

CIRCULATION AND APPROPRIATION OF EDUCATIONAL CONCEPTS: ILLUSTRATED THINKING AND TEACHING MANUALS IN PORTUGUESE COLONIAL AMERICAN WORLD (EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES)¹

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ABSTRACT: The intellectual production influenced by modern thinking, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has highlighted the propositions about the study methods and their role in the development of ideas about social behavior and desirable education for different social groups. They influenced the political process of reforms that took place in several European states in the second half of the eighteenth century. Education was given the mission of “shaping a new humanity” according to Condorcet’s expression. In this universalist and enlightened perspective, education would be an instrument for the harmonious organization of society through the dissemination of values and behavior standards. Based on these principles, the purpose of this article is to analyze the circulation and appropriation of educational concepts in the American Portuguese world, between the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, through works of the enlightenment thinking and current teaching manuals of that period. It is intended to confront these texts from the conceptions of education, instruction and civility, seeking to verify their presence in administrative and educational fields in colonial Brazil, particularly in the context of the spread of illustrated thinking and the Pombaline education reforms from 1759 and on.

Keywords: Enlightenment. Education. Colonial Brazil. Civility. Teaching manuals.

CIRCULAÇÃO E APROPRIAÇÃO DE CONCEPÇÕES EDUCATIVAS: PENSAMENTO ILUSTRADO E MANUAIS PEDAGÓGICOS NO MUNDO LUSO-AMERICANO COLONIAL (SÉCULOS XVIII-XIX)

RESUMO: A produção intelectual entre os séculos XVII e XVIII, destacou os métodos de estudos e seu papel no desenvolvimento de ideias sobre as condutas sociais e a educação desejáveis para os diferentes grupos sociais. A educação era dada a missão de “modelar uma nova humanidade”, conforme expressão

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de Condorcet. Nessa perspectiva universalista e ilustrada, a educação seria instrumento para a organização harmoniosa da sociedade pela disseminação de valores e normas de comportamento. O objetivo desta comunicação é analisar a circulação e a apropriação de concepções educativas no mundo luso-americano, entre o século XVIII e o início do século XIX, por meio de obras do pensamento ilustrado e dos manuais pedagógicos então circulantes. Pretende-se confrontar esses textos a partir das concepções de educação e instrução, buscando-se verificar sua presença nos meios administrativos e educacionais no contexto da difusão do pensamento ilustrado e das reformas pombalinas da educação, a partir de 1759.

Palavras-chave: Ilustração. Educação. Brasil colonial. Civilidade. Manuais pedagógicos.

An important intellectual production influenced by modern thinking, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has highlighted the propositions about the methods of education and its role in the development of ideas about social behavior and desirable education for different social groups. They influenced the political process of interventions that took place in several European countries in the second half of the eighteenth century, both in revolutionary and reformer contexts. Education was given the mission of “shaping a new humanity” as expressed by Condorcet. In this universalist and enlightened perspective, education would be an instrument for the harmonious organization of society through the dissemination of values and behavior standards. Still heiresses of modern concerns about the construction of civility and the formation of a “new man”, many propositions expressed in the intellectual production, in the laws, in the administrative decisions, as well as in the production of pedagogical works, gave emphasis on issues related to civilization and civility, ultimate targets of the training processes, of education.

Much has been studied about the concepts of civilization and civility present in the social and cultural environment in the West between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly with regard to their formulations present in works meant for moral and religious education. Catechism and civility manuals have been systematically analyzed from this point of view, but it is still necessary to invest more in the discussion on the concepts of education present not only in those works, but also in the legal and administrative discourses and educational practices more common at the time, avoiding the risk of considering that the term education is self explained, or that it becomes a concept of universal understanding.

Based on these principles, the purpose of this article is to analyze the educational concepts in the American Portuguese world, between the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, through works of the enlightenment thinking and the current teaching manuals of that period. The confrontation of these texts from the conceptions of education, instruction and civility can help in the discussion about their presence in the administrative and educational fields in colonial Brazil, particularly in the context of the spread of enlightenment thought and the Pombaline reforms of education from 1759 and on.

