Comparative Studies in the History of Colonial Education: Considerations on comparison in the Lusophone space

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ABSTRACT:

This paper reflects on the theoretical and methodological issues involved in research into colonial education, within the twofold prism of the history of education and comparative education, in a single linguistic space. It extracts from the work agenda of both disciplinary fields the contributions that allow the conversion of the Eurocentric and self-referenced view of comparative research in education into a set of proposals able to integrate the experiences, meanings and sensibilities of the *other* in *the same* plane of analysis. The reflection has the purpose of suggesting paths to identify new research problems integrating comparative methodologies in the analysis of colonialism, according to a cultural perspective. It also suggests themes of discourses on education — pedagogical models, mechanisms of socialisation, construction of the pupil, formation of identities, subjects and the curriculum, school temporalities, etc. — all around the same empirical question, i.e. the *School* in the colonial context.

KEYWORDS:

Comparative Education, History of Colonial Education, Lusophony, Theory and Method in Colonial Education.

The reconciliation of history with comparison: new scenarios for the history of colonial education

Despite the difficulties in integrating the historical perspective in the field of comparative education[1], the fact is the latter has been gaining ground in the area of the History of Education (Nóvoa & Popkewitz, 1992; Nóvoa, 1995a, 1998, 2000 and 2001; Nóvoa & Schriewer, 2000; Schriewer & Nóvoa, 2001). In tandem with this new impetus has been a renewed interest in comparison by anthropology and sociology (Santos, 2002; Bastos *et al.*, 2002), and comparative research in the history of education has aroused the interest of an increasing number of Portuguese researchers (Carvalho, 2000; Carvalho & Cordeiro, 2002; Correia & Silva, 2002; Correia & Silva, 2003; Rufino *et al.*, 2003; Correia & Gallego, 2004; Nóvoa *et al.*, 2002 and 2003; Madeira, 2003, 2005). The written production has above all arisen out of participation by the Portuguese scientific community in national and international meetings, which is largely due to the collaboration established between the History of Education Section of the Portuguese Society of Education Sciences and the Brazilian and Spanish History of Education Societies, as well as some of their European counterparts (Nóvoa & Berrio, 1993; Nóvoa, 1995a; Nóvoa *et al.*, 1996; Fernandes & Adão, 1998; Catani, 2000; Nóvoa & Schriewer, 2000; Veiga & Pintassilgo, 2000; Xavier, 2001). The participation of a team of researchers from Lisbon University in the Prestige network also constitutes an opportunity to enlarge analysis of the development processes of the school model in the Portuguese-speaking world in Portugal — Brazil — Mozambique[2].

In the field of colonial education studies, the main contributions have given rise to the writing of masters' thesis in several disciplinary fields (Paulo, 1992; Castelo, 1998; Jerónimo, 2000) contributing towards the demarcation, through its scientific pertinence, of a field of research that has been almost entirely constructed in Portugal. This despite the recent collective works that have been published within the scope of the studies on Portuguese expansion — originating in the field of economic and social history, sociology or anthropology — in which there is an obvious attempt to cross studies on colonialism with studies on the history of colonial education more intensively (Bethencourt & Chaudhuri, 1998; Bastos *et al.*, 2002; Ramalho & Ribeiro, 2002). As for Brazil, the considerations expressed by researchers from the educational field have led to fertile academic production in the scope of the Brazilian history of education, using theoretical frameworks similar to the approaches of cultural history. Less expressive, meanwhile, has been the presence of the colonial in studies on the history of education, which is still far from earning a place among the preferred areas of study of Brazilian historians[3].

With regard to the use of comparative approaches, the dynamics of research into the history of education in the Portuguese-speaking world is still tenuous, but is taking its first tentative steps. In a recent study, the Brazilian researcher Clarice Nunes listed

some of the difficulties underlying the establishment of comparative research in the Brazilian context, outlining the main constraints holding back development in the History of Education (Nunes, 2001, pp. 53-71). The author points out the predominance of national studies, the persistence of the developmentalist paradigm and the theories of human capital to compare the evolution of the various educational systems and the tendency to carry out global summaries of a descriptive character, illustrated through the statistical instrumentation produced by the international bodies. As well as these issues there is a set of methodological problems related to the comparison work in the area of socio-historical studies: space-time definition within the scope of the research, issues relative to the definition of the documental *corpus*, construction of the comparison dimensions and concepts, relation of the researcher with the object of research, etc. In addition to these problems, if we think of the amplitude of the filed, the necessity for interdisciplinary knowledge and the costs of materials, bibliographies and documents involved in comparative study, it is not difficult to understand the scarcity of the contributions made in this research area.

