

**INSA CONFSSIONAL SCHOOL, SALINAS/MG: MEMORIES OF A CIVILIZING  
PROCESS FOR GIRLS**

***ESCOLA CONFSSIONAL INSA, SALINAS/MG: MEMÓRIAS DE UM PROCESSO  
CIVILIZADOR DE MENINAS***

***ESCUELA CONFESIONAL INSA, SALINAS/MG: MEMORIAS DE UN PROCESO  
CIVILIZADOR DE NIÑAS***

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**ABSTRACT:** The proposition consists of interpreting as memories of formation and civilizing relations of the girls students at the Instituto “Nossa Senhora Aparecida” (INSA) Salinas-MG (1951-1972). The INSA was founded in 1951, and its organization was supported by the Clarissas Franciscanas. The study is situated in the field of memory (HALBWACHS, 2006), oral history (PORTELLI, 2016) and theories of civilizing processes (ELIAS, 1993; 1994). It is a qualitative approach in which former students of the Institute were interviewed, their evocations made us understand that the educational figuration presented characteristics of a civilizing process of girls that was constituted through the modeling of habits and behaviors through traditional and political-cultural practices. We consider that the memories revealed are a model of formation at INSA connected to a social organization, to which they were educated for civilization, and disciplinary in contexts of gender inequality and subtle orientation.

**KEYWORDS:** Memory. Confessional school. Civilizing process. Customs. Woman.

**RESUMO:** *A proposição consiste em interpretar as memórias de formação e de relações civilizatórias das meninas estudantes no Instituto “Nossa Senhora Aparecida” (INSA) Salinas-MG (1951-1972). O INSA foi criado em 1951, sua organização contou com a ação das freiras Clarissas Franciscanas. O estudo está situado nos campos da memória (HALBWACHS, 2006), história oral (PORTELLI, 2016) e das teorias dos processos civilizadores (ELIAS, 1993, 1994). Trata-se de uma abordagem qualitativa em que foram entrevistadas ex-estudantes do Instituto, e as suas evocações nos fizeram compreender que a figuração educacional apresentava características de um processo civilizador de meninas que se constituiu por meio de modelagem*

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*de hábitos e comportamentos através de práticas tradicionais e políticas-culturais. Consideramos que as memórias revelam a formação no INSA conectada a um modelo de organização social e civilizatória: as alunas eram educadas para demonstrar sutileza, delicadeza, obediência e disciplina em contextos de desigualdades de gênero e de orientação católica.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Memória. Escola confessional. Processo civilizador. Costumes. Mulheres.*

**RESUMEN:** *La propuesta consiste en interpretar las memorias de formación y relaciones civilizatorias de las alumnas del Instituto "Nossa Senhora Aparecida" (INSA) Salinas-MG (1951-1972). El INSA fue creado en 1951, y su organización contó con la acción de las monjas Clarisas Franciscanas. El estudio se sitúa en el ámbito de la memoria (HALBWACHS, 2006), la historia oral (PORTELLI, 2016) y las teorías de los procesos civilizatorios (ELIAS, 1993; 1994). Entrevistadas antiguas alumnas del Instituto, sus evocaciones nos hicieron comprender que la figuración educativa presentaba características de un proceso civilizador de las niñas que se constituía en el modelado de hábitos y comportamientos a través de prácticas tradicionales y político-culturales. Consideramos que las memorias revelan la formación en el INSA conectada a un modelo de organización social y de civilización, los estudiantes fueron educados para demostrar sutileza, delicadeza, obediencia y disciplina en contextos de desigualdades de género y orientación católica.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Memoria. Escuela confesional. Proceso de civilización. Costumbres. Mujeres.*

## Introduction

This research, inscribed in the History of Education area, addresses assumptions in a specific context of a group of former girl students. The educational activity of formation was promoted by teachers/sisters belonging to the Catholic Church, a fact that brought unfoldings in school education in Salinas, a city located in the north of Minas Gerais. The study covered the period from 1951 to 1972, considering the creation, implementation and operation of the first junior high and high school in that town.

The *Instituto Nossa Senhora Aparecida* (INSA) was created in Salinas/MG in 1951, a confessional school directed by nuns from the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Its mission was the teaching of first letters, junior high and high school, the latter, in principle, for the formation of schoolmasters. The formation of this school was permeated by the propagation of customs, values and educational principles of civilization, a reality that we take as an object of analysis for the unveiling of social, educational, cultural and political plots.