Education and instruction designated, in general, the process of forming individuals to properly integrate to life in society, according to accepted and legitimized references and values. In the current formulations during the so-called *Ancien Régime*, educating and instructing seemed often mixed up with one another or overlapping themselves about their goals. In his classic and foundational work, *Didactica Magna* (1657) Comenius said that teaching meant to make the youth “formed in the studies”, “educated in manners” and “instructed in all that concerns the present and future life”. His definitions indicated the association of *education* with the idea of *formation* focused on social interaction. According to the author, educating meant

ensuring that the spirits of the young people are preserved from the world’s corruptions and so that the seeds of honesty thrown at them are, through admonitions and chaste and continuous examples, stimulated to germinate fortunately, and finally arrange for their minds to be imbued with a true knowledge of God, themselves and the multiplicity of things; so get used to see the light in the light of God, and to love and venerate above all, the Father of Lights. (COMENIUS, 2001, Thread 22)

Instruction, on the other hand, in addition to filling the youngsters with content, would be the means of

open their intelligence to the understanding of things, so that it will sprout streams as a source of living water, and as from the “eyes” of the trees sprout shoots, leaves, flowers and fruits, and in the next year, each “eye” sprouts again another branch with its leaves, its flowers and its fruits. (COMENIUS, 2001, Chapter VIII, Fundamental V, Thread 22)

For Comenius, therefore, education was part of the individual’s process of adaptation to social and Christian values, in this case, influenced by the movement of the Reformation. These definitions, however, were very close to those advocated by Catholic authors, such as Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, to whom education had key role in the movement of fighting reformed religions, especially through moral prescriptions.²

But not only education as a strictly moral formation of religious foundations interested the authors of the time. The formation of a civil man, able to social life and familiar to the rules of civilization and good manners was on the horizon of several authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, helping to define what education and their purposes would be. John Locke, in his book *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1692), favored the education of *gentleman*, expressing the understanding in the *Ancien Régime* society, that education of the lower classes would take place through the examples offered by the elites. So, taking care of the education of the latter would result in the good of the whole society. Reflecting on the nature of education and instruction, Locke established a valuation for both, favoring education over instruction. For him, the latter would be the least important dimension of all the individual forming process because it could only bear fruit on a land fertilized by education for the good manners.

Author that can not be forgotten here, Rousseau also highlighted education as a formative instance, especially ethics. It would be the foundation of intellectual forming of the individual and could occur with minimal instruction. Although he's treated education more vertically in *Émile ou De L'éducation* (1762), it was in the work *Considerations sur le gouvernement de Pologne et sur sa Réformation projetée* (published posthumously in 1782) that Rousseau dealt with the institution of a national education to serve the formation of patriotic inclinations, leaving the instruction of the children and the youth to the private and domestic scope. Note here, also, the tendency to a conceptual separation between education and instruction, with minor variations between these authors.

In the *Encyclopédie or dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, directed by Diderot and D'Alembert (published between 1751 and 1772) several dimensions are given to the concept of education from "the care that is taken to nurture, raise and instruct children", to the purpose of taking care of "health and good body formation", and to "what concerns the rectitude and instruction of the spirit" and "the habits and social qualities." From these defining principles the word *education* in the *Encyclopédie* emphasizes the idea of education in relation to the formation of citizens for the good of the state and its order, reinforcing therefore a definition of education as *formation*. Instruction, as well as in other texts of the time, is also associated in the *Encyclopédie* to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, being "all that is able to enlighten us on any object that is," to "instruct us by speeches, the writings, the reasons, the facts, and the examples" (*Encyclopédie, Éducation*).

In what concerns to the space and time universe of this article, the presence of those ideas about education can be partially glimpsed in the Portuguese intellectual production of the eighteenth century. A first gateway to the analysis of current education concepts at that time are the dictionaries. Raphael Bluteau, in his well-known *Vocabulário Português e Latino* (1712), defines education as “raising (...) to the direction of customs. (...) that has been taking care of one’s education”, definition that directs its derivations: *educating* would be “raise “and *educated* would be “raised, taught “. Here, raising and teaching are not distinguished because Bluteau defines teaching both as the act of raising as the object of teaching. It is interesting to note that education will also be identified to civilized formation, related to courtesy, “it is the treatment of well indoctrinated men, whether by experience of the Court, & the City, or by the teaching of others who lived in it”. Such treatment reinforces the perception that education is closely associated with the idea of forming the individual to social life, to instill in him the values of good society. The idea of indoctrination is also mentioned, and this can help us understand the meaning of the various types of works intended for such formation of children and young people, as well as the meanings present in the discourse of civil and ecclesiastical authorities members of the colonial administration, as it seeks to examine in this article.