Her explanations show that the problems facing comparative study are similar on both sides of the Atlantic. This is why the intensification of co-operative relations between academic institutions by integrating the countries that share a common language and history with Portugal constitutes an exceptional opportunity to analyse the expansion process of the European school model in colonial settings. The identification of these difficulties, and even tensions, in the field of comparative education has been the object of analysis for numerous researchers who have sought alternative meanings for comparative work, seeking through an epistemological critique to surpass the ambiguities and to rebuild the potential of this disciplinary area (Khôi, 1981; Pereyra, 1990 and 1993; Garrido, 1987 and 1993; Schriewer, 1993; Nóvoa, 1995b, 1998 and 2001). These ambiguities in essence involve aspects related to the history of the constitution of the field itself: the existence of relational thinking and *prior* "practices of comparison", which are often *outside* the formalisation of a systematic theoretical-methodological reflection in education; the coexistence

of these practices with an *interventionist* educational rationality, associated with the collection of samples and their importation to contexts with very different socio-cultural and economic characteristics; and a *discontinuity* between the theoretical reflection work within the scope of sociology and the history of education and the production of comparison devices, complex to a greater or lesser degree, driven by the need to legitimise the subject of comparative education as a field of autonomous production of knowledge.

All of these aspects obviously refer to the areas of problems and not the syncretic obstacles. It is a question of trends and patterns of functioning of the field which, here and there, are crossed by contributions that break out of the methodological limits established. As such, given the amplitude and depth with which it has already been tackled by other authors (Altbach & Kelly, 1982b and 1986; Burns & Welch, 1992; Van Daele, 1993; Nóvoa, 1995a and 1998), we herein do not propose a critical summary of the history of the field. The consequences of these discourses for a historical cartography on comparison are widely documented (Nóvoa, 1995b, 1998), outlining the main constraints and tensions in building the field, and in turn the alternatives to overcome them. What is intended in this paper is precisely to recover this agenda of contributions that allow the conversion of the Eurocentric and self-referenced view of comparative research in education into a set of proposals able to integrate the experiences, meanings and sensibilities of the *other* in the *same* plane of analysis. It is a reflection on the conditions that make it possible to build a working programme between Portuguese and Brazilian researchers regarding education, within the twofold prism of historical comparison and the space occupied by the same language.

RESHAPING THE FIELD OF THE HISTORY OF CO- LONIAL EDUCATION: THEORETICAL AND METH- ODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

We are living in a complex historical time full of contradictions, albeit enthusiastically rich in theoretical provocations and fertile in alternative contributions. The new shaping of knowledge, "in archi-

pelago", suggests a reticular situation "that does not postulate a common origin or accept any hierarchy, whether natural or functional, of knowledge". This is one of the most decisive effects of the post-modern condition: "the waning importance, even the loss of the object, of centralised, branched or pyramidal conceptions of knowledge" (Caraça, 2003, pp. 175-6). This observation by a physicist, developed in a field that is traditionally associated with the "pure" conceptions of science may surprise even the most radical of historians. It is a fact that the emerging paradigm, whose transition has reached the various social sciences in different ways, heralded some decades ago the reconciliation of the historical sciences with other fields of knowledge that use different methods and strategies, namely anthropology, philosophy and sociology of the sciences. Facing this changing paradigm has not been an easy task, either for historians in general or for the history of education (Nóvoa, 1995a, p. 33; 2001). The sharing of this temple of knowledge with other theories and methods constitutes nevertheless an indispensable stimulus to question, in the light of new approaches, the phenomena of the educational field, in the past and in the present. It is not a question only of approaching them from an interdisciplinary perspective, but to reshape the field using theoretical and methodological transgressions that create alternative modes of construction and analysis of new cultural objects situated in the colonial/post-colonial continuum.

