

Educational reforms, journey and comparison in the 1800s Brazil: the case of Uchoa Cavalcanti (1879)

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Abstract

We analyze in this article the journey of Uchoa Cavalcanti (Inspector of Public Instruction of the Province of Pernambuco) to the Court and Provinces of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1879, based on the official report of this trip presented to the president of the Province and published in that same year in Recife. When reading this document, we paid attention to the general conditions of the journey and to the narrative constructed by the inspector as a strategy to discuss the representations that he produces, with special emphasis on those related to the Court and Province of Rio de Janeiro. To such end, we analyzed the sources utilized by the author, articulating them with what is produced by his personal testimony and experience.

The report, entitled “Public instruction – study on the system of primary teaching and pedagogical organization of the schools of the Court, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco” has 293 pages distributed along an introduction, four parts, and a conclusion.

As a whole, the inspector attempts to carry out his objective of contrasting the knowledge that he has with what he observes in loco. In this exercise, the inspector builds a narrative that helps to problematize recurrent theses in the historiography (general and of education) that establish the Court and the province of Rio de Janeiro as models for the nation. On the basis of this report the comparison within the country becomes necessary to fertilize reflections related to the variety of school forms at work in the 19th century, contributing to temper the thesis that a vertical power organized a single form for *Brazil and her schools*.

Keywords

History of education – Comparison – Journeys.

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Journey and comparison

The journey as a technique of investigation and knowledge, as a practice of observing, experimenting, comparing, and producing knowledge about the other, that which we observe, has been a significant experience in the trajectory of various men and women in different times and spaces, including of educators involved with the systems of instruction, the schools, and the problems of Education.

During the 19th century teachers, school principals, teaching inspectors, physicians, and politicians involved with educational projects sought in journeys the “codes of civilization” and the increase of their intellectual asset. Educators and authorities traveled through foreign lands, particularly Europe and the United States, sometimes even participating as representatives of the Brazilian Empire in the famous International Exhibitions, which worked as showcases of progress and civilization (Kulhmann Jr, 2001). Getting to know closely cities and countries regarded as advanced in matters of teaching organization represented the possibility of incorporating models and ideas that would then function as guidelines of the projects aimed at the construction of a great nation (Chamon; Faria Filho, 2007; Gondra, 2007; Schueler, 2007).

Experiences of self-formation, of knowledge and learning, oriented and presided over by specific motivations, pedagogical journeys worked, above all, as a means of production of a discourse of cultural mediation in which we can detect the use of various strategies of appropriation, of (re)interpretation and comparison of ideas, knowledges, and pedagogical models in circulation in the so-called civilized countries (Chamon, 2008). As proposed by Vidal (2005), the late 1800s were characterized by the intense circulation of objects, people and cultural models, leading us to consider the hypothesis of a connected history in the perspective proposed by

Subrahmanyam and Gruzinski (apud Vidal, 2005). Such perspective affords historians of education to search for an understanding of continental and intercontinental connections established by the national histories in multiple scales (local, regional, national, and transnational)¹.

Along these lines, taking the journey simultaneously as a comparative device and as a privileged form of reflection about the circulation of ideas, projects, and educational models among Brazilian regions, we analyze here the journey undertaken by João Barbalho Uchoa Cavalcanti, Inspector of Public Instruction of the Province of Pernambuco, to the Court and to the Provinces of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 1879. For that, we worked with the “remains” of this experience, as contained in the “singular peregrination of the quill and mind²” of the voyager, in other words, in the official report of this journey entitled Public instruction – study on the system of primary teaching and pedagogical organization of the schools of the Court, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco. This report, presented to the president of the Province, the judge Adelino Antonio de Luna Freire³, was published in Recife in that same year by the Typographia of Manoel Figueiroa de Faria & Filhos.

When reading this document, we tried to observe the general conditions of the journey and of the narrative constructed by the inspector as a strategy to discuss the representations he produces, with special emphasis on those related to the Court and to the Province of Rio de Janeiro. In this sense, we analyze the sources employed by the author, articulating them with what is produced

1. On the scales of observation in Social Sciences research, see Revel, 1998.

2. On the view of travel reports as a literary genre and on the regularity of this practice, especially in Europe and in Spain, see Tobar; Elduyaen, 2005. In the case of Brazil, see Leite, 1997; Toussant-Samson, 2005, amongst others.

