

Foreword

Over the 19th century, education took pride of place in the Western world. As a central process in the composition of the contemporary world, the formation of sovereignty of the national States relied on the citizens as a whole. To make this work, there was a need to develop new individuals willing to sacrifice themselves for the political community they themselves conceived. Imagining the horizontal camaraderie coined by Benedict Anderson,¹ by which men and women share cooperation without having ever met each other was only possible as the different institutions steadily started taking interest in this task. The use of a common language, the recognition of a national geographic space, the construction of a national past, were tasks, among others, which the builders of this cultural artifact known as State dedicated themselves to. It is because of this that the role education plays in this process is becoming stronger and stronger.

On the other hand, education was made into a social transformation tool. T. H. Marshall's classical study on the evolution of citizenship in Western Europe already points to that.² Its analysis system seeks to show how the articulation of three successive moments in this process. Firstly, comes the conquest of the civil rights, associated with the assertion of individual freedom and private property. Following this, and because of this, comes the steady expansion of the political rights, especially the ballot, and the right to association. The increased political participation brought about the development of the social rights, opening the door to what is known as *welfare state* over the 20th century. Within this system, Marshall recognizes that there was some social right that preceded all the others and which was the condition for the organization of the working classes and the expansion of their demands: education. Motivated by the wars, now fought between the national States, the defense of this new sovereignty mode required special care with the formation of the citizens, which favoured the universalization of the secular and public schools. Being an unforeseen consequence of the

1 ANDERSON, Benedict. *Comunidades imaginadas: reflexões sobre a origem e a difusão do nacionalismo*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008.

2 MARSHALL, T. H. *Cidadania, classe social e status*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1967.

directions taken by the process of formation of the national States, education came to shape the faces of the western world of the 20th century.

The economists have also shown great concern for the issues associated with education; in their case linked to the economic development. Dealt with as human capital, the education of a population would steadily have more serious implications in the capacity of a national economy to respond to the challenges posed by the contemporary world. However, more recently, scholars have conducted extensive studies on the impact the formation of human capital will have on the historical path of the nations. With a comparative study of the spread of the lettering and numbering in different national spaces, the latest economic literature has sought to draw a correlation between this spread and the increased capacity of response to economic challenges posed to the national States along their history, particularly regarding the issue related to capacity to overcome economic inequalities.³

It was because of the importance of the role education plays in the history that the dossier of this number of *Varia Historia* was organised. Its purpose is to highlight articles that show the importance assumed by education in a key moment of the process of formation of the Brazilian national State: the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century.

The first article, written by Juliana Goretti Aparecida Braga Viegas and Ana Maria de Oliveira Galvão titled “Interfaces between the legitimation process of a primary school as an institution of knowledge and the resignification of the symbolic place of Ouro Preto as a historical city”, discusses the creation of Grupo Escolar Pedro II (a primary state school) symbolizing the conception of Ouro Preto as a place whose memory has been preserved. Within the context of the educational reforms at the beginning of the First Republic, Minas Gerais gave a giant step in the construction of primary state schools so that they would replace the ancient model of isolated classes. According to the authors, the way Grupo Escolar Pedro II was established and the very choice of its name show that the context within which the school was seems to have played a very important role in the process of legitimacy and in the directions these institutions would take. Therefore, the history of the places where the primary state schools were implanted seems to have affected the production of their legitimacy and the paths these new institutions followed.

In her text “Collect and educate: Julio de Castilhos Museum and its visitors (1903-1925)”, Zita Rosane Possamai describes the path followed by that museological institution from its creation to the moment it stops being a natural sciences museum to be made into a historiographic institution.

3 Exemplo dessa abordagem é: BATEN, Joerg; JUIF, Dácil; MUMME, Christina. Aberto e desigual: a globalização aumentou o intervalo educacional entre ricos e pobres? In: BOTELHO, Tarcísio R.; VAN LEEUWEN, Marco H. D. (orgs.), *Desigualdade social na América do Sul: perspectivas históricas*. Belo Horizonte: Veredas e Cenários, 2010, p.139-162.

In its first decades, despite the challenges faced by its managing board, the institution had as its focus the research, and parallel to it, teaching in articulation with the educational institutions in the south of the country. In this sense, the association of the procedures for museological exhibition with the method known as intuitive or *Object Lessons* has gained importance. Introduced during the Empire and resumed in the Republican period, the new method contrasted with the traditional educational methods (based on memorization and repetition), encouraging the active participation of the student in the learning process. By starting from the concrete towards the abstract, from the objects to the ideas, they sought to encourage observation and experimentation within the scope of the scientific education. The author believes that it is possible to observe in the practices and ideas expressed by Francisco Rodolpho Simch, director of the museum in the period under study, “some affinity with the presuppositions of the intuitive method as it favours the collection, study, classification and exhibition of collections, especially within the field of natural sciences, developing their products in the same way as those that had some practical use by society in favour of the development of the State of Rio Grande do Sul”.

The third article in the dossier (“Collect and educate: Julio de Castilhos Museum and its visitors (1903-1925)”, by Marcus Levy Bencostta) brings an analysis of the strategies used by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which encouraged, in their Episcopal documents, cultural manifestations of a civic nature in the educational institutions under their aegis. More particularly, it discusses the performance of Dom Nery, Bishop of the diocese of Campinas in São Paulo (1908-1920), integrated to the strategies developed by the Catholic Church in the first decades of the 20th century meant to get closer to the Brazilian State, as a reaction to the laicization and anticlericalism that marked the republican regimen. In this sense, the schools associated with the diocese started participating in the civic parades. This proximity included military instruction for their students in close collaboration with the Brazilian Armed Forces.

These three texts show the paths followed by education at that specific moment of the Brazilian nation. They draw the readers' attention to the comes and goings in the establishment of the educational formation processes, highlighting the different processes and contexts of the legitimacy of the educational processes that throw light on the difficulties of attaining the universalization of education in Brazil.

Tarcísio R. Botelho

Department of History

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Belo Horizonte (MG)

Brazil