In effect, within the scope of the new history, the most recent developments seem to evoke the revolutionary effects that almost thirty years ago the notion of "mentalities" introduced into the post-Annales historiography (Le Goff & Nora, 1974 and 2000). These developments, which were produced outside the scope of historiography through the influence of authors such as Foucault, Derrida, Ricoeur or Habermas, were accelerated to a large degree by the differentiated appropriation of the concept of "discourse" in the analytical instrumentation of intellectuals such as Paul Veyne, Roger Chartier, Mark Ginzburg, Michel de Certeau or Antoine Prost. As had happened with the notion of "mentalities", whose incorporation led to the shifting of interest to themes as varied as the body, feelings, the

private life, festival, death, etc, the notion of "discourse" also stimulated a new shift, based on a new conception of document, transferring the analysis centred on contexts to the texts. When he states that "il n'y a pas de hors texte", Derrida attributes it a wide connotation that includes, in addition to the books, works and discourses, with their conceptual and semantic content, a whole set of systems of thinking and social and political institutions with which they are articulated (Derrida, 1967). *Archaeology* (Foucault, 1969) and, subsequently, *genealogy*[4] (Foucault, 2001a) are two other central concepts that define a methodological commitment with this new approach of the documents making it possible to re-think all the historical work. In the history of education field, the issues introduced by the archaeological method enable the reshaping of intermediate spaces of comparison, leading to shifts in the themes of the fields of analysis and the construction of new objects. In the spatial plane, frameworks have been defined crossed by multiple discursive productions; in the thematic scope attention has been transferred from social history to cultural history; in the domain of objects, the groups, 'authors' and practices neglected by the history of ideas have been brought to the historical research.

The reflection of these reconfigurations to the field of the history of education has allowed analysis to be more attentive to the internal functioning of the school, the design of the curriculum, the formation of school knowledge, the organisation of everyday activities, the experiences of students and teachers, etc. (Nóvoa, 1995a, p. 34). Meanwhile, these new themes have also enabled different actors and a wide range of material sources to be taken on board. Children, women, youths, teachers, pupils, "learners", inspectors, pedagogues, etc, are the chief characters in a configuration of discourses produced around the questions of the school, education, civilisation, identity, subordination, 'subjectivation', domination, etc. To analyse them the documental choices have been widened to include all the *monuments* available: literary works, laws, texts, narratives, records, buildings, institutions, regulations, objects, customs, techniques, etc. (Le Goff, 1974, 2000). Finally, the methodologies have become more sophisticated to embrace the treatment of the different discursive methodologies contained in the texts: quantitative

and qualitative methodologies and comparative methodologies. This methodological perspective, which frees the history of ideas from the shackles of its origins and the representations of the subject-narrator; which opens the documental materiality to a diverse range of documents; which stresses the discontinuity of the discourses contained in the *monuments,* also heralds a new research programme for the history of colonial education.

Historical explanation therefore abandons the totalitarian and totalizing intentions, opening up to the understanding of a world of discontinuities and ruptures (Foucault, 1998). The dynamics of this discontinuity allows the constitution of *spaces of dispersion* — frameworks in which games of relations, disagreements, strategies, contradictions and specificities co-exist — and frameworks of *positivities* — groups that reflect ideas, choices and strategies that allow a defined set of projects to be shaped (Foucault, 1969, pp. 19 and 237). It was these ideas — presented in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) regarding the rules of archaeological description and in *Monitor and Punish* (1996) about the analysis of "power-knowledge" relations — that most contributed to the building of an entirely new field of research into the analysis of colonial culture. Foucault made it clear that through description of the archive, i.e. through description of the set of rules that, in a given time and for a given society, defined the *limits* and the *possibilities* of the discourses — in its forms of disclosure, of conservation, of *memory*, or reactivation and appropriation — it was possible to free the discursive field from its historical-transcendental structure imposed by 19th-century philosophy (Foucault, 2001b, pp. 701-725).

As a simplifying reference point for the entire project to delimit the practical field which encompasses the conditions of birth, disappearance and silencing of discourses, this idea is central to analyse a set of problems: What propositions that are destined to enter into the memory of men (through ritual recital, through pedagogy and through teaching)? Which are repressed or censured? Which individuals, groups and classes have access to a given type of discourse? And how is it possible to process the battle for its appropriation among classes, nations, or linguistic, cultural or ethnical communities? In effect, with the definition of a framework of knowl-

edge in which "the subject who knows, the objects to know and the modes of knowledge are the effect of the fundamental implications of the power-knowledge pair" Foucault revolutionised the approach to questions concerning 'power' and its historical transformations. In the field of colonial studies, children, schools, and the colonised population are core aspects of this machine through which the relations of power give way to a possible knowledge, in which knowledge itself redirects and reinforces the effects of power (Foucault, 1996, pp. 30-31).