3. The mission was conducted in the administration of Adolpho de Barros Cavalcante de Lacerda, which went from 20/05/1878 to 18/09/1879. Lacerda was succeeded by Dr. Adelino Freire, to whom the report is sent in December 1879.

by his testimony and personal experience. This approach privileges the discussion of issues such as : the diffusion and interprovincial circulation of ideas and pedagogical models; the appropriations and representations constructed about the schools visited, about their teachers and pedagogical initiatives observed; and still the comparative effects produced on his own experience as an inspector of public instruction in Pernambuco.

The narrative

The report has 293 pages, distributed in an introduction, four parts and a conclusion. In the introduction, the inspector offers a set of information that explains motivations, purpose, duration, work method, and its own writing. In the first part he devotes himself to the examination of the pedagogical organization, an aspect divided into a group of aspects contemplated by Dr. Cavalcanti: preschools, primary schools, asylums, night courses, Sunday schools, libraries, museums, school savings bank, pedagogical conferences and teaching plans. In the second, longer part, with 133 pages, the teaching processes and methods are emphasized. In the following part, emphasis is given to the comparison with normal primary education and finally a general appraisal of the statistic data of the places analyzed comprises the fourth part. In his conclusion, as recommended in the rhetoric guides of the time⁴, the author combines humility and erudition: the work “incomplete and imperfect” is corroborated by authorities such as Cardinal Diepenbreck, Jules Simon, Altemeyer and Channing, integrating the closure of the “cursory narrative “of the erudite general inspector of instruction of Pernambuco.

The reasons for the journey are made explicit in the introduction to the text: they combined public and private interests. Among the former, the primordial justification for the journey refers to the three-month paid leave with the intention of “visiting schools in

another province that is advanced” and “studying it in its workings” in the province of Pernambuco⁵. At the private level, health demands for medical treatment required a trip to the Court and to the Provinces of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The motivation for the “school excursion” reported by the inspector reaffirms the perspective of the voyage, both abroad and to the interior of the country, as an instrument to produce a discourse of mediation and comparison, through which the interests of the administration of public instruction of the province would be served. The interest was in improving the educational services, keeping up with the progress of teaching in regions regarded as “advanced”, such as the Court – capital of the Empire – and the provinces of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. To that end, it was not enough to work with the official documents, which were already familiar to the inspector by force of his post. Neither was it enough to know the laws, programs, regulations, the school regiments, and the statistics that went around among the provinces. On the contrary, according to him, it was necessary to go beyond those sources, problematizing them, since the “experience” showed how much the exclusive study of laws could lead to “false appraisals”: in practice, the school programs were often altered and at other times were put entirely aside by the agents of educative practice. For these reasons, to analyze the reality of things, the journey and the visits to schools were justified, since they allowed to observe the manners of teaching, the processes and methods adopted for each one of the disciplines, the choice and use of books, compendia and other materials, as well as to investigate the “weak points” and the difficulties found in the school daily life. With

⁴. See, for example, the manual by Father Roquette (Schwarcz, 1997).

⁵. The request was made to the President of the Province of Pernambuco in 22/03/1879, which was promptly accepted in an answer of 24/03/1879, making the journey an official mission, including the duty of writing a contextualized report of the “school excursion”, as inspector Uchoa Cavalcanti called it.

that, we could ask: would it be possible, through the device of this journey, to capture the “manner of working of the organic system of the school”? (Cavalcanti, 1879, p. 5). Would it be possible to have a glimpse of aspects of school culture in motion at the Court and at the provinces visited? How do the aspects of the process of schooling show up in the recording and circumstantiated writing of the inspector? What place do they assume in his narrative?

A detailed examination of the inspector’s report allows us to notice that he dedicates a specific part of the report to the examination of the pedagogical organization.

