

Education in the province of Pará, Brazil: from the additional law of 1834 to the report by Gonçalves Dias

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Abstract: Current research, based on reports and speeches of Province presidents in Brazil, between 1841 and 1852, discusses several educational aspects in the Province of Pará during the first decade of the Second Kingdom. The period is highly important since it is the time in which the Second Kingdom was established. The publication of the Provincial Law 97/1841 in the Province of Pará which regulated primary and secondary education in the Province, owing to the publication of the 1834 Amendment, triggered the organization of a proto-system in Education. However, the documents under analysis show that almost nothing changed with regard to the provided instruction. These conditions were corroborated by Gonçalves Dias in his 1852 report which was ordered by the Emperor for an analysis of schooling in the northern provinces of Brazil.

Keywords: education, Grão-Pará Province, Empire of Brazil

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A instrução no Grão-Pará imperial: do ato adicional de 1834 ao relatório Gonçalves Dias

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Resumo: Neste trabalho, com base em relatórios e falas de presidentes da Província, especificamente entre 1841 e 1852, foram investigados alguns aspectos da educação na província do Grão-Pará durante a primeira década do Segundo Reinado. O período tem especial importância para o país porque, antes de mais nada, corresponde aos tempos em que se implantou o chamado Segundo Reinado. Na Província do Grão-Pará, com a promulgação da Lei Provincial nº 97/1841, a qual regulamentou a instrução primária e secundária na Província em razão da emulação resultante da edição do Ato adicional de 1834, foi dado início ao processo de organização de um ‘proto’ sistema educacional. Os documentos investigados, no entanto, atestam que pouco ou nada se modificou em termos da qualidade da instrução ofertada. Tal situação foi confirmada por Gonçalves Dias no relatório de 1852, encomendado pelo Imperador para conhecimento da situação da instrução nas províncias do Norte do país.

Palavras-Chave: educação, Província do Grão-Pará, Império Brasileiro, instrução pública

La instrucción en grão-Pará imperial: del acto adicional de 1834 al informe Gonçalves Dias

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Resumen: En este trabajo, con base en informes y hablas de presidentes de la Provincia, específicamente entre 1841 y 1852, fueron investigados algunos aspectos de la educación en la provincia de Grão-Pará-SC-Brasil durante la primera década del Segundo Reinado. El período tiene especial importancia para el país porque, antes que nada, corresponde a los tiempos que se implantó el llamado Segundo Reinado. En la Provincia de Grão-Pará, con la promulgación de la Ley Provincial nº 97/1841, la cual reglamentó la instrucción primaria y secundaria en la Provincia en razón de la emulación resultante de la edición del Acto adicional de 1834, fue dado inicio al proceso de organización de un ‘proto’ sistema educacional. Los documentos investigados, no obstante, demuestran que poco o nada se modificó en términos de la calidad de la instrucción ofertada. Tal situación fue confirmada por Gonçalves Dias en el informe de 1852, encomendado por el Imperador para conocimiento de la situación de la instrucción en las provincias del Norte del país.

Palabras Clave: educación, Provincia de Grão-Pará, Imperio Brasileño, instrucción pública

1 From disregard to concern: the origins of legislation on education

The 1932 Manifesto of the Pioneers of the New School denounced the establishment in Brazil of “[...] two parallel educational systems, enclosed in watertight and non-communicating compartments, different in their cultural and social aims, and thus constituting tools of social layering” (O manifesto, 1932, p. 40). Quoting the same excerpt from the Manifesto, Carlos Jamil Cury also underscores the existence of “[...] two systems or two opposing networks” (Cury, 2008, p. 1190), whereas in another passage, on the obligation of the State towards the “[...] lower classes [...]”, the same author again highlights the “[...] theory of the two parallel systems” (Cury, 2008, p. 1192).

Cury comments and qualifies as admirable the chapter ‘Guarantees of Civil and Political Rights of Brazilian citizens’ from the Imperial Constitution of 1824 — “[...] acknowledging the right of these citizens to free basic education in Article 179, XXXII”. The author, however, rejects such admiration when he discusses Article 6 which, conversely, denies citizenship to slaves, conceived by the Constitution as “[...] objects, property, goods and chattel” (Cury, 2008, p. 1189-1190). Further, in spite of the originality of the Constitution that established, in Article 179 § XXXIII, that basic education was free for all citizens, and in spite of the 1827 Royal Charter regulating literacy schools, nothing really significant occurred. In fact, nothing happened even during the Cabanagem Revolt period in the Province of Pará between 1823 and 1840. Consequently, the first initiatives for the instruction of the people in the Province of Pará occurred only after the Cabanagem Revolt between mid-1839, and was inspired by Law 16 published on the 12th August 1834, known as the Additional Act of Diogo de Feijó (Brazil, 1834). The only reference to education occurs in § 2 of Article 10 which deals with the competence of the Province Legislative Assemblies to legislate on public education and on school, with the exception of faculties and other higher education institutions.