The questions of power and analysis of discourse that interconnect colonial questions and the history of education are also associated with the development that emerges from linguistic turn and cultural studies. These new critical positions influenced by post-structuralism in turn feed a body of perspectives labelled post-colonial studies. It is precisely within this theoretical scope that Edward Said published, in 1978, the work *Orientalism*, which is considered the founding text of the field of studies dedicated to analysis of the colonial discourse, clearly outlining the convergence of these various stimuli in the structuring of a new view on the cultural questions of colonialism. The challenge of E. Said, entirely dedicated to the analysis of the relation between culture and imperialism, a project continued in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), stimulated a large group of authors who came to the fore as a consequence of the work carried out by the *Subaltern Studies Group*. This was a heterogeneous group of researchers, both with regard to the emphasis that guided the analysis of the colonial discourse (e.g. the psychoanalytical perspective of Bhabha, the decontructionism of Gayatri Spivack, or the feminist focus of Chandra Mohanty) and with regard to the theoretical approaches that lived alongside the post-structuralist criticism (e.g. Marxism). This diversity did not prevent, nevertheless, convergence on a central theme: the need to analyse the narratives of the colonial meeting as the result of a process of registering the visions and representations concerning the *other* from the assumptions of the traditional illuminist historiography. Deeply aware of the Manichaeism built by the Western narratives, this *other* is not only seen as one of the poles of the coloniser-colonised dichot-

omy summarised in the us-others equation. On the contrary, the colonial discourse is considered, in itself, a complex and contradictory manner of representation that implies both the coloniser and the colonised. Countering the binary oppositions, the post-colonial theories argued that the colonial context should be looked upon as a space of "translation" (Bhabha, 1985, 1994a, 1994b, 1997), a hybrid place that is not either a *one* or *other*, a "third space" of identity, discontinuous and ambivalent which creates a new political subject: the colonised subject. On the other hand, this built identity — "identity in the difference", Guha would say — is also defined from the crossing of individual experiences with local contexts and the colonial institutions, namely the *School* (Guha, 1982). The forms of appropriation of school culture, the relation with the colonisation language, the interaction of the forms of "native" knowledge with the cultural cannon of the pedagogical texts are crossed with other aspects related to the economic-social development and the social stratification of the dominated groups, whose results according to the *Subaltern* create extremely wide-ranging situations (Loomba, 1994, 1998).

Notwithstanding the central idea according to which the subject is the product and not the actor of history, it is surprising to see the impact that the approaches inspired by Foucault had on the history of colonial education, above all when we see the way they were appropriated by authors situated in such a wide epistemic framework. Researchers such as Engin Isin (1992), Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose (1990) sought in the theories of translation, inspired by sociology of science, to stimulate proposals to understand the mother country-colonial articulations (Callon & Latour, 1981; Callon, 1986). According to these authors this articulation is put into practice through *mechanisms of translation* which, in establishing connections among very different entities (institutions, sanitary and educational authorities, regulations, values and ambitions, individuals and groups) enabled the exercising of a government of the citizens "at distance" through the mediators-specialists — local doctors, teachers, inspectors, governors (Rose, 1999, pp. 48-51). This appropriation of the concept of *translation* is fundamental to understand the contradictions, increasingly exploited by post-modern colonial his-

toriography. And it clearly illustrates the kind of epistemological reflection and theoretical sophistication characteristic of the reticular way an attempt is made to reshape the knowledge in the field of historical-cultural analysis of colonialism.

Another example of the new historiographic guidelines is the work of Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, whose main theme resumes the crucial issue regarding the presuppositions on which the categories of western knowledge and historiography are based (Young, 1990). Young believes that the analysis of colonialism allows the shifting of the theory-history debate moving it to a question on the implication of the history and theories in the very historicity of European colonialism. The fundamental text, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Cooper & Stoler, 1999) represents one of the best examples of this new conceptual eclecticism, bringing together contributions from the field of feminist studies, post-colonial theories and the proposals of the new colonial anthropology. Concerns about the economic consequences and policies of European colonisation (namely in the background of the British and French empires) are also tackled, but are looked at from the perspective of the tensions, conflicts and contradictions of the various projects that link the European centres to the colonial peripheries. However, the most important aspect of these contributions has perhaps been to confer visibility to questions usually ignored by traditional historiography, of a cultural and social order, namely those linked to gender, the construction of identities, processes of educational hybridisation, the influence of missionaries on socialisation, etc. It is noteworthy that this work is one of the rare applications of the theoretical instrument of post-colonial analysis of concrete empirical situations. As such, it is an indispensable tool for the systematisation of comparisons with regard to topics as wide-ranging as gender, sexuality, racial frontiers, colonial architecture, the models of maternity, the domestic space, the production of knowledge, informal education, the missionary models, etc[5]. Indeed, the cultural aspects have absorbed the attentions of other authors who have worked on issues concerning the colonial meeting in an historical perspective

(Colonna, 1975, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991, 1992; Thomas, 1994; Cooper, 1994; Williams & Chrisman, 1994; Conklin, 1997; Gruzinski, 2003). This dynamic clearly illustrates that the shaping of the scientific discourse around questions of colonial culture is increasingly interested in rewriting the history of the coloniser-colonised meeting centred on a more in-depth analysis of the contexts and experiences of colonisation, focused on defining the specificities of this meeting based on voices silenced by traditional historiography.