Even if other elements are used to define what *instruction* would be, the *Vocabulário Português e Latino* ends up approaching again the idea of formation, while defining *instruction* as “the action of instructing. Instruction of boys” as well as “documents, or doctrine principles for knowledge of human and divine sciences, and also for the moral life”. Once again the action and the object are defined from the same point, and the subtle difference between education and instruction seems to be the fact that the second would be done by means of more accurate normative tools, while the first would be oriented more general principles.

Published a few decades after the *Vocabulário Português e Latino*, the *Diccionario da lingua portuguesa* (1789), by Antonio de Moraes Silva, defines education as “raising, that is done on someone, or given; teaching of things that improve the understanding, or serve to direct the will, and also with regard to decorum”. Instruction has the definition that, once again, includes both the action and the object of this action: “teaching, education, document. Record, regiment, given to someone to be governed by it”.

In other dictionaries published right in the first decades of the nineteenth century we see that these meanings are kept, practically repeating the same definitions present in the works published in the eighteenth century. The *Novo Dicionario da Lingua Portuguesa*, published in Lisbon in 1806, defines instruction as “document, teaching, doctrine, record given to someone to be governed”, and instruction as teaching, as well as to “state a warning”. The *Diccionario da Lingua Brasileira*, published by Luiz Maria da Silva Pinto in 1832, defines education as “raising with teaching of doctrine and good manners.” Although the author has not written the word instruction, the term appears defining teaching (instruction, education) as well as catechesis.

Moving forward from the formal definitions present in dictionaries, it is necessary to examine briefly how some important Portuguese authors have addressed the problem of education, particularly concerned with the good formation of the subjects and the construction of modern civility in Portugal. In their works there is a clear influence of some classics like Locke, Fénelon and Rousseau. In *Apontamentos para a educação de um menino nobre*, Martinho de Mendonça Pina e Proença was imbued with the concepts of education related to ethics and moral formation of the individual to life in society, particularly inspired by John Locke. According to Pina e Proença, formation would be the foundational basis of all education, supported by elements linked to instruction:

It is not my intent to underestimate the Latin and Greek languages; but to lead them to the true purpose of wisdom, which can contribute the lesson of the ancient authors, that offer prudent precepts and illustrious examples of prudence, moderation and good manners: but as ordinarily in the education of boys are proposed, as a sole purpose, which can only be means to achieve true end; seemed useful to reject with all forces the vulgar persuasion, that mistakenly thinks is well educated who has a memory full of many voices, and facts, even if the speech lacks the insight, the judgment lacks maturity, and the will lacks virtuous inclination. (PROENÇA, 1734, p. 17-18)

Pina e Proença’s reflections put instruction in the field of development of knowledge and skills as a foundation for moral education and intended for the construction of modern civility. The fact that his thinking is focused on the education of the elites is consistent with the current concept of education as an example to be given, preferably by the nobility. For her, beyond the moral foundations and education for civility, it would be useful teaching skills that prepare for the service of the state and religion. It is how Pina e Proença defines instruction:

True instruction, which should be sought by a Master, is not about making the memory of your Learner a dark and confusing warehouse of facts, and voices; but to order it, and to clarify the concepts that correspond to the most common terms; getting them used to distinguish them well, and to closely recognize their proportions, and relations between each other; teach him how to overcome his own appetites, inspire him to the love for reason and good order, teach him the basics of civil society, that creates the obligation to obey the Sovereign, and to expose life, when it suits, to the Republic. (PROENÇA, 1734, p. 183-184)

In his famous work *Verdadeiro método de estudar*, considered one of the major influences in the development of so-called Pombaline education reforms³, Luis Antonio Verney made major criticism on the understanding of education exclusively as moral and ethical formation, arguing that it should be founded on the principles of reason and not mere speculation. Interested in a useful education for the good of the state and society – let us remember of his concerns and other Portuguese's with the disadvantage of Portugal compared to other European nations – Verney reoriented the concept of education, fusing it to the instruction's. As both would concur for the formation of an active individual and useful to the development of the state, formative education with moral grounds would have the same status as the instruction (the teaching of practical knowledge). Focused on the problems over education in Portugal at the time, and on the formulation of proposals to reorient it, Verney defended an education capable of forming the Portuguese population in a more effectively way through a more rational and applied education.