Precisely at this period Brazil experiences a significant effort to meet its obligation in the instruction of the ‘lower classes’ as a fundamental task within the establishment of its own national identity. Faria Filho (2000, p. 137) states that “[...] as from 1835 and throughout the Empire, the Provincial Assemblies and their Presidents published a significant number of legal texts, inducing us to believe that the legal

standards became one of the main forms of State intervention within Education”. Undeniably there was an intense debate on the education issue in the 19th century in Brazilian provinces on the relevance and the need of educating poor people. On the 1st January 1843, the Emperor, in ‘his speech from the throne’ addressed the Legislative General Assembly of the Empire and referred to this specific theme: “[...] I would heartily like you to dedicate yourselves to these serious matters; including public education and the means to welcome free people who will be useful to the country” (apud Niskier, 2011, p. 138).

However, the conditions of the provinces to implement such initiatives could not be worse due to their low investment capacity in Education and to the few people prepared to face the teaching profession. According to Faria Filho (2000, p. 135), several provinces sometimes “[...] employed more than one fourth of their resources in education but eventually obtained meager results.”

Further, an ideological obstacle was present, or rather, the school was thought to be an unnecessary and disposable good. The same author states “[...] that the school did not have a conspicuous social place, with undeniable legitimacy [...]”. “The State had to put all its authority on Education and gradually underscore the role of the institution in the formation of new generations” (Faria Filho, 2000, p. 135-136). “Lessons normally were given in the teachers’ residence or in other unsuitable places, with a methodology featured by individual monitoring, even if the tasks were developed in classes. Even when the teacher had more than one student, he would teach each one individually” (Faria Filho, 2000, p. 140).

In her analyses on Education during the period of the Empire of Brazilian, Maria Lúcia Aranha (2006, p. 222) highlights the systematization difficulties at primary and secondary levels “[...] due to elitist interests of the monarchy with its total disregard for the education of the common people who predominantly lived in the countryside”. The economic model and the hegemonic ideology of the period excluded Education as a priority. If there were any aim at establishing a national system of public instruction that would meet the interests of the State, it was only wishful thing. After the ill-fated attempt by Parliament to approve a ‘Treaty on the Education of Brazilian young people’ and after the demise of the first Constituent Assembly, the emperor himself published a Royal Decree on the organization of elementary Education on the 15th October 1827. “It was the only one within a century on the subject

and for the whole country, or rather, the establishment of primary schools in cities, towns and villages” (Aranha, 2006, p. 222).

However, it was not compulsory to attend all the stages of the primary level so that the student could pass to high school. Rich people educated their children at home by hiring teachers for that purpose, or they organized family groups and hired a teacher who would work in their own home or in another less adequate place. Schools for the mainly illiterate population were extant in small quantities and totally inadequate for the task.

It may seem a paradox that, as from this specific period, laws and rules on Education started to be decreed right and left. In fact, the interests of the elites were satisfied and the ‘conditions’ for people’s education were established. On the one hand, the proliferation of laws resulted from the total absence of standards on Education in Brazil; on the other hand, there was perhaps the expectation that, through the publication of norms, the situation would change as if by magic. In fact, an effort for the development of activities to this end may be observed, even though budget limitations had to be taken into account. The great amount of laws and regulations on Education might also have occurred due to the short period that Presidents spent in office and due to the establishment of an administrative culture that shunned the continuation of the previous policy: “In fact, reforms in Education were almost always considered and shown in reports by administrators as great political and administrative achievements” (Faria Filho, 2000, p. 137-138, author’s emphasis).

School conditions were the worst possible. Adopted teaching methods in Brazil comprised, among others, the mutual-instruction method (or Lancasterian Method), imported to optimize education and to supply the absence of qualified personnel, but failed. According to Aranha (2006, p. 223) “[...] the failure of the experiment was due to several causes. Large rooms to house a great number of students were not available. In fact, premises were chosen at the spur of the moment and they were not always appropriate”. Comments on this item were already reported by the imperial government in 1830. In the 1833 report, the Minister of the Empire, Viscount of Macaé (1833 apud Sucupira, 2001, p. 59), claimed that the method “[...] failed to present in Brazil the advantages obtained in other countries. Consequently, the Government is not willing to multiply schools where the method is taught, whilst the existing ones will be shut if they do not improve”. Further, in 1835, Minister Lino Coutinho (1835

apud Niskier, 2011, p. 136) declared that “[...] schools using the mutual-instruction method have not produced the expected results”.

In his inauguration discourse to the Provincial Assembly on the 2nd March 1838, the President of the Province of Pará, Soares Andrea (apud Pará, 1838, p. 35-36) remarked: “I am convinced that mutual-instruction has either not proved useful in Brazil or good teachers have not been found. I believe that they may be replaced by two posts in simultaneous literacy in the capital city and the post in Bragança will be extinct”.

With regard to the idea of Education current during the period, hardly anything more than ‘utility’ may qualify it, since aims were restricted to achieve the imperial government’s goals and interests. This is a highly important fact since events experienced by Education in the Province of Pará were synchronized with changes, omitted or materialized proposals, by the Brazilian central government.