Comparative studies in history of colonial education: some considerations on comparison in the Portuguese-speaking space

We go back to some of the questions we mentioned in the first point, concerning the difficulties underlying the establishment of comparative research in relation to the Portuguese-Brazilian context, given that they are inserted in the Portuguese-speaking space. The terms, *lusophony* (Portuguese speaking) and *lusophony space* (Portuguese-speaking space) were tackled in greater depth in another paper, and we therefore outline here the understanding we arrived at regarding their operability as scientific concepts (Madeira, 2003). When we refer to *lusophony*, we want to delimit the space occupied by the diversity of Portuguese language speakers, not strictly as an official language, but as a "language of inter-understanding". The Portuguese language is considered the vehicle through which one registers (or not) in the people who participate in it, the discourses (or the silences) about the *us* and the *other*, the narratives of construction of the "imagined identity", the correct forms of its utilisation and its deviations, values, representations and forms of knowledge that allow a community to refer to a group of ideas, knowledge and practices. It is therefore a dynamic understanding of the Portuguese language, which is not seen only as an instrument of cultural diffusion (linked to its institutionalisation as the dominant language) but as a social phenomenon of cultural transformation (linked to its social appropriation as the colonisation language).

According to this assumption, the sounds of *lusophony* construct meanings (and register absences) for those that participate in its differentiated appropriation, writing models and ways of being, thinking, feeling and doing in these groups, in specific temporalities, i.e. a hybrid culture, ambivalent and at times ambiguous. It is this linguistic space made up of identities and differences that the *theoretical knowable field* of our specificity refers to, translated in the literature, texts and historical narratives resulting from the colonial meeting and in the corresponding post-colonial elongations. Closing this aside on the understanding we propose of *lusophony*, and returning to the words of Foucault about the *limits* and *possibilities* that archaeology lends us, we can say that these points of resistance to the historical-comparative studies in education are located around two key areas: space-time questions and theoretical-conceptual questions. If we consider these two major areas of problems in the framework of an approach to the history of colonial/post-colonial education, we demarcate a set of possible questions that call for alternative explorations.

Work in the history of colonial education has focussed on the domain of the periods studied, the demarcations of the political chronology. In Brazil for the colonial period, the studies have concentrated on the work of the *Companhia de Jesus* and the reforms carried out by the administration of the Marquis of Pombal in the second half of the 18th century. In Portugal, work on the action of the State and the Church in the pre-colonial period has been prevalent in the study of the African colonies, with little work in the colonial period from the end of the 19th century to the mid 20th century. The period of the New State is without doubt, the most enticing period for historians of colonial education, which is understandable given the greater availability of sources of organised documents. Maybe for this reason the majority of the historiographic production in the history of colonial education encompasses the objects of analysis based on the demarcation of political benchmarks, ignoring the autonomy of the educational field with its specific marks and with its own temporalities. This insistence in demarcating the educational phenomena based on political facts raises an essential question: the question of knowing what perspective the researcher adopts in selecting the multitude of facts with which he or she

wants to work. As Marc Bloch and Antoine Prost stress, each historical object matches a specific period, and cumulatively each series of phenomena has its own time interval (Bloch, 1960, pp. 93-94; Prost, 1996, p. 119). Hence the delimitation of political periods underpins a reading of the facts of education based on the political facts "shackling" the reading of the cultural and the other dimensions that are connected, albeit not exclusively, to the educational phenomena. Therefore a history of critical colonial education will have to insist on the creation of its autonomous objects and problems, of its specific contexts and its own time periods, interconnected (but not subordinated) to the events that traditional history usually celebrates based on political happenings, economic cycles or social turmoil. It is worth recalling that some recent contributions (Paulo, 1992; Castelo, 1998; Carvalho & Cordeiro, 2002; Correia & Gallego, 2004) have emphasised the permanence of the educational discourses of actors that transverse the Monarchy, the Republic and the New State, making it obvious that the political ruptures do not necessarily imply discontinuity in the educational field. These ruptures, identified based on new sources, or on the reappearance of these sources in the light of new methodologies, have made it clear that the points of discontinuity are closely linked to the transformations related to the phenomena of the educational field or school culture themselves. In effect, the institutional configuration of the school temporalities is systematised in different contexts and scales of implementation, such as the organisation of teaching work, the school subjects, the discursive construction of the pupil or the activities of the academic timetable (Hamilton, 1989).