The pedagogical organization

In the first part of the report, entitled “Pedagogical Organization”, the inspector focuses on the analyzes of the constitution of the public school systems in the localities studied, drawing from official sources, such as the legislation, regulations, and school rules. The historical narrative that he establishes places the General Law of Teaching of 15/10/1827 as a landmark for the instruction in the Empire, here included Pernambuco, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Uchoa Cavalcanti considered this law not only as a significant part of the historiography of Education but as one of the first attempts to impose a program of national elementary instruction, by specifying that schools should be established in the more populated settlements and villages, one for each sex, destined to the elementary instruction of the free population. The program of the common primary instruction consisted in the teaching of the Christian doctrine, reading – including the Constitution of the Empire – , writing, and rudiments of arithmetic. However, the curriculum relative to feminine classes suffered restraints in the teaching of algebra, geometry, grammar, national history and geography, while including the teaching of needlework, embroidery and sewing.

With respect to Pernambuco, this curriculum model was in force until the time when, with the Additional Act of 1834 and with the provincial autonomy for the regulation of primary and secondary teaching, other legal devices modified the programs and norms of instruction, in some cases broadening curricula⁶, introducing grades and classes into primary teaching⁷, returning to the organization in a single grade⁸ or establishing new grades, knowledges and class ordering⁹, in an abundant “reform frenzy”, characteristic of the policy for instruction in the provinces and at the Court, as observed by the inspector himself.

In the case of the Court, the reporter privileged as redefining signposts of primary and secondary instruction the Regulation of 1874 (Decree 6479 of 18/01/1877) and the Leôncio de Carvalho Reform (Decree 7247 of 19/04/1879), devices that would have abolished the Couto Ferraz Reform of 1854¹⁰. In the first case, the main change pointed out by the inspector was the introduction in teaching of general notions of the rights and duties of the man and citizen, as well as of social economy (for boys) and house economy (for girls). The reform of 1879, established by decree and not approved by the House of Representative, adopted new disciplines and knowledges for primary school, like the notions of farming and horticulture, the manual practice of crafts for boys, systems of weights and measures, and lessons on things.

6. Act 369 of 14/05/1855 introduced in primary school the teaching of History and Geography of Brazil and of the Province of Pernambuco.

7. The Internal Regulation of Primary Schools of 30/07/1859. Divided Primary Schools into 1st and 2nd degrees, establishing eight classes of teaching commanded by the teacher, his adjuncts and decurions.

8. Act 598 of 13/05/1864 dealt again with the organization of primary schools, considering all of them in a single grade (first), according to the legislation of 1827.

9. The regulation of 27/11/1874 extended the school curriculum, and the new regulation of 7/04/1879, authored by the General Inspector Uchoa Cavalcanti, introduced innovations such as “lessons on things and moral and civic instruction through appropriate readings”(Cavalcanti, 1879, p. 11); it also reorganized primary teaching into three grades: elementary, intermediate and complementary.

10. For an analysis of the reform of 1854, see Gondra, 2003; and Martinez, 1997.

With respect to the points that the Pernambucan Inspector could see in the Capital of the Empire, the municipal schools maintained by the Municipal Council, the São Sebastião and São José Schools, built in the 1870s were picked out positively not just because of the modern and grand aspect of their architecture (the “school palaces”), but also for the adoption of new methods and teaching programs, in which some of the elements of the pedagogical modernity appeared (Nunes, 2000): the adoption of teaching in series and graded in three years or series, simultaneous classes and the school organized under a new model with new spaces, times, and modes of functioning. Modernity that also meant a single school building, specific for the instruction of children of both sexes; several teachers, men and women, including a teacher specifically dedicated to the teaching of music; the presence of a hierarchy of management of teaching, and of new functions within the school space (principal, inspector, teacher, support staff, janitor, gardener). The pedagogical modernity, built in the dynamics of the tensions between the new and the old, the ancient and the modern, merged with religious practices and with the teaching of Christian doctrine and moral. As an illustration of this point, the chapel of the São José School had a Sunday mass and the moral teachings of the classical texts with read and explained to the boys immediately after mass by the public teacher Candido de Matheus Faria Pardal.

However, despite exhibiting novelties, the Court did not seem to him as developed as he expected, in view of its importance as the political center of the Empire and capital of the country. Regarding pedagogical methods and processes, and school organization, he claimed to have found nothing that was not already familiar to him and known in the Province of Pernambuco through the circulation of information, educational laws and projects recorded in official reports and regulations, as

well as in foreign newspapers and publications.