Nevertheless he was a critic of the church control over education, Antonio Nunes Ribeiro Sanches, author of the celebrated *Cartas sobre a educação da mocidade* (1760), addressed the issue seeking to conciliate civil education to the Christian formation of subjects. Supporter of the need for reforms that would help to transform some operation dynamics of Portuguese society – at least with regard to the performance of the elite serving the state – Ribeiro Sanches favored in his ideas the education of these segments without, however, significantly breaking up with the already current notions of education and instruction. The meanings attributed by him converge to the tendencies we analyzed so far, namely, that education was related to the idea of general education of the individual to the social life in Christian cultural scene (Catholic in this case) and that instruction was part of that, being closer to the acquisition of knowledge and useful skills:

proposing virtue, peace and good faith, as target of this education, and doctrine and science as a means to acquire these sociable and Christian virtues. It never

leaves my thoughts to form an obedient and diligent subject to fulfill obligations, and a Christian always resigned *to imitate*, in the way we reach those immense actions of kindness and mercy. (SANCHES, 1922, p. 109. Emphasis added)

Thus, in the field of moral enrollment education would be written in, while the “practical” knowledge would be the instruction’s domain. But not only. This knowledge would be also the means by which moral formation would occur. The mention of the idea of “imitation” expressed Ribeiro Sanches’ understanding about education also as an “example”, especially the one that should be given by the elites to subordinate classes, always willing to imitate the actions “of their greatest” (SANCHES, 1922, p. 115).

Authors such as those mentioned so far produced works with general reflection of education in their time, its features, its meanings and its goals, devoting themselves to propose what they thought were the best guidelines for that in a context of possible changes, of reforming policies, the State and eventually the Church acted in the development of a more useful education to society. But they were also dedicated to draw the attention of parents and teachers for their roles in this formative effort.

Others have proposed themselves to write about the possible practices in the scenes of these education and instruction concepts, composing works that, in a contemporary perspective, could be called “manuals”, aimed at parents and teachers, and made of guidelines and contents considered to be essential for the direction of the education given to children and young people, whether at home or at school. Method, school, instruction, text-book, were some of the most common names present in the titles of these books, which generally matched the Christian catechism to the method for learning the first letters (read, write and count), rules of civility and in some cases, geography and chronology, for example.

Besides the Portuguese authored books, many translations circulated, usually of French works, intended for moral education and instruction on the rules of civility. Among these, for example, *Elementos da Civildade e da Decência para a instrução da mocidade de ambos os sexos* (1788), *Método de ser feliz ou catecismo, especialmente para uso da mocidade* (1787), *Tesouro de meninas ou diálogos entre uma sabia aia e suas discípulas* (1783), and *A Escola dos bons costumes, ou reflexões morais e históricas* (1786).⁴The latter, translated by D. João de N. Sra. da Porta Siqueira, added to the work of Jean-Baptiste Blancard a “practical treatise of portuguese civility” of the translator’s own authorship.

In his prologue, he exalts the original work as a source of examples of good manners in order to “educate the Youth, and to instruct with honor and virtue.” Again, these books reveal the notions of education as general formation and the basis for the development of instruction that would lead to children and young people to learn the basic knowledge to become good Christian subjects.

Among the works of this type produced in Portugal – some of them already reasonably known and studied – emphasizes the association between these two dimensions of educational processes in the combination of the Christian catechism and the moral precepts, with learning to read. These features and the emphasis given in these books about the usefulness of that learning to allow access to the reading of moral maxims and to the doctrine forces us to reconsider, at least partially, the idea that the value of literacy would be the mark of Protestant societies due to the motivation and even the necessity of reading the Bible. It’s important to relativize such interpretation, bearing in mind that this also implied in the valuation of the spread of the school institution, especially in the exhortation to the political power to take responsibility for it. In Catholic countries, judging by texts like the ones we’ve been analyzing, these two things would not be necessarily connected, meaning, exalting literacy as a tool for refinement of the moral and religious education would not mean calling for the establishment of schools, especially by the state.