Meanwhile, with regard to the exercising of comparison in different spaces we find two opposite situations concerning the scale of the research. These are two dimensions of historical analysis whose articulation has proved difficult to conciliate. On the one hand, there are numerous projects that focus on institutions, teaching practices and educational processes restricted to geographical areas or even to specific locations, whose results tend to be linked to national processes or even extendable to the set of colonial territories. These are

micro-historic perspectives, labelled *case studies*, whose results are often generalised to the whole of the national territory or the various colonies. On the other hand, the dynamics of schooling and teaching have been viewed in a relation of polarisation between the mother country and the colonial guidelines, stipulating a relation of central-peripheral dependence with regard to the processes of construction, diffusion and incorporation of the educational projects of the State at colonial level. A macro-analytic linear relation and continuity is therefore postulated between Portugal and Brazil, especially up to independence of the latter in 1824, and on the other hand between Portugal and the African colonies, as a homogenous colonial space, in particular between 1890 and 1930-40. The approaches that analyse colonialism from the cultural point of view and the work produced by the *subaltern studies group* encompass huge potential for the historical understanding of the processes of transfer, appropriation and production of discursive practices about education between the mother country and colonial contexts, both for the colonial period and the post-colonial period. They transfer attention to the importance of analysing the dissemination of models of European education and schooling in a non-linear perspective, of monolithic transposition, but in which some traits are appropriated and others transformed in accordance with interpretations and adaptations carried out in the different contexts. Several studies have indeed pointed out a wide range of schooling configurations in colonial spaces as different as Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Mozambique or Brazil, in relation to the institutional dynamics, school models and universal structures of socialisation, supposedly similar in all zones of the "Empire" (Muacahila, 2003; Carvalho, 2004).

From the perspective of analysis, the work in the history of colonial education has kept in step with the traditional historiographic tradition, seeking answers to educational questions in the action of the State or the Church, considered the two main subjects of education in the colonial context. Usual objects of study include the organisation of teaching systems, the educational policies and projects of the State, the laws produced and the educational

reforms, the education statistics and the confirmation of the educational backwardness based on the investment in schooling of the colonial populations. The action of the Church is usually devalued in relation to the action of the State, because it is considered an obstacle to the illuminist ideas and progress that began with the liberalism, and later with the Republic. Yet the State and the Church are not the only actors in the colonial cultural *performance*. Curiously, the reading of educational phenomena that is attentive to the relations established between the different groups of individuals and involving other actors (collective or institutional) has been left to researchers who use historical inquiry in other disciplinary fields, namely in sociology or in anthropology (Silva, 2002; Gruzinski, 2003). In these works it is the women, mixed race individuals, slaves, and missionaries who play the main role in the research. The incorporation of these new actors has many advantages to aid understanding of the colonial meeting: they identify the plurality of perspectives, world views and life experiences that cross in the African and South American Portuguese speaking countries; they stress the *processes of translation* underpinning the formal discursive productions produced under educational domination at the mother country or even colonial level; they strengthen the understanding of the discontinuities between the discourses and the practices, the tensions and the contradictions of the processes of "governing at distance" (Rose, 1992, 1999); they clarify the subaltern identities construction process; they situate the dispersion of the power/knowledge effects incorporated into the *mechanisms of subjection* of the colonised subjects, etc. The role of theses actors who are given a voice, the vestiges of which (ignored or silenced) were not considered relevant by the traditional historiographic perspective, raises questions about the themes and problems of comparative work in colonial education.

The choice of new objects implies new themes. Without doubt, the theoretical provocations in which we are immersed give rise to innovative ways of shaping the problems of cultural phenomena that surround the colonial meeting. In the case of *lusophony*, this "major question" remains to be answered related to the incomplete and fragmented

way the language was established in formally sanctioned writings in mass schooling, and it should not be forgotten that this 'incompleteness of the language' coexisted with the political geography of the peoples colonised by the Portuguese. What factors and phenomena are behind this reproachful "educational backwardness" by all the peoples that Portuguese culture reached? But there are plentiful other perplexities that only now are we beginning to tackle. For example, the question of the inter-identities provided by the coexistence, in a space of colonisation, of abundant cultural references linked to socialisation, to civilisation and to progress of the colonised people (formal/informal schooling; public teaching/missionary teaching; catholic missionaries/protestant missionaries/Koran schools; systems of transmission of knowledge/schooled processes of incorporation, etc). These are old questions that need to be reviewed with another view, with new approaches, with other theories.