2 The law of the province that intended to organize public education

On the 28th June 1841, The Legislative Assembly of the Province of Pará, Brazil, published Law 97, and was signed by deputy president Bernardo de Souza Franco. It provided norms for primary and secondary education in the Province (Pará, 1841). In Chapter 1 (On Primary Education), the law stipulated free basic education for all citizens, taught at schools in two classrooms. The first lessons comprised reading and writing or calligraphy, the Principles of Arithmetic, with a perfect knowledge of the four arithmetic operations involving whole numbers, fractions, complex numbers and proportions, Grammar of the Portuguese language and spelling. The second included the principles of Christian Moral teaching and the Religion of the State, Introduction to Civility, General Elements of Geography, Reading of the Constitution and the History of Brazil. In the case of female students, in addition to the above subject matters, they would be instructed on “[...] the use of the needle, and a half; on embroidery; rules for cutting and making dresses, and other tasks in Domestic Education” (Pará, 1841, art. 3).

School sites would be decided by the President of the Province: “[...] with their definite locality depending on the approval of Legislative Assembly” (Pará, 1841, art. 6). However, if during two consecutive years the school failed to have at least ten students with effective frequency, the

President would transfer it to another place where lessons would be attended by a greater number of students.

Chapter 2 deals with Secondary education and the Law established that it would be developed in Lyceums, featuring two types of courses: Humanities and Commerce. The 5-year course in Humanities comprised Latin, French, Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry; Rational and Moral Philosophy, World History, Ancient Geography, Modern History of Brazil; Rhetoric, Critique, Grammar and Poetics, Bookkeeping and Accounting. The 2-year course in Commerce comprised French, Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry; Rational and Moral Philosophy; World History, Ancient Geography and Modern History of Brazil; Bookkeeping, Accounting and English.

Only one Lyceum, 'Lycêo Paraense', was allowed for the whole Province, in the capital city, "[...] and will exist as long as it will be convenient" (Pará, 1841, art. 11). The Chapter ends by establishing Latin lessons in Bragança and maintained courses in Cametá, Macapá and Santarém. It is highly interesting that the last article (art. 13) recommends the establishment of Teacher Training College in the capital city¹.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to Teachers. The Law determined that there should be "[...] as many primary school teachers as the number of subject matters taught, each receiving an annual salary of 400,000 reis; in the case of teachers in the Teaching College, each will receive an annual salary of 600,000 reis" (Pará, 1841, art. 14). The eight teachers of the High School "[...] will receive a salary of 600,000 reis each" (Pará, 1841, art. 15). There will be three deputy teachers with a salary of 400,000 reis each. The Law warranted a job for life and the post had to be occupied by qualified people.

Entry to the teaching profession would be by a public exam. If at the expiry of the deadline no candidate was available, the President would fill the vacancies with qualified people (Pará, 1841, art. 17). It was also established that no teacher could be fired without a court sentence. He would only lose his job if he was sentenced to the galleys, and condemned for the crimes of rape, kidnapping, adultery, theft or robbery, or by quitting school for more than three months or for habitual negligence in his duties (Pará, 1841, art. 18).

1 A Teacher Training College was established in Pará only in 1871.

The school headmaster may suspend teachers “[...] correctionally for omissions, or small faults, up to one month. In more serious cases, he will file a suit in the local courts” (Pará, 1841, art. 19). After hearing the teacher, the headmaster should first report the suspension measure to the President of the Province who will extinguish the case if unfounded.

Chapter 4 deals with the Director of Public Instruction, established in the capital city with “[...] a salary of 1000 reis provided by the Provincial Treasury, coupled to all things necessary for executing his mission” (Pará, 1841, art. 22). Another important aspect of the law deals with the Board of Education (Chapter 5), made up of the Director and all high school teachers. The Board should suggest improvements, provide regulations and programs, examine candidates for the teaching profession and award prizes to students.

The Sixth and last Chapter deal with several items, such as students’ exam timetable, prizes to be awarded to the most distinguished student, the certificate format (determined by the Council for Public Education), the establishment of the posts of Secretary and servants, both from high school – the first with a yearly salary of 200,000 reis and the latter with a yearly salary of 150,000 reis – coupled to the price of the certificates.

It would be expected that, after the publishing of Law 97, deep changes would occur in the educational layout of the Province. However, dissatisfaction and frustration on what had to be done and was not done were rife.

Speeches of the Province’s leaders giving an account of the purported claims and accomplishments of their managements are the sole references to results harvested after the publication and implementation of the Law. Foregrounded on their reports and speeches, we will forward an education assessment for the Province in the years following the enactment of Law 97 of 1841.

3 Assessment of public education in the 1845 speech

At the start of his report, the deputy President of the Province, Moraes (apud Pará, 1845, p. 9) forwarded a highly critical and pessimistic opinion of public education. Referring to Provincial Law 97 of the 3rd July 1841, he insisted that he would not conceal from the legislators that “[...] the current status of Public Education in the Province is entirely unsatisfactory and that no one expects that things would change in a short time”.

3.1 Schools and Primary Education

Whilst insisting on the descriptive nature of his report, Moraes (apud PARÁ, 1845, p. 10) underscored that, to date, the Province could boast of 42 primary public schools, emphasizing that their goals would not be achieved. Eight lacked pupils and “[...] the other schools had 18 full teachers and 16 interim ones. Moreover, the schools were not only insufficient for the educational needs of all but failed to meet the aims of the educational institution”. He stressed that, although the law established two classes for primary education, each comprising several educational subject matters, school officers did not comply with the rule and ignored such classification and the teaching of the subject matters assigned by law. Further, teachers sent only lists of students’ names with very vague remarks on behavior and frequency, instead of the mandatory names of students, their age, place of birth, progress achieved and other aspects. He concluded on “[...] the ensuing disorder and irregularities” (Pará, 1845, p. 10).