For the Province of Rio de Janeiro, the inspector highlighted as official sources the internal regulation of primary schools of 14/04/1873, which divided primary teaching into three classes, reducing the program to reading, writing, Christian doctrine and arithmetic, and the act of 01/08/1876, which granted “permission” to teachers to lecture on notions of national history and geography, cosmography, plane geometry and linear drawing. In his analysis, quite critical to the province of Rio de Janeiro, he showed disapproval and disappointment concerning the scantiness of the curricula and school programs. A negative assessment that was second only to that made about the state of instruction in São Paulo: so “timid and poor” that it consisted only in “this reading, writing and counting, grammar and catechism. (sic)” (Cavalcanti, 1879, p. 37). In this province, as in Rio de Janeiro, the teaching of disciplines such as physical and natural sciences, civic instruction and natural history and geography were optional, in spite of the school childhood having right of access to these knowledges in primary school.

According to the reporter, the school was a powerful instrument of civilization, and should give to the future citizens a wide instruction that afforded them access to knowledges useful for practical life, and enable individuals to fulfill their civic duties. In this perspective, neither the Court nor Rio de Janeiro, and much less São Paulo, exhibited promising results, there existing no reason for Pernambuco to look up to them in matters of instruction¹¹:

As a result of my school excursion I came with the conviction that my province has no reason for envy regarding the system and mechanism

11. “... it is painful to see that in two provinces as important and flourishing as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo the plan of studies for official primary classes is so reduced, and does not have the extension it should have at the schools of the Court” (Cavalcanti, 1879, p. 36)

of public instruction, or as to the pedagogical organization and regime of official primary teaching. (Cavalcanti, 1879, p.78)

In making such diagnosis the general inspector of instruction from Pernambuco produced a mediating discourse which, more than revealing the reality of things as he intended, indicated specific social places of belonging and his political stance as the managing authority for instruction of a region of the country. By evaluation the pedagogical organization of the teaching systems observed, the reporter uses singular lenses, constructing representations mediating by power relations inscribed in his writing practices. He thus articulated the assessments of the provinces and of the Court based on his own experience in the Province of Pernambuco, seeking to legitimize the initiatives he coordinated and, in so doing, preserved for himself and his province a place of honor in matters of instruction within the interprovincial scene.

It is in this sense that the author emphasized the distribution of the school programs in Pernambuco and, through the Pedagogical Conferences carried out in April 1878¹², the debates he would have encouraged between primary teachers of the Province about primary instruction. By describing and analyzing the proposal of one of the teachers presented at the above mentioned Conference, the inspector drew attention to the curricular reorganization conducted during his stay in office, the Regulation of 07/04/1879, which, according to him, was quite close to the proposal by Vicente de Moraes Mello, a teacher in Pernambuco. With this decree primary schools were maintained in three grades of teaching: the elementary, lasting for about two years; the middle or intermediate; and the superior, “maximum grade of instruction”, for those children that reached higher “intellectual ability”. At the same time he introduced the lesson on things, the grading of primary teaching, and the co-education of the sexes and, as a project, he foresaw the construction of buildings appropriate

to primary schools. He defended in his words the “program of modern pedagogy”: order and natural following of matters and integral graded system, and parallelism between teaching disciplines.

Pernambuco was also in evidence for its supposed pioneering role in establishing night schools to be attended by adults and by the children of artists and apprentices; those, according to him, existed since 1866, two years before those of any other province¹³. He still highlighted his own work as inspector, translator, and compiler of pedagogical methods and books (as the lessons on things by Mme Carpentier), and articles in foreign journals (he gave the example of the translation of a text on the School Savings Banks of Switzerland), among other works in the educational field.

The functioning of schools

In the second part of the report, however, Uchoa Cavalcanti's assessments of the school education in the Court and visited Provinces revealed nuances, for it gave way to more positive discourses about what he had seen in terms of teaching methods of school disciplines, pedagogical practices employed by teachers, and the daily life in some institutions, highlighting among them the two days experience at the school of Manoel José Pereira Frazão at the urban neighborhood of Lagoa at the Court.