Perhaps the critical review of the ideas of *luso-tropicalism*, was the object of knowledge that most contributed to the renewal of the whole area of questioning the colonial discourse. It allowed, in turn, other themes (and objects of research) to be brought to the light of day. It revealed the mechanisms of passage of discourses through books, school textbooks, everyday school life, teaching practice and through all the *monuments* at the service of western domination. In these *monuments* one finds discursive productions registered related to the pedagogical discourses (philosophical conceptions, political concepts and social values), to the pedagogical innovations (teaching techniques and strategies), to the scientific knowledge (hierarchies, classifications, distinctions and taxonomies) and to the western cultural values (freedom, autonomy, civility, citizenship). On the other hand, these adaptation mechanisms produce localised , "indigenised" and hybrid answers which can only be understood by focussing on the everyday problems, the experiences lived by the actors, and the institutional cultures that are relatively restricted to the processes of schooling-training.

It is impossible to escape regarding this point, the circulation of the process of theoretical elaboration regarding these new objects. This will inevita-

bly result in reflection of the concepts (of the pupil, teacher, school culture) so as to get round the conceptual anachronism and the naturalisation of representations that make it difficult to grasp the meaning of learning in the colonial context. Therefore, and with regard to the formal categories of analysis in the history of education (pupils, teachers, school, curriculum) it is indispensable to reflect on the consequences they acquire in the colonial contexts. The "pupils" — a category of analysis that itself unifies a class of individuals in the mother country context — acquire extremely hybrid meanings in the colonial contexts. It is sufficient to think that the fact that the schools belong to different ethnic, linguistic and class origins does not enable the "pupil" to be viewed as a homogeneous category, with identical characteristics in each of the spaces of colonisation. The same can be said of the "teacher" actor. Also here the diversity, even the antagonism, of the training courses, experiences, world views, representations on education, cannot be neglected by the researcher. Indeed, while the questions of gender only recently have begun to be worked on, we should also add the experiences related to the exercising of the teaching profession in the colonial context: missionary teachers, teachers coming from training schools from the mother country, military teachers, secular priests, girls' mistresses, etc.

In effect, the *lived experience* concept (Habermas, 1993, pp. 95-99) enables the school experience to be faced (of the pupils and teachers) in the colonies not only as a passage through School in another territory, but as an experience of contact with *another School*, in a context with considerably different time and spatial spans, in the colony and the mother country. When we talk about the schools of Tete (in Mozambique), of Santa Catarina (in Brazil) or of Bissau (in Guinea-Bissau) we are not talking about the same *School* situated at different latitudes. What we have instead are variations of a modular configuration interpreted in different space-times. The geographical difference answers this *Other* School with its own temporalities (schedules, rhythms, timetables and rituals); the school is the *ABC* lesson, the school is the workshop, the school is the church, the school is the territory of the mission); with the overlaying of the paths, knowledge and experiences of its inhabitants (skilled teachers, missionary teachers, European teachers, military teachers, indigenous teachers, etc.).

A historical-comparative perspective is therefore called for to exercise added vigilance within the scope of the operational concepts of the research. The representation of the concept of *School*, as a homogenous entity, linearly transposed and crystallised in the representations of European tradition has to be contested. In a colonial environment there must be a listing of the *Schools*, identification of the types of formation, the modes of learning and the types of curriculum that characterise them. It is under this scrutiny that the meaning of the concepts can redirect the production of conceptual equivalents (teaching systems or parallel teaching practice systems, coexistence of informal or non-schooling teaching methods with the transmission of knowledge about school, etc.). This plane of observation that fluctuates between observing the major processes of dissemination of School models and their appropriation updated by groups with particular cultural characteristics also has consequences as regards the sources.

In relation to the sources, the concern in building up a homogeneous documental *corpus* seems to have influenced the choices of researchers. Most of the work tends to give preference to the written and official sources issued by the State or the Church, or alternatively those that have been produced as part of the activity of certain educational institutions (seminaries, colleges, congregations, municipalities, teacher training schools, teaching establishments, etc.). In these cases they are sources produced with very particular aims, naturally connected to the official discourses of a regulatory or prescriptive nature, and which are very important to ascertain the "formal" discursive dimension with regard to education and teaching in the colonial context. But only for this dimension. For intermediate dimensions of comparison work the new cultural history encompasses a wide set of materials that should be considered for reading of the colonial meeting. For these domains of analysis, more attentive to the question of experiences lived, of the silenced discourses, of the parallel and non-schooled processes, one cannot ignore the analysis of materials as diverse as confidential statements

and reports, correspondence, literary narratives, iconography, class diaries, orders for school material, etc. These are the kind of materials, constituted as sources, that allow the construction of intermediate frameworks of comparison, either using non-explored data or re-reading the same sources using alternative interpretative methods.