According to the Deputy President’s point of view, ‘the poor state of primary schools’ was primarily the result of the quantity and quality of the teaching staff, mainly due to the Government’s lack of teaching incentives; secondly, the schools’ precarious conditions, particularly the low salaries received by teachers, insufficient for their own livelihood. According to Moraes, the two causes for current situation were lack of school administrators and resources, such as premises, textbooks, books, geography transfers, globes, maps, chairs and desks for the students. He further mentioned that “[...] teachers’ wages were not sufficient for their own subsistence” (Pará, 1845, p. 11). In the wake of his mission in enhancing the cultural emancipation of the people in the Province of Pará, his conclusion on the situation of state primary schools could not be different: “In such conditions, it is not possible that the whole population receives education and knowledge to which it is entitled” (Pará, 1845, p. 11).

3.2 Arts and Crafts School

The speech on the Arts and Crafts School was greatly different. The institution thrived and was an asset for its 107 students “[...] who were literate and knew their sums; they observed their religious duties and the duties of the house they inhabited; they dedicated themselves to the arts and the crafts to which they were naturally inclined. Some of them were so smart and intelligent that they were prepared to work in more than one

job” (Pará, 1845, p. 16). The Deputy President remarked that the students have high morals and stated that the lawmakers would, without any doubt, “[...] have observed the order, cleanliness, seriousness and honesty they have shown themselves in public, which is surely the result of the good education they have received” (Pará, 1845b, p. 16-17).

Moraes praised effusively the Arts and Crafts School and underscored that the enterprise was worthily protected by the Government and by the Legislative Assembly. The former authorized “[...] repairs and refurbishing of the Arts and Crafts School which was in danger of collapsing and, if it had not been immediately taken care of, would have caused high expenditure which the treasury would not support” (Pará, 1845, p. 17). The Deputy President reminded the lawmakers the need of hiring a civil servant to take care of the accounting, enrolment and exit of pupils, material and tools of the workshops and other registers and declarations “[...] which are indispensable for good economy, surveillance and regularity of its workings” (Pará, 1845, p. 17).

3.3 The Home for Orphans and the Home for Abandoned Girls

In Moraes’s opinion (apud Pará, 1845, p. 18), the Home for Orphans and the Home for Abandoned Girls were “[...] an asylum for unprotected innocence, a house of prayer and work and the school of Arts and Crafts proper to girls and for the teaching of domestic tasks”. However, he acknowledged that conditions were not at their best and requested the lawmakers to provide “[...] the means and necessary arrangements for the upgrading of the Home so that it would provide the good things for which it was established” (Pará, 1845, p. 18).

One thing that really worried him was the urgent need for hiring a civil servant as the Administrator of the Home, since Father Salvador Rodrigues do Couto had for a “[...] long time been suffering a lot because of several diseases and the execution of his tasks and obligations had become extremely painful, especially the purchasing of goods and other indispensable objects for consumption and for the well-being of the Home” (Pará, 1845, p. 18).

3.4 The Lyceum and Secondary Education

The report on the situation of public schools was followed by discussions on secondary education at the ‘Lycêo Paraense’, which, due to its aims, had, in the government’s opinion, “[...] the same ailments, coupled to other causes and effects”. Moraes (apud Pará, 1845, p. 11-12)

explains that Law 97 “[...] established two Courses in Secondary Education, Humanities and Commerce, taught in eight classes, with only one vacancy. The others are taught by six full time teachers and one part-time. Two auxiliary teachers are required”.

After listing the difficulties of the Secondary Courses, Moraes (apud Pará, 1845, p. 12) ended his speech by admitting that “[...] in spite of the bad conditions in which Primary and Secondary Education may be encountered, Public Education is progressing as much as possible within present circumstances, if not accordingly”. His conclusion was foregrounded on the fact that there was a considerable amount of students studying and learning the elements of education, unlike in the past when “[...] judges and councilors² had to sign their names by making a cross³, and even today, due to this deficiency, many people who should be on the list of jurors, have to refrain from doing so” (Pará, 1845, p. 12).

Moraes (apud Pará, 1845) underscored his opinion by arguing that, with the exception of private schools, government-run primary schools had approximately one thousand male and female students, whereas secondary schools were frequented by only one hundred and thirty-two students whose most ‘remarkable’ achievements were jobs and occupations and admittance to Imperial Academies. The Deputy President was hopeful that in the near future better prepared teachers will improve the quality of pedagogical work: “In a few years’ time the ‘Lycêo’ will prepare capable teachers; revenues will increase and the means to uphold them and the schools with dignity will willy-nilly be available” (Pará, 1845, p. 13, emphasis added).

Moraes also reminded the lawmakers that, besides public primary schools and the Lyceum, the capital city of Pará, Belém, had three other educational establishments at the expenses of the Provincial Government, namely, the Bishop’s Seminary, the Arts and Crafts School and the Home for Female Orphans and the Home for Abandoned Girls.