In Salinas, glimpsing the expansion of education by formal institution, the Franciscan Congregation was sought for support, since it was already recognized for the missionary work and dedication performed on behalf of education with teachers intellectually seen and respected, the Franciscan Poor Clare nuns. The sisters were esteemed for dedicating themselves in initiatives to common goods, with actions of struggle and persistence from pedagogical practices cultivated to teaching by religiosity and moral customs.

As a methodological strategy our research took as historical sources oral history and life history interviews of former students of INSA, documents from the institute's collection, informative and pedagogical printed matter. The sources were analyzed considering specific theoretical conceptions from the field of memory studies (HALBWACHS, 2006), oral history (PORTELLI, 1997, 2016) and the theory of civilizing processes (ELIAS, 1993, 1994). Thus, this article appropriated memories of former students aiming to interpret the formation and civilizing relations of girls graduated from INSA Salinas/MG (1951-1972). The oral testimonies were fundamental evidence for the analysis of civilizing actions in the tensioning between past and present, between memory and experience (PORTELLI, 1997, 2016). The interviews were conducted taking into account themes that start from the life history of the subjects. We started from a chronological perspective and focused on the girls' schooling at INSA - Salinas.

The narratives revealed an interdependence between the schooling of girls with the movements of social control produced in the figurations in society. We pondered the educational formation of girls in the relationship with Franciscan Poor Clare nuns, having as perspective the Eliasian studies, specifically when Norbert Elias (1994) addresses the issues of civility regarding the behavior of people living in society, articulating the mechanisms of shame and behavior to the changes of social processes. In his work "*The Civilizing Process*", Elias (1994) makes reflections on posture, gestures, facial expressions and clothing, in order to treat the manifestations of individuals as a whole, in figuration of instructing the human being to that, making him cultured and close to social excellence. That is, human relations concern the interdependencies established among people, coexistence groups, and institutions, causing changes that involve a social-historical context.

The concept of civilizing process concerns changes in people's psychic structures (psychogenesis), in interdependence with changes in social structures (sociogenesis). Changes in individuals entail driving greater internalization of social controls and distinguishing their emotional controls from their experiences. This means change in how the individual acts, feels,

and relates to others in the world. This is a processual civilization produced socially, because, considering that no human being is born civilized, the civilizing stage to which he or she is submitted is a social exercise of the civilizing process itself, in progress for a long time. This civilizing action takes place, with greater or lesser rigor, with attitudes that model civilized individuals to live the standardized norms in society. It is a process that must proceed, adopt postures of ideas, standard of virtues, morals and customs produced in society (ELIAS, 1994) - a role also assumed by institutions, among them, the school.

For Honorato (2017, p. 114, our translation),

Although the school institutions were not part of the central concerns of the Theory of Civilizing Processes, in his masterpiece, *The Civilizing Process*, Norbert Elias (1993; 1994), when elaborating the stages of development of a civilization, allows us to systematize: 1) the educational processes, institutionalized or not, have centrality in any civilization, this because there is a constant that is the learning of behaviors, both at the individual and social level, transmitted from one generation to another, and may become a habitus (second nature); 2) the formulation and incorporation of educational values as habitus imply effective changes in conduct and feelings towards a specific direction, greater social control and self-control of the emotions of individuals; 3) the (self)control of emotions, as well as of popular and scientific knowledge, foments a growing process of individualization in society, and this process started to be increasingly enhanced and ensured by specific groups and institutions, in this case, the school; 4) the schooling of individuals became then obligatory, and, thus, in the structuring of modernity, the regulation of elementary knowledge was monopolized by the nation-state as one of the foundations of its existence, as it happened with the legitimate control of the use of physical force and tax collection.

In this way, for analysis, we unite Eliasian concepts and empirical research, having as reference the experiences of former students of a confessional school created in the 1950s in the north of Minas Gerais, the *Instituto "Nossa Senhora Aparecida"* (INSA) of Salinas. The research was carried out through memory studies, in order to interpret the evoked memories about the formation of students from this institution, by means of oral history and life interview of five women, born between 1940 and 1955. They bring back their memories regarding the education they received at INSA, in terms of habits, behavior and moral values. These women studied at the institution between 1952 and 1972, and bring back memories of collective and individual school experiences. One of them studied in a boarding school regime, the others in an external regime. Thus, for a better understanding, we will trace a history of memories of INSA.

## Memories of a confessional school, the *Instituto "Nossa Senhora Aparecida"*

Already said Halbwachs (2006), the human being brings with him ideas and feelings originated in groups, which populate in thoughts with other beings, such as places and circumstances. There must be many points of contact between individual memories for collective memories to be recovered on a common axis. In turn, Elias (1993) states that education, civilizing and formative processes, are constituted in the relations of life practiced in human figurations, such as social groups.