A final word on the relation of the subject with the object of research, a compromise that, from the traditional history-science point of view, denies the teacher-researcher the distance required to produce new knowledge. It is obvious that this view is not independent from the relations that are established, on the one hand between the *subject* and the *object* of research and, on the other hand, between the meanings of appropriation (*individual*), the different codes of socialisation (*collective*) and the legitimisation mechanisms (*institutional*) in which the researchers carried out their work (Silva, 2003). These relations shape ways of perceiving and build their own representations about the educational phenomena that condition choices with regard to the type of tools that are used to analyse them. This is why the inclusion of an ever increasing number of researchers, marked by different experiences and training paths, can help overcome some of the impasses that comparative research has come up against. Participation in networks of projects defined according to complex frameworks, but clearly demarcated, will allow the intertwining of the globalising theoretical discourses and the localised

processes of appropriation, the different experiences of the subject with the same object (Wacquant & Calhoun, 1989). It is a complex challenge in which the different fields of relations articulate with one another, namely of a cultural order, of an epistemological nature and linked to the constitution of the scientific communities in different spaces:

"Today we know or suspect that our personal and collective life paths (as scientific communities) and the values, beliefs and prejudices that they transport are intimate proof of our knowledge, without which our laboratory or archival research, our calculations or our fieldwork would constitute an entanglement of absurd processes without any direction or course. […] In the emerging paradigm, the autobiographical and self-referral character of science is freely admitted. […] Therefore another form of knowledge is necessary, a comprehensive and intimate knowledge that does not separate us but rather unites us personally to what we study." (Santos, 1988, p. 53).

Indeed, if these relations were considered as an integral part of a set of *empirical questions* maybe it would be possible for us to situate this knowledge that unites us to what we study. Perhaps it is then possible to unburden ourselves from concern with questions of "method" so as to move on to the perspectives of research; subordinate the debate of the "great" theories to the conception of intermediate frameworks of comparison; separate analysis of the practices of the subject to analysis of the discourse regarding these same practices.

1. In one of his latest contributions on the art of the field, Andreas Kazamias pointed out this issue, stating: "The social scientific metamorphosis of comparative education in the 1960s and after, may have enlarged and enriched its epistemic landscape. But it has done so at a high epistemological cost, namely, the virtual abandonment of one of the unifying elements of the field: *the historical dimension*" (Kazamias, 2001, p. 440).

2. The Prestige programme (*Problems of Educational Standardisation and Transitions in a Global Environment*) was a project funded by the European Union aimed at the consolidation of networks of researchers and university centres in the field of comparative education. Coordinated by the Stockholm University team, also participating in it were the universities of Bourgogne, Complutense, Humboldt, Oxford and Lisbon. The Lisbon University team established networks of cooperation with the Eduardo Mondlane University, in Mozambique, and with São Paulo University, in Brazil, and published the Prestige Booklets as a consequence of this collaboration, in order to disseminate to the scientific community the research work produced within the scope of the network. The book "The World Dissemination of the School" (Nóvoa & Schriewer, 2000) delimits the theoretical and methodological presuppositions of the comparative work undertaken.

3. In effect, among the 231 abstracts accepted for communication at the 1st Brazilian History of Education Congress in 2000, only six focussed on themes related to education in the colonial period (Xavier, 2001, p. 223). In recent meetings the proportion of works on the colonial period, in relation to all the papers registered or presented, has not surpassed 3% (Fonseca, 2003).

4. Cf. "Nietzsche, la génealogie, l'histoire" (Foucault, 2001a, pp. 1004-1024).

5. The articles by Anna Davin, Ann Stoler, Susan Thorne, Nancy Hunt, Gwendolyn Wrigth, Fanny Colonna and Luise White (Cooper & Stoler, 1999) illustrate precisely the force with which the colonial studies reflect a strong presence of analysis carried out based on feminist perspectives and how the different perspectives are leading to the emergence of new themes and objects of research (See in the same publication the articles by Homi Bhabha, John Comaroff and Frederick Cooper).

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