A striking aspect of these books published in Portugal in the second half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century is the view that the correctness and accuracy of the method would ensure a successful education. The method would be associated with the clarity of guidelines for the development of educational processes of reading, writing, civility and doctrine, according to the rules distinctly established for each case, and that would involve explanations of what, how and the why of things. In a certain sense we see the appeal – often explained by the authors – of *reason* as an element of general guidance for good formulation of rules for their apprehension, or learning. If that would or not be directly related to the intellectual context of the time, marked by the influence of the enlightenment thinking in some of the Portuguese intellectual and political circles, it is difficult to determine without a closer study of the works and their authors. But is a possible evidence.

For these authors, the correct learning of the “rules” of good education would be aid to introduce other sciences to the youth, from

reading and writing to spelling and geography. Especially reading, “door where the man’s understanding is empowered to be able to enter each other speculative sciences”, as read in *Escolla Nova Christã, e Política*, signed by D. Leonor Thomasia de Souza e Silva (actually, Francisco Luis Ameno), 1799. The effort of trying to understand the development and employment of education and instruction notions find this book an interesting aid. Like the others, education is presented as the general formation process of the individual for life in society, but to get to it, runs through the path of several “instructions”, which suggests the procedures used to build the distinction between the two concepts. Instruction is a mechanism of transmission of knowledge, being doctrine or civility, reading, spelling, arithmetic or geography. The ultimate goal of all this knowledge is general formation and, therefore, it is necessary to establish rules, standards and learning devices, according to the different “fields”.

In *Nova Escola de meninos*, by Manoel Dias de Souza, 1784, education is at the same time basis, path and goal for formation, to “cultivate and form the youth in the sciences, as well as in good costumes and teach them to meet the obligations of civil and Christian life” (p. 190). Souza tends to separate education from instruction, linking the latter to the teaching of contents and skills, such as reading, writing, arithmetic and doctrine, which is also an exercise for reading. Separately, he includes by the end of the work a part entitled *Breve direção para a educação dos meninos*, of a more prescriptive feature, and adding that the example was the best form of education. At the end, reveals the tendency of the author in accordance with others of his time, of understanding that forming must be done first, then instructing, and that the knowledge derived from instruction, or various instructions, is useless without the foundations laid by good formation. Still, both notions are mixed up, because education can also be understood as the result of all this process.

In the well known *O Perfeito Pedagogo na arte de educar a mocidade*, by João Rosado de Villa-Lobos e Vasconcellos, published in 1782, these concepts are also present, moving further in relation to other authors when it includes a detailed section for each of the arts and sciences considered by the author necessary for the proper education of individuals: revealed religion, the Portuguese grammar, the study of French, the ancient classical literature, geometry and logic (the two indicated as the most important because necessary for the organization of thoughts), metaphysics, psychology, ethics or moral philosophy,

geography and chronology, eloquence, poetry, dance, design, horse taming, rapier, hunting and music. Vasconcellos builds his manual guided by the idea that to achieve good education is necessary to instruct the youth with at least all this knowledge: “Although sciences, briefly pointed out, are not enough to form a true wise man; they are however the most necessary to form the knowledge, and the conduct of a citizen a Citizen Man, and well raised” (VASCONCELLOS, 1782, p. 266-267).

Of all books of this type that were analyzed, *O Perfeito Pedagogo* appears as the one that tries to contemplate the greater diversity of knowledge and situates them as part of education, according to the author, “compass” to enable the individual for life. Of course, considering the listed knowledges, it would not be the entire population’s education, but the favored classes’. But this would not be necessarily a school type of education, this assumed by the allusion to the importance of the “pedagogue” or “mentor” ultimately responsible for the process, the one who “Form language, inspires civility, and above all polish customs, and significantly advances Religion and Morals. The fortune of our candidate depends solely on his education; but mainly on the capacity of his mentor” (VASCONCELLOS, 1782, p. 274).