Since 1873, Frazão was making use of a disciplinary method he called moral and civics, through which, according to Uchoa Cavalcanti, he taught to the boys elements of social and political moral, reinforcing at the school the learning of the duties and obligations of the citizens¹⁴. The inspector from Pernambuco stated that he already knew the method above because of his reading of the ministerial reports and of the official sources of public instruction of the Court, but he was unsure of its practical efficacy. His doubts were, however, dissipated after his visit and in loco observation of the

12. For the case of the Conferences of the Court, see Borges; Gondra, 2005.

13. On the night schools of the Court, see Costa, 2007.

14. On Frazão's moral and civic system, see Schueler, 2005.

proposal. He argued that the system used by Manoel Frazão was not a “utopia” or an “oddy”, on the contrary, it was “perfectly adequate to children”, since it was well integrated with the other school disciplines, bringing about magnificent results for the education of boys.

In this respect the reporter made a vehement defense of moral and civic education, not as a specific theoretical discipline, but as an educative practice, an experience to be lived by the pupils at school through pedagogical actions such as those observed at the school of the Court. To fundament his argument, he made very positive considerations about the “Frazão system”, drawing attention to the following aspects: the adoption of school savings banks; the awarding of money prizes to the “good students”; the creation of norms and rules by the students themselves through the organization of the school as a little State, in which the imperial laws and institutions functioned (the Constitution, the Penal Code, the Parliament, the “party games at school”); the Charity Feast, at which there was the distribution of donations to the poor; and finally the weekly reading of moral texts conducted by the master¹⁵.

According to the inspector, the moral and civic education of boys was also accomplished traditionally by the regular reading of the “Constitution” and its use for the teaching of grammar and logic, as he observed in some schools of the Province of São Paulo. In many schools he noticed the use of memorization methods for moral sentences and proverbs, repeatedly, sung or read by the pupils. Nevertheless, in his opinion, for the better efficacy of the teaching of moral and civism it would be more adequate if the teachers made more extensive use of prelections, of the moral exposition of lessons and narrative of stories to the boys, as well as adopting simplified commentaries of the Constitution geared specifically to use at school, apart from texts containing rules and

norms of civility and social life.

The inspector exemplified the works that could be used: *Catecismo brasileiro* [Brazilian Catechism] by Ciriaco dos Santos; *Catecismo Constitucional* [Constitutional Catechism] by Demophilo; *Entretenimento sobre os deveres de civilidade* [Entertainment on the duties of civility] by Guilhermina Azambuja Neves; *Fábulas* [Fables] compiled by Justiniano José da Rocha; *Florilégio* [Florilegium] by mister Jordão; *Selecta Clássica* [Selecta Classica] by Motta Azevedo (Teixeira, 2008).

With respect to the pedagogical novelties, such as the “lessons on things” and the intuitive processes of teaching, the simultaneous method for the teaching of reading and writing, the introduction of knowledges such as History, Geography, Drawing, Music, and Gymnastics, the inspector from Pernambuco stated his disappointment with their limited diffusion in the schools visited at the Court and Provinces. In the case of the capital of the Empire, the use of lessons on things was observed only at the Institute for the Deaf and in private establishments such as the Menezes Vieira School, in spite of the fact that there were already at the time books translated or proposed by national authors to divulge the method among teachers¹⁶. Music and Gymnastic were referred to as knowledges present in the curriculum of the Municipal Schools of the Court. The teaching of practical economy was observed by the inspector in the school of Mr. Frazão at the Court, and in the school of Bráulio Jayme Muniz Cordeiro in Niterói, capital of the province of Rio de Janeiro.

Still regarding that province, and also the province of São Paulo, he regrets that the teaching of National History and Geography is not mandatory in the first grade primary

15. A reference to the book “O Caráter” [The Character] by Samuel Smiles.

16. In this case he refers to his own translations of Mme Carpentier and Rousselot and to the texts for the teaching of Physical and Natural Sciences: *Primeiros elementos de História Natural* [First elements of Natural History] by Theonilla Tavares Bastos and *Dicionário de Educação e Ensino* [Dictionary of Education and Teaching] by Campagne, translated by Camillo Castello Branco.

schools, and also the lack of books and other volumes appropriate for the use of children in these disciplines, as well as in reading and writing, Physical and Natural Sciences, Arts and Industries.

Another point emphasized by the inspector from Pernambuco relates to the intervention of society and private initiative in the diffusion of teaching to the popular and worker classes by means of organizing societies and associations for the protection and instruction of children, lay and religious, of popular libraries, of night courses for adults, of schools and shelters for poor children and courses of professional teaching, and of Sunday Schools – actions that incidentally, were co-sponsored by the imperial government.

