner (1935), the scouting she saw in schools was characterized by “deviations” manifested in militarizing traits. That reality was seen as contrary to advances in pedagogical science and physiology, with serious impacts on the way body practices were assumed:

[...] Scouting was simply reduced to physical exercises and strenuous marches of hundreds of children under the command of inexperienced young people unfamiliar with pedagogical concerns. Under those conditions, failure is fatal. Let us not forget that Baden-Powell’s school is a work on whole education for adolescents ... (ANTIPOFF, 1935, p. 1). (Emphasis added).

Therefore, the challenge lied on setting boundaries between what is practiced in schools and scouting groups regarding practices that happened in the barracks or that represented them. The debate questioned the conditions for body education for children and adolescents. Several stances aimed at implementing the educational importance of scouting through body education were evaluated. That value was supposedly able to cope with a whole “bookish” educational reality as long as Scouting and its methods softened the military tone that, despite numerous stances on the contrary, manifested itself in body practices it proposed.

6 FINAL REMARKS

Inspired by the battlefield, the concern to strengthen the body to consolidate moral values and propagate worldviews was not discovered in the late 19th century. Suspicions were not raised about war and soldiers not only in that context either. With ruptures, those stances sometimes favorable, sometimes contrary to martial practices are part of a long educational history. Notwithstanding sympathies and antipathies alternating over history, the valiant warrior or the brave soldier are important as an educational ideal to be achieved by education at different times. Based on that model, body education may be conceived, for war is “still primarily a combat of bodies” (BRAUDY, 2005, p. 15), even with the increasing incorporation of technology into disputes.

With industrial development and social problems posed from the late 19th century on, it is this legacy that was processed with the new educational perspectives that emerged. In this view, the understanding that technique eased the physical effort required for existence would have resulted in moral weakness that should be urgently challenged. Where and how can we foster moral strength through body roughness and readiness in a society marked by body softening, by an “excess of civilization” and by a disproportionate “blood thirst” that flowed into visible “cultivation of hatred”?

By demonstrating the relevance of this problem in the early 20th century, the reflections conducted in this paper showed that the choice between relating or drawing away body practices from militarism proposed by Scouting is not analytically feasible. After a closer look at that time, we concluded that we must watch the movements between the two poles as typical of hesitations existing in the first decades of the 20th century. Contrary to what Thomé (2010) and Nascimento (2008) state, the proximity of Scouting, army and body education shows that the military institution, with its training practices, gave important traits to Scouting. At the same time, we explained that Scouting did not simply reproduce the army as stated Souza (2000) and Nascimento (2004).

By stressing that Baden-Powell “did not invent anything new”, Nascimento (2008, p. 111) disregards the ability of the former English general in dealing with a large complex of pedagogical values and building the relevance of Scouting in the first decades of the 20th century. This disregard can also be found in Souza (2000), which called plain scouting as “childhood militarization”. It does not take into account the proximity of Baden-Powell and many of his followers to modern pedagogy; they criticized the way body practices were used both in schools and in military organizations. Furthermore, we must note the importance of body education and the place of the “fighting instinct” (BOVET, 2007) and “moral equivalent of war” (JAMES [1906]) in it.

The ways Scouting was absorbed and practiced in Brazil also showed the attempt to think its body activities within fine line between educational and military – indications that those activities were seen by many as militarizing are frequent. Criticism to this situation was also heard. In this case, it is important that the intention of Scouting champions in Brazil has achieved some ubiquity in articles that circulated in a military journal that dealt with Physical Education. These ideas contrary to Scouting’s militarism circulated together with the view of the Scout movement as a possibility for fostering values praised not only by parents, teachers and educational leaders, but also by sergeants, captains and generals. For all of them, that would be based on body practices. In short, we affirm the importance of the scout movement to study the way in which philosophical and political views influence and are influenced by understandings related to the body’s role in the realization of formative intentions circulating in society.

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