Right in the early years of the nineteenth century some works of this nature held the purposes grounded in the same concepts, indicating the relative strength of this way of thinking about education as a concept and as a practice. Addressing these books aimed at the analysis of the education and instruction concepts present in them helps to clarify the understanding of the role of education placed in methods and rules, in guidelines and manuals, beyond its association with schooling. That said, means that such analysis helps to deconstruct rooted historiographical concepts that tie education with school, or processes of teaching and learning specific knowledges with the school institution, necessarily. If, for the current times, this association can not be considered absolute or universal, much less in times and places in which the educational institution wasn’t still present, or was barely visible or too exclusive. More so in times in which the participation of other institutions such as the family and the Church were at the center of educational activities. We shall return to this discussion, after analyzing other instances that carried conceptions and actions for the education of individuals in the Portuguese-American world.

Imbued with the purpose of promoting changes that would move Portugal away from its state of backwardness in relation to

other European nations – particularly Britain – the government of D. José I, under the command of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, future Marquis of Pombal, held a number of administrative reforms that reached different sectors of the life of the Kingdom and its empire. The so-called Pombaline reforms of education, initiated in 1759 with the expulsion of the Jesuits of the empire and closing all their schools, started the schooling process ordered by the state, also reaching overseas domains. The royal classes of first letters were created, on Latin grammar, Greek and rhetoric, and established the “career” of royal teaching in the staff of the state administration. Wages were defined, as well as forms of joining royal teaching and control mechanisms of teachers’ work. Other initiatives took place with the creation of the Class of Commerce (1759) and the Royal College of Nobles (1761), and the reform of the University of Coimbra (1771-72), all aimed at the most modern and effective formation of social groups responsible for the government and for the economy of Portugal and its domains.

As known, these reforms were somehow inspired by enlightenment thinking and the idea of modernization from the perspective of administrative rationality.⁵ The legislation created to implement these reforms gives us clear indications of these influences, but also of the concepts of education and instruction current at the time, and dear to the Portuguese culture of the *Ancien Régime*. It is adequate, therefore, to examine some documents of this nature as part of the ongoing analysis in this article. As we have seen so far, education perceived as general formation of the individual to become a good subject and a good Christian was both related to formation for civility and catholic christian indoctrination.

The *Alvará Régio* of 1759, which expelled the Jesuits and created the first royal schools, presented in its text some of the features analyzed in this article, as set out in its first lines, which list the reasons why the Crown decides on the reforms: “I, El Rei, make it known for those who see this *Alvará*, that considering the culture of Sciences responsible for the happiness of monarchies, saving up religion through it, and Justice in its purity and equality” (ALVARÁ, 1759).

The “sciences”, understood here as knowledge, are not separated from the necessity of Christian formation, as we have seen in most documents analyzed, understanding that this formation for the good of the state (“happiness of Monarchies”) consists not only of knowledge useful for the individual’s performance in this society,

but also for its better adaptation to the order. For the government of D. José I the Jesuits had failed in this mission by applying methods that did not result in knowledge and useful skills to the nation's progress, at least from the state's perspective, at that time involved in conflicts with the Society of Jesus in their efforts to secularize some aspects of empire administration and their populations, and to reduce the influence of this religious order in Portuguese society.

As much as the speech present in many normative documents issued by the Crown in this reform process indicated the need for renovation and modernization, were also present many conceptions dear to maintaining a absolutist type of monarchical order, and returning to practices that dated back to the sixteenth century, before the progressive influence of the Society of Jesus and its teaching method, materialized in the famous *Ratio Studiorum* (1599). The 1759 *Alvará* text clearly indicated that “reform” returning to the old way, ordering the return of the “old method”, meaning to be different from the Jesuitical method. In this first moment of the reforms, marked by the creation of public classes on Latin grammar, Greek and rhetoric, the more clearly conception present in the legislation is instruction, linked to education of knowledge with practical purposes and that could contribute to the “building” of “faithful vassals” (*Alvará*, 1759). Such idea is also clear in documents that followed the 1759 *Alvará*, so the instructions contained in it were executed, as the Notice published by command of the General Director of Studies, D. Thomaz de Almeida, to call for civil service examination that would fill up the first chairs of Latin grammar of the reforms. In it, D. Thomaz de Almeida reinforces the purpose of education to be developed in the new context and that would guide the choice for the new masters: to ensure that the “culture of science of the vassals” was “the most well-founded establishment to the service of God, and of Monarchies” (EDITAL, 1759).