With regard to the Court and Province of Rio de Janeiro, he points out the Sociedade Amante da Instrução [Instruction Loving Society], Sociedade Auxiliadora da Indústria Nacional e Propagadora das Belas Artes [Society for the Support of National Industry and Propagation of the Fine Arts], Liceu de Artes e Ofícios [Lyceum of Arts and Crafts], Associação Promotora da Instrução [Association for the Promotion of Instruction], Sociedade Propagadora da Instrução às Classes Operárias da Lagoa [Society for the Propagation of Instruction to the Worker Classes of the Lagoa] and Associação Protetora da Infância Desamparada [Association for the Protection of Helpless Children]. In the case of the Province of São Paulo, he notes the night course and the Gabriel Franzen Library, the Anna Rosa Institute for poor and destitute boys, and also the Glória Seminary for orphan girls.

With that, he calls attention to the fact that the educational initiatives were being sponsored by other agents, each one with specific interests that saw in the involvement in the instruction a way of looking after strategic sectors of society whilst capitalizing the benefactors for other initiatives and interventions.

Another point emphasized in the

narrative of the inspector from Pernambuco relates to the knowledges produced by the State about its own initiatives. It refers to the increasingly common use of instruments for measuring populations, the official statistics. The mechanism of measure as a requisite for government will also be applied to the field of formal education.

The instruction in numbers

In the fourth and last part of the report, Uchoa Cavalcanti proposes to organize statistical data and to appraise in a comparative manner the state of public instruction in the regions visited. He starts his assessments by the Province of São Paulo, aiming to demonstrate the precariousness of attendance to primary school, using for that the provincial reports of the inspectorate of instruction. He notes the absence of a Superior Council for consultations on the businesses of teaching and guidance to the legislative body on the matter, as well as the inexistence of the practice of gathering teachers in Pedagogical Conferences, something that had been happening at the Court, in the Province of Rio de Janeiro and in Pernambuco throughout the 1870s. With regard to the teachers, he declared to be unable to find in São Paulo associations or societies organized around the defense of their interests, as he had observed at the Court and in his home land¹⁷. As positive points for the province of São Paulo, the inspector referred to a “new phase” following the 1874 Act, after which primary teaching was regarded as mandatory and normal teaching was reorganized.

The reform of education in São Paulo was, in his view, urgent:

The land of the Andradas, which has soared so high for its development and progress in commerce, arts, industry, agriculture, transports, and whose income has risen so

17. On the organization initiatives by teachers at the Court, see Lemos, 2006.

promisingly and flatteringly cannot stand still in what concerns the higher interests linked to the diffusion and improvement of education and public teaching. (Cavalcanti, 1879, p. 265)

Compared to São Paulo, the Province of Rio de Janeiro was depicted as an example of a finer concern with instruction, a fact he corroborated with the argument of the budget expenses in the field of Education for the year 1878, which amounted to a quarter of the total budget of the Province. Complimentary remarks were extended to the administrative organization of public instruction, although in practice the number of inspectors was small, hampering the inspection and control of the schools. He still highlighted the presence of popular libraries, which were under the control of the Municipal Councils, and the movements of association of teachers through the Pedagogical Institutes founded in 1873 with statutes approved on 4th September 1875.

In the report of the Court the reporter pointed out the improvements and the “remarkable movement” in terms of public teaching, notwithstanding the fact that, in his view, the development still seemed timid before the financial situation, of the political centrality and of the cultural importance of the neutral municipality for the Empire:

A wealth and flourishing capital, with the sizable financial resources at its disposal, and with the illustration available to it from its most important political figures should have for some time now a wide and well structured system of education and public teaching – not restricted to the dead letter of the regulations, and solely dependent on the dedication and spontaneous effort of teachers –, solidly constituted and amply rewarded, deserving every care by the government, and organized in such a way as to make the best possible use, and brightly stimulate, the zeal, talent and

vocation of teachers and the patriotic effort of private citizens.