3.5 The Bishop’s Seminary

According to the Deputy President’s report, the Seminary’s situation was bad. In spite of an increase in the number of students and

2 Councilors were aldermen or people in the service of the Royal Court. In this case, they were aldermen.

3 In the past, many people signed their names by marking a cross – actually it was a sign of illiteracy.

improvements in teaching and education, its budget “[...] was the same or worse than that in the last report” (Pará, 1845, p. 15). He argued that even though the Seminary Director’s efforts were great, “[...] they were not enough for its betterment, good management and required improvement, and only the indispensable resources of the government propped this important mode of education” (Pará, 1845, p. 15). The cause of the crisis was the low budget for the Seminary which, during the previous year, was less than expenses; debt increased by one thousand reis. He underscored that “[...] in such circumstances, the establishment would not produce more resources and no guarantees exist that it will last for many years to come” (Pará, 1845, p. 15).

As one may see, the critique on public education by the Deputy President Moraes ranged between the Government’s scanty investments and teachers’ conditions characterized by fewness and low quality. Criticism was severer in the case of primary schools than for the other levels of education, even though he admitted that shortcomings also existed. He made exceptions for the School of Arts and Crafts. Due to the exemplary behavior of its students, he insisted that the institution deserved the encouragement of the Government and that of the Legislative Assembly. The High School of the Province of Pará, on the other hand, received a less negative prognosis, even though it had the same problems as those of other establishments. In fact, it had the possibility of producing and training qualified teachers for the teaching job.

4 Assessment of public education in the 1846 discourse

The 1846 speech by João Maria de Moraes at the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Pará, on the occasion of his second term, was quite short when compared to the previous one. Although in 1845, the Deputy President’s report contained 12 pages to explain the situation of education in the Province, the 1846 speech ran to four pages only. After the ordinary introduction, he argued that “[...] among the most relevant tasks in society, the promotion and education of all social classes is, without any doubt, the most useful and important due to its advantages and results, when well fulfilled, since it deals with people’s morality, civilization and increase in wealth” (Pará, 1846, p. 14). However, he discusses the issue and confesses the backwardness in education throughout the entire Province, with “[...] 40 primary schools, a high school in the capital city, the Bishop’s Seminary, the Arts and Crafts

School and the Home for Orphans, maintained by the Treasury of the Province” (Pará, 1846, p. 14).

4.1 Primary schools

The Deputy President of the Province underlined that primary schools still did not comply with the items of the 1841 Law of the Province and the same complaints of the previous year were repeated once again. However, he insisted that the primary schools were successful in the teaching of the most common subject matters, such as reading, writing and simple arithmetic. He informed that schools attended about one thousand male and female students, with private schools catering for another 600. Fifteen schools had full-time teachers, seventeen had temporary teachers and seven did not have any. He explained the most urgent needs: “[...] they need premises, good textbooks and other indispensable tools for teaching; teachers should be paid and should not remain without salaries for months or years; they should be visited and inspected with a certain frequency by the Director or his deputy” (Pará, 1846, p. 15).

4.2 Arts and Crafts School

Moraes said that he had little to add on what he had been informed by the President of the Province with regard to the Arts and Crafts School. He underscored the graduation of twenty-two students, the hiring of a storekeeper and a secretary for keeping records of donations, accounts and bookkeeping of school assets and expenditure. However, these people could not be admitted to their posts due to lack of regulations on norms and duties, which could not be prepared due to several reasons: “[...] besides lack of time and health, [...], in fact, time was close to our meeting and I thought it convenient to wait for your deliberations before dealing with the regulations. Indeed, fifteen deliberations should be taken on personnel, coupled to the regime of the same school” (Pará, 1847, p. 13).

4.3 The Home for Orphans and the Home for Abandoned Girls

Moraes declared that the problems exposed in previous reports still existed. The institution's conditions and needs were the same, affecting negatively if the number of boarders increased. “We may not give haven and education to a few more unfortunate victims of misery and indigence, who knock daily at the door of the Home; due to lack of funds, the doors have to remain closed” (Pará, 1847, p. 13-14).

4.4 High school and secondary education

Moraes classified the situation at the high school as satisfactory. The institution had all the required teachers. Moreover, they were all qualified. He mentioned the Director's report with data on its functioning, students, their dedication and achievements and on Latin classes in the towns of Bragança, Macapá, Santarém and Cameta (Pará, 1847, p. 12-13).

In his 1846 discourse, Deputy President Moraes compared the educational level in the Province to 'childhood, backwardness and poverty'. When his criticism on the lack of resources for public education during the previous period is taken into account, it is not surprising that once more he gave a negative view of the primary school model. However, Moraes referred to several urgent needs, such as premises, textbooks and salaries due to the teachers, but failed to say anything on alterations. The exception was still the high school which, in his opinion, improved significantly and structurally.