Certifying the fidelity to that concept of education as general formation, and the possibility of being combined with some practical use instruction, the main law for expansion of the reforms, of November 6th 1772, created the royal schools of first letters assigning this function to them. The law ordered that the reading, writing and counting teachers were forced to

not only teach the good shape of the characters, but also the general rules of Portuguese Spelling, and what is necessary of its syntax, so their students can write correct and orderly: Teaching them at least the four types of simple arithmetics; the Catechism, and Civility Rules in a brief manual: because being so essential to

the happiness of states and their individuals, these matters are very easy to instill in the early years to the Boys, who are tender, docile, and susceptible of good impressions of those Masters, who worthily apply to instruct them. (LEI, 1772)

It is quite evident the consonance of this text with the concepts present in other sources studied in this article, from the ideas present in the thinking of some of the most eminent European intellectuals of the time – including some Portuguese – to manuals indicated for the education of children and youngsters. As we have seen, the organization of most of these books follows exactly this structure, combining a instruction that ended up being considered introductory for broader formative education according to the cultural values and social needs. The sooner this process was developed, the better the results. This wider education/forming would reach all social classes at first, but it would be sufficient in their most basic levels for the population of those “employed in rustic services and in Manufacturing Arts”, because being responsible for the “support of the people”, “instruction of parish priests” would be enough for them. This one, essential to ensure that formative education. The others, according to their skills, there would be a possibility of some instruction in Latin, and deepening for those “intended” to higher education, which would “figure Men in the States” (LEI, 1772).

The need for proper formation of subjects for the “happiness of the Monarchy” was also in the speech of different occupants of management positions, particularly in Brazil, concerned with situations that escaped their predictions and their control. Not rare are the documents produced by these officials, reporting their perplexity with a society that was structured according to the circumstances, and that was against a preconceived notion of order. Many attributed this situation to the large population of African origin and their descendants, “naturally” prone to indiscipline and insolence, but also to the Portuguese emigrants, especially the lower social origin.

In one of these documents we see the indication that, in addition to a police control over this population, it was necessary to pay attention to their lack of education. In a letter of 1805, Basílio Teixeira Cardoso de Sa Vedra Freire, Ombudsman of the Sabará District, Capitania of Minas Gerais, expressed his outrage at the state of decadence, poverty and disorder in the area. For him, the matchup of white men with black and mestizo women originated a population of freed “without raising, without means to feed themselves, without manners and with the crazy opinion that freed people shouldn’t

work.” He criticized some current practices among the population and the slaves, but also pointed out abuses committed by masters, that could well be liable for part of that lack of control, keeping slaves in the absence of food, treatment of diseases, and the “lack of instructions on Religion, Moral, customs”. The local administration would be compromised due to poor performance of employees, for their lack “of knowledge, or character”. He demanded an urgent reform as a means to destroy these defects, primarily through the naming of “unselfish men, intelligent, and able to perform at it all” such reforms (INFORMAÇÃO, 1897).

The Ombudsman’s impressions allow us to glimpse the understanding of education as well as a political and social control strategy, but founded on the same basis that combined religious and moral instruction and rules of behavior, the “morality”, whether it would involve elites or the lower classes, including slaves. It is interesting to note that, in the latter case, the responsibility of this “education” would fall on the masters. In this regard it should be remembered that the education of slaves for the formation of character had already been the subject of attention in the famous *Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia*, set of the post-Tridentine church standards for Brazil and related not only to church affairs but all possible dimensions of everyday life of the population. In *Título II* of his *Livro Primeiro* are the guidelines on the moral and religious education in which it is perceived, as already noted, the combination with the instruction of first letters, basis for allowing access to specific manuals or textbooks for this teaching, whether in school or out of it:

Because it not only matters a lot that the Christian doctrine and morals are planted in the first age, and late childhood, but that they are also kept in the most grown adults, learning along with the lessons to read and write, the good living during time, in which our nature soon bends to the vices, and others continuing the culture of faith, in which they were instructed, and believing in its mysteries those who hear once again, so we order: We demand that all people, ecclesiastical and secular, teach, or make teach the Christian doctrine to their family, and especially to their slaves, who are the most in need of this instruction due to their rudeness. (CONSTITUIÇÕES, 2007)