In 1951, the *Instituto "Nossa Senhora Aparecida"* (INSA) started its activities in Salinas/MG with the status of a Nuns' School, just like its counterparts in the countryside and in the capital Belo Horizonte, in the state of Minas Gerais. The Institute aimed to meet the need for schooling at that time and territory, with education as part of a process of modernizing and civilizing people through schooling.

The school was governed by the Franciscan Congregation, specifically by nuns connected to the order. The founders were four sisters, Narcisa Chamone - superior, Maria Elias Chamone - secretary/director, Maria Piedade Guimarães - treasurer, and Elizabeth Freitas - teacher. They had among their propositions to strive to improve the standard of living of the population in its deficiencies, and the chosen path was school education. The main purpose was to promote female education, with the primary goal of educating the needy youth. To this end, free education for the disadvantaged class was only possible with the help of the better off, those who could afford to pay for school.

At that period, in the Brazilian context, liberal ideas were taking space and spreading - such that a renewal in the Catholic church would be necessary. "Thus the Church also intended to slow down the advance of non-Christian, anticlerical ideas that were spreading throughout the country. A large contingent of religious men and women launched themselves into the battle to re-Christianize the masses" (RODRIGUES, 1986, p. 52, our translation). The Catholic school of Salinas was then the means of action to defend the doctrine and propagate Christian customs and values. It had as aspirations the "daughters of the people", the most deprived youth, and consequently, the whole society. However, due to the lack of its own financial resources and public investment, the service was reversed.

INSA attended girls in three formats: boarding school, day school (in the modalities of paying and scholarship) and orphanage (attendance to needy orphan girls) with free education. The ideological orientations of the Franciscan Congregation in the schools were oriented to a "[...] solid Christian formation, habits of piety, examples of prayer and life, according to the

teachings of the gospel, besides, of course, the intellectual instruction" (RODRIGUES, 1986, p. 53, our translation).

Each period of history has its socially constructed civilizing demands (ELIAS, 1994). In the 1950s, the INSA religious and teachers took over all the curricular subjects, even because they understood that in the locality there were lay people unprepared to take over the classes. And even if there were academically qualified people, it was not in the Catholic Church's interest to hire them for reasons such as: the salaries that would overload the school's finances, the school that needed to establish itself before hiring them and, not always, these possible teachers to be hired were practicing Catholics. Thus, the nuns took over all the chairs (RODRIGUES, 1986). They engaged in this educational work by imposing a spirit of obedience, discipline, respect and compliance to customs, values and moral conduct. By this core, the school was understood as a regenerating center of the values of civility in society.

According to Freitas (1994), in the 1950s, education was marked by a process of ideologization of political, cultural, and educational practices. A reorganization of the capitalist production mode was underway, and the school became an instrument of social control, of economic development, and of maintenance of a certain fraction of society. Thus, it was necessary to train the students for certain occupations, the education of an elite for the molds of an education with social ascension that comprised primary, vocational and secondary school. These characteristics are very similar to the educational context of the INSA in the same time frame.

INSA was a school created by the Catholic Church at the request of politicians, merchants and wealthy men living in Salinas/MG, with the support of the community. There were political and developmental aspirations, however, it was necessary to maintain an organization and control that would not put at risk the values, customs and moral precepts desired by the most favored groups. To meet these aspirations, the school had to be created in a discourse that it would be a relational place for everyone. In this sense, the partnership with the Franciscan Congregation was well aligned, and its precepts were to attend those who were at a greater social, cultural, and economic disadvantage.

INSA was created as a private institution, the girls to be enrolled would have to pay for these services. As published in the Extract of the Statutes of the "Nossa Senhora Aparecida" Institute of Salinas, in the newspaper Minas Gerais, on October 04, 1951:

Art. III - The establishment, which will constitute a juridical personality, is private, Catholic, functions in its own building, and is directed by the same Congregation of the Franciscan Poor Clares of the Blessed Sacrament.

Sacramento, which in Brazil has its principal office in the city of Belo Horizonte (INSA, 1951b, p. 4, our translation).

There was a price table to be charged for the studies of the enrolled students. The values were adequate according to the student's situation (internal or external). Until then, the resources collected were exclusively for the maintenance of the school, because the religious did not receive salaries.

NOSSA SENHORA APARECIDA GYMNASIUM  
SALINAS – MINAS GERAIS

ANNUITY BOARD

BOARDING SCHOOL

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th grades..... Cr\$20.000,00

EXTERNAT

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th grades..... Cr\$6.000,00

Sister Maria Elias do Coração de Jesus, Principal. Izidoro Bretas, Janitor (INSA, 1959).