5 Assessment of public education in the 1849 speech

Jerônimo Francisco Coelho (apud Pará, 1849, p. 34), President of the Province of Pará in 1849, discussed the importance of education in its several 'modalities' and qualified it as "[...] a strong factor towards happiness, independence and dominance". He considered primary education as "[...] the basis of all education: besides being the first link in the long chain of human knowledge, it is true popular knowledge which everyone lacks for their transaction in civil and domestic life" (Pará, 1849, p. 34-35). Employing the same melancholic tone of his antecessors (even when he underscored 'the obligation and interest of those who administer and make laws'), Coelho states that, in the case of Primary Education, in the Province of Pará and in other Provinces, except in the capital cities, "[...] schooling given to young people, as a whole, is bad, since there are not enough people trained for the professorship" (Pará, 1849, p. 35). In his view, the fact that there were few trained teachers was the result of low wages. Paradoxically, he argued, "It would not be prudent to raise salaries to invite properly trained teachers, since, in both cases, either the expenses go up excessively or wage increase would be conceded to the same teachers without any improvement on their part" (Pará, 1849, p. 35). Similarly, he was skeptical with regard to the formation of teachers in Training Colleges "[...] neither the establishment of Training Colleges in the Province nor their sending to other Provinces for their training. I have already seen the unfeasibility of all these experiences. They are to no avail. They merely increase expenditures" (Pará, 1849, p. 35).

When the President concluded his speech on primary education, he proved skeptical on the possibility of any solution for the issue and declared that he would not discuss any more on teaching system. “Current primary education is below average, till, over time, through population growth and the subsequent enlightenment, further improvements will be possible” (Pará, 1849, p. 35).

5.1 Primary schools

Coelho informed that the Province had 38 primary schools with 977 boys and 3 primary schools with 110 girls. Other data were forwarded, especially on expenses amounting to 15:300\$000 reis in teachers' wages. He calculated that, since the Province had 151,810 free citizens, “[...] approximately 36:530\$000 were still required” (Pará, 1849, p. 36). Another concern was the increase of vacancies for girls “[...] so that each town may have one school for girls. No schools for girls are extant in Macapá, Santarem and Rio Negro. The latter town has been complaining and I think that you should legislate on the issue right now” (Pará, 1849, p. 37).

After briefly addressing the conditions of high school, seminaries and convents, Coelho discussed the cost of students. The central issue was schools' expenditure which, since the town in which they were established had so few students, the costs for their maintenance were not worthwhile. He mentioned the reasonableness of the expenses or their excess for each school level or type. “If you take the trouble in consulting the maps of the school personnel, you will note that the number of students is extremely small in most schools and classes of elementary and high schools when compared to the population of the town they inhabit” (Pará, 1849, p. 38).

While acknowledging that the lack of students was not the teachers' responsibility, he proposed, as a solution to the problem, that teachers were paid on the basis of the number of students and suggested that only children could be considered students who “[...] really frequented classes, or rather, those listed in the monthly reports sent to the capital city by the Director of Education, and in the three-month reports to the towns by members of the town hall and by magistrates of each quarter” (Pará, 1849, p. 39).

5.2 Arts and Crafts School

Coelo was more optimistic when dealing with the Arts and Crafts School (apud Pará, 1849, p. 41). He reminded all of his previous report:

“In spite of the poor state in which the establishment lay and due to the reforms to restore it, I told you that it will not worsen but that it will even prosper”. He insisted on the success of the remedies employed. “The school is currently administered with due regularity. A 10-year-old chaos was replaced by order [...]; further, the school itself produces most of the funds it requires (Pará, 1849, p. 41). He underscored that results were the product of a balance between the school’s expenditure and the possibility of improvement. Coelho then reported on the activities of the 54 students and their respective tasks at the War Arsenal, in the Navy, in public works and within the school itself, namely, 2 tailors, 22 carpenters, 5 chain makers, 2 caulkers, 2 blacksmiths, 3 tinkers, 2 joiners, 4 pulley makers, 4 bakers, 5 locksmiths, 1 lathe operator and 2 without any specified craft (Pará, 1849).

5.3 The Home for Orphans and the Home for Abandoned Girls

According to the President of the Province of Pará, the Home for Orphans and the Home for Abandoned Girls, administered by Father Salvador Rodrigues do Couto, were highly thought of by the people and were funded by the General and Provincial Treasury and by some assets of its own. Between October 1848 and October 1849, the Home harbored 81 students from different social classes, namely, rich people and from the Legislative Assembly. It should be emphasized that, during the 19th century, the Home established to be a haven for Indian, poor and abandoned girls, started to admit young females from rich families. Since the premise became inadequate, Coelho (apud Pará, 1849, p. 45-46) criticized the suggestion of using a segment of a public building and proposed the construction or the purchase of another premise more fitting for its aims. At the end of his discourse, he suggested that the General Government should maintain the Homes, “[...] by obligation or by fairness [...]”, increasing their annual budget from two to six thousand reis, together with a donation of 12 slaves, so that “[...] old accounts, which no one would achieve, could be settled” (Pará, 1849, p. 45-46).

6 Gonçalves Dias’s report and the confirmation of a dual educational system

One of the most relevant documents for investigating teaching issues in the state of Pará during the Brazilian Empire period is the Gonçalves Dias Report of July 1852. The author was ordered by the General Government to visit certain Provinces in the north of Brazil and

investigate “[...] thoroughly all High schools, Colleges, Schools and other establishments, either private or public, for the education of young people, with the exception of the Law Academy of Olinda and the School of Medicine of Bahia” (Dias, 1989, p. 337).