These guidelines are present in other documents of administrative nature, but that contemplated concerns that went beyond that. In fact, it appears that the administration of oversea lands also implied in civilizing actions, partially resulting of educational processes, whatever their nature. It was role of administrators to

control the activities of the clergy and observe the fulfillment of their obligations, including the “teach people the precepts of the law they profess, preach them the gospel, give them the sacraments and lead them with zeal, unselfishness, and regular behavior of a good and exemplary pastor to the body of the church that they are children of” (INSTRUCCÃO, 1844), as it can be read on the instructions given by the Minister Martinho de Mello e Castro to the Viscount of Barbacena, Luiz Antonio Furtado de Mendonça, who took on the government of the Capitania of Minas Gerais in 1788. These guidelines were part of the first orders contained in the *Instruções*, as a means to ensure that the population of Minas was not only civilized and not moved away from “obedience and submission to His Majesty, who they are vassals of”, but was also prepared to provide the Crown of all economic resources that the region could produce, mining, land cultivation, the licit trade and, of course, taxes payment.

Although in general these conceptions about education as formation of good subject are recurrently present in the official, ecclesiastical or secular documentation, it’s also noted in them the understanding that such type of formation would only be possible through formalized and institutionalized instruction. Such understanding would be aware of enlightened conceptions of education advocated from the second half of the eighteenth century, and related to the reforms undertaken by the Portuguese Crown in this period. This instruction would have key role in the desired modernization process of the State and its economy, which would include, of course, the overseas domains. The vice-king of Rio de Janeiro, Marques do Lavradio clearly noticed it and considered the importance of this type of instruction when analyzed the trade situation in Brazil. He said that most traders were unaware of the technical and fundamental practices for the proper administration of their business, and even those dealers more “honest and true” ignored “what this profession is, that they don’t even know the necessary books, or know the regular order of their records. Today, having had Trade Classes, some salesmen have come about and have put in these books better order; but most of them still retain significant disorder” (RELATÓRIO, 1842, p. 454).

Lavradio also had in mind the role of education as a control mechanism of the behavior and example as an educational tool. Idleness, for example, should be fought with the occupation with the learning of useful things, as ordered to soldiers to be occupied with studies at night when they had nothing to do. In order to control disorders in the Capitania of Rio de Janeiro, he granted lands to

facilitate the establishment of people in lands where such disorders occur, and in order to polish their manners, called them to talk so they would “get used to see how people live, and to see the way to respect and obey the various magistrate, and the most representative people” (RELATÓRIO, 1842, p. 422).

Browsing various sources, produced in different instances and situations, in search of conceptions about education and instruction which they may indicate as part of thinking and cultural practices in the American Portuguese world of the eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth centuries was a purpose in this article to create the discussion about the historicity of these concepts and the denaturalization of education as something given, homogeneous and universal. And yet, unlink, when necessary, school from education or from schooling, to a time when the forms taken by them were far distant from those that we would see developing from the mid-nineteenth century. This analytical proposal also points to the presence of the current educational concepts in different institutional instances such as the State and the Church, and not always linked to discussions of institutionalized education, especially school. That's indicated by the speech and the proposals and actions of the administrative authorities in their efforts to establish, in America, the state of social order and obedience and allegiance to the Portuguese monarchy. The fact that many aspects of the concepts of education and instruction have origins in modern thinking, forged from the sixteenth century in Europe, did not exclude the presence of elements which, unlike changes, intended the conservation of ideas, norms and behaviors. Or that modernization sought through reforms, besides intending to create new educational instances based on enlightened and rational assumptions, to leave aside important slices of formation and prevailing cultural practices, especially those of Catholic religious matrix.

Books of catechism, rules of civility, teaching of the first letters and “sciences”, useful to the formation of the good Christian subject to the Portuguese monarchy went along with the most considered works of European thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as with laws and royal determinations, and with the impressions and administrative actions of the colonial authorities in America. Education was not, therefore, subject to minor importance and consideration, taking the concerns of people in different positions and functions in the *Ancien Régime* society, since it was action and result of impact on the quality of the subjects, and the establishment of better order for the state.

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NOTES

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²*Les règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne (1695) e Conduite des écoles chrétienne (1717)*.

³The reforms were initiated during the reign of D. José I (1750-1777), under the command

of his powerful minister Marques de Pombal, and suffered some continuity over the reigns of D. Maria I (1777-1816) and D. João VI (1816-1826).

⁴The dates refer to the year of publication in Portugal.

⁵On this topic see: SANTOS, 2011.

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