In return, the school received some needy girls who earned their education through the orphanage and others on a boarding school basis. In exchange, these non-paying students helped in domestic chores, maintenance and general services of the school.

This evidence is revealed in Francisca's memoirs (2020):

*The school was fee-paying and I couldn't afford it. So I looked for my baptism godfather, who paid the admission fee <sup>4</sup> for me. And when I went to register for high school I couldn't afford to do it either [...] I wanted to study and I couldn't afford it. I was still a child, when I was 11 years old, I went to the sisters. The sister who attended me was the school secretary at the time, Sister Benigna, already deceased. She was my history teacher in the admission course, and when I went to her, she said: "No, I will not leave you without studying! Because I was very studious [says with emphasis]. "You will do the registration, when you can, you will pay me back" (laughs). I said: "Okay. I don't know when I will be able to pay you, because my mother works to support the house... and I come from a very humble family. And she said: "No problem, I'm telling you whenever you can".*

The account shows Francisca's (2020) yearning for education, she was aware of her real situation and the economic conditions of her family. Still, she was aware that, in order to achieve her dreams and have a different, promising life, the path would be through education, study, and graduate as a teacher. We notice here a process of formation that was operating in our society and that provoked in human beings a social restlessness, a feeling of desire to belong to

<sup>4</sup> Admission Exam - functioned as a selection test, instituted through the Reforma Francisco Campos, in 1931. It was in effect until 1971, and was mandatory for public schools, which made access to junior high and high school education more difficult.

this world under construction. The structure of the Salinense society was in transformation with the arrival of INSA, thus, we recognize that "these forms of emotions are manifestations of human nature in specific social conditions and react, in turn, on the socio-historical process as one of its elements" (ELIAS, 1993, p. 152, our translation).

It cannot be denied that the Franciscan Poor Clares tried to help some students, however, we know that few had this help. To expand this service, it was necessary to have a larger number of paying students, more nuns to teach, more help from society for the purchase of teaching materials, among other needs.

The Minas Gerais newspaper, in the same publication cited above, publicizes the act of regularization of INSA's operation in Salinas/MG. Furthermore, it shows the profile of the students to be trained by the school, and summarizes the ideal woman model for that society. In this way, it makes public in its article II that the formation would be given in an integral way, taking into account the physical, intellectual, moral and devotion to the church, family, society and the Homeland.

EXTRACT FROM THE STATUTES OF THE *INSTITUTO NOSSA SENHORA APARECIDA DE SALINAS* (INSA, 1951b)

Art. I - The Instituto Nossa Senhora Aparecida, founded in the city of Salinas, Minas Gerais, by the Congregation of the Missionary Clares of the Blessed Sacrament, on March 1st 1951, to function for an undetermined period of time, will have the above mentioned name and will consist of a nursery school, primary school, junior high school, orphanage and home school.

Art. II - The Institute has the purpose of giving female youth an integral education: physical, intellectual, moral, civic, artistic and religious, in order that its students become capable of fulfilling faithfully, with devotion their duties towards God, the family, the society and the Homeland.

Art. III - The establishment, which will constitute a juridical personality, is private, Catholic, and functions in its own building. Sacramento, which in Brazil has its principal offices in the city of Belo Horizonte.

Art. IV - (illegible)

§1. The members of the Executive Council shall be determined by the Mother General or her representative, in agreement with her council.

§2 - It is the responsibility of the director to represent the Institute in and out of court.

Art. IX - In case this work is extinguished, its patrimony and goods will revert to the benefit of the Parish of Saint Anthony in Salinas.

Montes Claros, September 18, 1951. - (a.) Antônio, Bishop of Montes Claros. (B. 3.644 – T. 5734)

(INSA, 1951b, p. 4, our translation).

The content published in the Extract of the Statutes of INSA (1951b) highlights that the formation of the students in the institution would be restrained by a strong Catholic education.

The training was intended to prepare the girls for religious devotion, to be virtuous young women in society and at home, in order to demonstrate an example of respect and dissemination of good manners. These elements are close to the studies of Elias (1994), when he says that changes in personality influence the social context over the years: there are differentiations and modifications in human customs according to the social formation of the moment.

In Francisca's recollections (2020), these issues are evidenced:

*It's because we really learned [emphasis], we prayed! I, as a boarder in the school... We got up early, they [the nuns] got up at five o'clock in the morning to recite the litany, after the litany we [boarding students] had already woken up, we first went to mass, after mass we went to breakfast. And after breakfast we would go to the classroom. So... We prayed the rosary every day, morning and evening. It was really prayer, besides the spiritual retreats we went to. It was a very strong religious education that we had.*

The formation of the girls was based on a consciously Catholic position; there was a pattern of religious society that wanted to secure and expand its faithful. Moreover, in the light of the Eliasian studies, there is criticism that children had to learn as if they were small adults, because they were seen as actors who would continue the customs, traditions, values, and social moral conduct of their generation (ELIAS, 2001, 2012).