Gonçalves Dias (1989) used a wide set of criteria to report on public education in the provinces. These comprised teachers, substitutions, allowances, salaries, dismissals, suspensions, removals, permutations, teaching methods, textbooks, books, teachers’ work shifts and even their nationality. Owing to its extensiveness, only the most important aspects on the Province of Pará will be presented, always keeping in mind certain specificities so that a better understanding of the period’s educational context could be obtained.

Gonçalves Dias (1989, p. 337-338) gave a positive opinion on the Company of Apprentices of Pará and on the Arts and Crafts School. “In the midst of so many others, seemingly crazy, if not decadent, or when compared to others which are similar, which in other places they are contrasted, since they do not have such a transparent Board Management”. Gonçalves Dias ranked the Province of Pará as fair when he gave his opinion on the different stages in education within the region; he ranked Bahia first, followed by Pernambuco and Maranhão, followed by Pará, after Ceará; albeit at equal ranks, Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte were placed last (Dias, 1989).

Gonçalves Dias also denounced the lack of selection and employment of human resources in education. Foregrounded on conditions in the northern Provinces of Brazil, he claimed greater care for the above-mentioned aspects, insisting that Directors of Studies, due to their posts, may be easily appointed or dismissed, “[...] in spite of their proven capacity and the expectations they raise” (Dias, 1989, p. 339). He also reported that the salaries of other directors, especially in Rio Grande do Norte and Paraíba, were so meager that few people accepted the post; even if they accepted, they could accumulate jobs and little could be exacted from them (Dias, 1989).

Besides these conditions, the effects of abusive decentralization by the government is easily detected, particularly after the 1834 Additional Law according to which the Provinces were totally responsible for education and school within their boundaries. The negative reaction to this legal initiative by those directly linked to education and by Dias himself is well-known. Although contrary to centralization, Dias insisted that “[...]”

in education, nothing, strictly nothing, could be expected from the Provincial Legislative Assemblies” (Dias, 1989, p. 340).

After summarizing, or as he would prefer, ‘the cardinal point of the Report’, already forwarded to the Court Minister, Dias (1989) reported the situation of the different educational institutions in the northern Provinces of Brazil, starting from the Seminaries, followed by High Schools, Arts and Crafts Schools and Charities.

6.1 Training the Clergy

Gonçalves Dias examined the situation of the Seminary in the Province of Pará and discoursed primarily on its physical conditions. Although it was one of the few institutions with its own property, namely, “[...] eight small houses, 25 square meters of land and a yearly income of 900\$ reis”, the Seminary lay in ‘miserable conditions’, due to the Cabanagem Revolt. The report states that “[...] the insignificant repairs still revealed signs of the conflict. When I visited the Seminary in 1851, I found a room for literary activities and some small rooms for the young people: there they slept in threes or fours, according to their age” (Dias, 1989, p. 341). Twelve poor boys were cared for on the premise. There were also 10 choir boys, for which the Seminary received more than 1.000\$ from the General Treasury (Moacyr, 1942). Regarding to other people living in the Seminary, Gonçalves Dias (1989, p. 342) listed “[...] the number of people funded by the Treasury; the number of choir boys, funded by the General Treasury; the aggregated people who waited for a vacancy; fee-paying people; day-boarders with free of charge education”.

The Report is then dedicated to the subject matters studied in the Seminary of Pará, namely, Philosophy, Latin, Rhetoric and Poetics, French, Moral Theology, Choir and Instrumental Music: piano and Plain Chant. Further, other disciplines were taught for the formation of the Clergy, namely, Ecclesiastical History, Moral Theology and Dogmatic Theology, one year for each subject. However, holy orders were conferred at the first stage of the literary course, after the exam on Latin Grammar. The priestly course in the Seminary of Pará had a three-year duration but one might be ordained a priest after only one year of studies (Dias, 1989).

6.2 Formation of the Elites

High Schools, in which the subjects related to secondary education were taught, came next in Dias’s analysis. There was one high school in each province; even though a few existed in the hinterland. Since the latter

were not greatly attended in Pará, according to Dias, there was a motion for their abolition. Subjects taught in High Schools were Latin, French, English, Arithmetic and Algebra, Bookkeeping, Rhetoric, Critique, Grammar and Poetics, Philosophy, Geography and History. The systematic sequence of subject matters was not attended to since they were not distributed over several years. “Every student studies what he wants and how he wants and how he wants (except a variable subordination of subject matters) and thus completing his studies during the time he desires” (Dias, 1989, p. 348).

Dias (1989, p. 348-349) was critical on the priority given to the classical subjects to the detriment of the technical ones.

The greatest impairment in secondary education is its insistence in preparing people for the medical or legal professions [...] If someone desired to introduce in secondary education the study of the Natural or Exact Sciences, such as Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Agriculture and Agricultural Surveying, they would die in the bud since they were not necessary for the literary degrees.

Dias also criticized the method used and “[...] considered it full of defects, since there was neither simultaneity in the teaching of the subject matters nor distribution for the student to conclude their studies within a given period of time” (Dias, 1989, p. 349).