To be sure, much has been done, but only in comparison with the little that was done before: compared to what still remains to be done there is a very long way ahead [...]. (Cavalcanti, 1879, p. 272)

The emphatic criticism of the capital of the Empire in matters of teaching was reinforced by the data from the 1872 census, according to which only a quarter part of the school age population attended the existent public and private schools. On the other hand, among the positive points, he emphasized the government action to subsidize private schools (a total of 100 subventions granted, according to data of the 1878 report). As public institutions in which good material and teaching conditions were observed, the reporter mentioned the Asilo de Meninos Desvalidos [Shelter for Helpless Boys], the Colégio Pedro II [Pedro II School], the Instituto de Surdos-Mudos [Institute for the Deaf-Mute], and the Museu Nacional [National Museum]. In the case of the private institutions, he highlighted the Colégio Abílio [Abílio School], the Liceu de Artes e Ofícios [Lyceum of Arts and Crafts] and the Colégio da Santíssima Trindade [Holy Trinity School]. He was also complimentary of the Public Conferences conducted at the Escola da Glória [Glória School] and at the Liceu de Artes e Ofícios [Lyceum of Arts and Crafts].

Comparison as politics

The general assessment of the Pernambuco officer clearly had as its points of reference the representations of his own experience, his strategies and political actions as general inspector of instruction of the Province of Pernambuco. In this sense, to conclude this comparative part, the author resumes the analysis of the historical constitutive processes of the system of public instruction in Pernambuco citing the regulations and

emphasizing the improvements achieved by previous administrations, particularly the 1874 reform. In this reform the Province would have established mandatory teaching, the freedom of teaching, the mixed attendance to school under the guidance of female teachers, the instruction of girls equated to that of boys, the subvention to private schools, and the reorganization of the teaching career.

The system of inspection in Pernambuco, through the action of literate delegates and school inspectors, and also by the annual intervention of committees of local public servants in visits to the establishments was also placed in evidence. In this respect he drew attention to the importance of families and of the presence of parents at school and supporting their children by helping with their homework and school exercises. The intervention of the parents was presented as one of the means of inspection of the pedagogical action of the teacher, insofar as it constituted an “incentive to their dedication to the performance of teaching”. The communication between parents and teachers was then facilitated by the use of a constant practice of recording and controlling pupils’ performance, a pedagogical technique introduced in the schools of Pernambuco through the use of students’ school records.

He also commended the secondary schooling at the Pernambuco Gymnasium and the freedom of teaching that allowed the development of private institutions in the Province. He still highlighted the presence of societies and associations dedicated to the expansion of instruction, of night courses for adults, libraries and a private Normal School dedicated to the formation of female teachers. A negative aspect pointed out by Uchoa Cavalcanti on the state of the instruction in Pernambuco was the poor development of professional teaching, restricted to the private initiative of the Liceu de Artes e Ofícios [Lyceum of Arts and Crafts] in the capital and of the Instituto Orfanológico Agrícola e Industrial da Colônia Isabel [Industrial and Agricultural Orphanological

Institute of the Isabel Colony] founded by Judge Henrique Lucena.

The organization of the teaching career, the benefits bestowed upon the teacher for time of service and dedication to teaching, the exoneration rules, all regulatory dispositions concerning the relations of the State with the body of teachers showed up in the general inspector’s discourse as the most favorable possible, having been unobserved by him in any other place. In this respect he also highlighted the associative nature of teachers and the constitution of the Instituto dos Professores de Pernambuco [Teachers Institute of Pernambuco] and of the Grêmio dos Professores Primários [Primary Teachers Association], which he, in the capacity of general inspector, tried to support by accepting some of the measures proposed for the teaching. When finishing his narrative he made a strong defense of the improvements in working conditions for teachers and of increases to their wages.

In the closure to his report, which he considered as a true “school organization plan”, he emphasized the need to carry out educational reforms for the national development and progress, with the purpose of fending off the perils of ignorance and illiteracy, the gravest obstacles to civilization.

On the whole, the inspector tries to bring to good term his objective of contrasting the science he has on the basis of the official documentation he reveals to know with what he effectively observes in loco. In this comparative exercise the inspector constructs a narrative that helps to problematize recurrent theses in the historiography (general and educational) that establishes the Court and the Province of Rio de Janeiro as models for the nation. Based on this report the intra-national comparison appears as necessary to fertilize the reflections about the variety of schools forms at work in the 19th century, helping to add nuances to the thesis of a vertical power that, centered somewhere, could have organized a single form for Brazil and her schools.

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