6.3 Education for the people: apprentices

The school workshop for apprentices was another type of institution visited by Gonçalves Dias. These schools prepared young people for specific jobs and coupled primary education with an apprenticeship in a mechanical craft. As explained above, ‘The Company of Young Apprentices of War Arsenals’ in Pará ranked first, along with those in Pernambuco and Bahia. It comprised not only primary education but also Music, with the exception of Drafting, which was also mandatory.

Dias had a good impression of the Apprenticeship in Pará, especially with regard to the young people’s cleanness. The same quality was also noted for the refectories and dormitories. ‘There is discipline and good will’. The Pará workshops comprised blacksmiths, locksmiths, chain makers, tinkers and carpenters. Dias opined that Drafting should also be added to the roll of subject matters. “Since a good teacher of Drafting is

not easy to find, technical drawing may be taught within primary education and given during each subject matter” (Dias, 1989, p. 354).

6.4 Education of the people: poor students

In the Province of Pará, the ‘Home for Orphans’ and the ‘Home for Abandoned Girls’ were ‘Charities’. Poor young boys were admitted in the former to be educated in primary education and to learn a mechanical craft. Dias (1989) found the place “in a decrepit state”: the premises were in ruins; hammocks, beds, cloths, uniforms and shoes for the boys were lacking and described the situation as a quantitative regression of clients. The main causes of such decadence comprised the lack of accountability of the director “[...] to give a monthly account of assets received and the restitution of surplus; in this manner, there is no possibility of saving nor improvements for the students” (Dias, 1989, p. 354).

The Home for Abandoned Girls, funded by the Province of Pará and by the Town Hall, was another issue that brought concern to Gonçalves Dias in Pará. His concern involved the jobs that the girls took after their quitting the Home. He predicted that, if things did not change, their future “[...] would be a new sort of slavery, more drastic than the first, which will take two routes: despair would lead them to suicide or necessity would lead them to prostitution, a moral suicide (Dias, 1989, p. 358).

Reading the ‘Gonçalves Dias Report’, with its data, parameters and inferences, the existence of a dual teaching network seems extant. The Seminaries and High Schools with their ‘classical’ and ‘scientific’ subject matters preparing citizens to be priest, physician and lawyer were a great contrast to the Arts and Crafts Schools and Home for Girls whose aim was to provide a ‘mechanical craft’ to ‘the most unfortunate segment’ of society.

Although Seminaries enrolled poor young men, their structure was selective. They were religious institutions and the selection process was done according to their principles and statutes. As Gonçalves Dias’s report revealed, High Schools were a preparatory learning stage for higher education and demanded clients from the rich classes of the Province. One may note that Dias’s concern focused on the updating of the curriculum due to the lack of professionals in the technical and scientific area and the excessive load given to ‘traditional’ professions.

7 Final considerations or persisting harm

Foregrounded on the information on education in the Province of Pará in the early 1840s, one may perceive that, although there were important initiatives such as the publishing of laws that regulated and organized public education in the Province, the core issues were still rife.

There were references to the failure to comply with the rules, difficulties in the maintenance of the schools, the structure of schools, lack of equipment and pedagogic material, ill-paid teachers and lack of qualified personnel to the teaching profession. These items were part of the daily life of educational administration in the period. It is interesting, albeit tragic, to realize that the President of the Province makes recurring remarks and criticisms on the dire situation of education in the province. If, at the beginning of the period studied, we have the official position that public education in the province was non-satisfactory and despairingly backward, the speeches at the middle of the period under analysis reiterated the dissatisfaction, while its causes impaired development and progress.

A synthesis on the matter reveals that the norm of 1841 was already defunct when published. First, although Provincial Law 97 ruled that primary education was free and for all citizens, the Deputy President's speeches reveal that few schools were extant. In addition, not all subject matters were taught since there were no qualified teachers and many did not have any warrant. No evidence on the success of the mutual teaching method could be perceived from the Deputy President's references.

Another legal item that schools should receive from the Government of the province 'reference books, books, calligraphy tools, globes and maps according to an annual budget approved by the teachers and the Director' was not complied with. Moraes's speeches show (apud Pará, 1845, p. 11) "[...] lack of means and tools to furnish schools as is necessary to fulfill the aims of the Law", or rather, 'backwardness and poverty' were rife, as he admits.

Although the High School of Pará could be considered a rather 'qualified' establishment, it was also criticized especially with regard to subject matters without qualified teachers. Several contradictions may be perceived. According to the Law, the number of primary education teachers should be equal to the number of subject matters". However, reports revealed that teachers were lacking and when teachers were available, they were not qualified. The speech of the Deputy President

shows that the annual budget mandatory by Law was either not paid or paid irregularly. There is no reference to the functioning of the Education Council or the execution of its attributions. Limitation and deficiencies were confirmed in 1852 when Gonçalves Dias made his report.

Cury's statement on the duality of systems is justified. "Overcoming clear, explicit and selective dualism in education would be a slow and painful process due to the equivalence of professional teaching with secondary schooling and the possibility for enrollment in higher education" (Cury, 2008, p. 1193). The situation still persists and there is an absurd similarity between that period and contemporary one. These issues were actually already known in the mid-19th century and after approximately 165 years things are strangely similar. Today we are witnessing conditions and situations that have been occurring during several generations. A logical question is pressing: What are the causes that we have not overcome these limitations and why we still lack the courage to cope with the problem in the 21st century?

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