### **Schooling at INSA: training and civilization of girls**

The former students of INSA had individual and collective life trajectories; in the formative process, some elements are remarkable in the experiences of school routine, particularities demanded by the characteristics of historically and socially constructed relations in the context of Modern Pedagogy<sup>5</sup> and the Home School. Among them, we point out the issues of gender, class and power relations that, according to Eliasian studies, are interdependencies of the civilizing process of individuals in society. The socio-historical panorama presented in this study led us to think about how the educational and interactive relations took place in the coexistence groups, with emphasis on the history of school life, teaching and learning of women in INSA.

The focus is on the schooling received by girls who had the Franciscan Poor Clare Nuns of the Blessed Sacrament as their teachers. All of them attended the gymnasium and the normal

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<sup>5</sup> John Amos Comenius is the forerunner of Modern Pedagogy. He advocated an education that interpreted and extended the experience of each day and used classical means such as teaching religion and ethics. The curriculum should be enriched by including music, economics, politics, history, and science. It strengthens the conception that man is capable of learning and can be educated (COMENIUS, 2011).

course at INSA between 1952 and 1972. In view of this, what interests us here are the memories of these women in their schooling process in the aforementioned institution. We have chosen to highlight the civilizing processes from the relations marked for feminization, behaviors, customs and moral values practiced in teaching by the nuns in a domestic school perspective. In this way, we selected some points of this interdependent relationship of the formation of girls present in domestic education for the instruction of molded behaviors, intuitioning their inclusion in life in society.

The founding sisters of INSA brought experiences from their formation and from their work in other Catholic institutes, colleges linked to the Congregation of the Franciscan Clarissary Missionaries of the Blessed Sacrament, to implement them in Salinas/MG. The Nuns College grew in fame and in the number of students. Parents wanted their daughters to have an excellent, Christian education and solid professional training. Thus, "the strictness of the regulations drawn up by the Director did not frighten, because her person exerted a strong attraction on parents, teachers and students. They noticed that her severity was united to a good, firm, affectionate heart, really dedicated to the formation of her students" (RODRIGUES, 1986, p. 56, our translation). The school's regulation brought the following duties to be fulfilled:

Art. VI - About the authorities

§ Respect for authority is an indispensable condition for the formation of character, and all students are required to respect the constituted authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil.

§ 2 - The role of authority is not to curtail freedom, but to guide it towards the good, correcting its abuses. For this reason, the students will consider your teachers and Superiors as friends, and will obey them promptly, avoiding the spirit of murmuring and rebellion.

Art. VIII - Every year there will be a spiritual retreat for all the pupils (INSA, 1951a, p. 19, our translation).

There was a relational power in the organization of social life and in the maintenance of the Catholic Church objectified in INSA. The education of the girls had to be based on power relations with the authorities, who were considered to be people with greater power gradients. The authorities were not to be questioned, the whole teaching had to be accepted as knowledge and control mechanism to be internalized, containing the most intimate impulses. It was up to the pupils to comply with the regulations and, thus, the school had a regulating and severe character of behavior. School timetables were determined and should be strictly followed, it was a process of regulation not only in the girls' school life, but also in their social life.

According to Elias (1993), children are placed in a civilization process based on behaviors produced by social groups. In what concerns the education of girls by INSA, we

notice an effort so that the ruder habits, the looser and uninhibited customs were softened, polished and civilized. The education of the girls permeated the field of domestic activities, in which women were placed in the position that they were born to be housewives, wives and mothers. They were also assigned behaviors to serve the Catholic faith and politeness in social habits. These factors appear in Luana's (2019) evocations when she recalls her student days at the Institute:

*Goodness gracious! Nobody was disrespectful. The sisters were like that... [pause]. You had to see how firm they were. They were not only concerned about culture and discipline, but also about religiosity, religious education. If there was any problem, they called the parents.*

In the power relations with the authorities, the girls were with lower power gradients, therefore, they should follow the hierarchical ordinances. They, as women, were placed in a condition of invisibility and social subordination to faith, being responsible for expressing affection and fragility. Otherwise, in a veiled way, they were trained for a role of invisibility and devotion. The configurations of this formation presume to avoid any kind of conflict; they seek a balance of sovereignty.

We understand INSA as a perspective of demarcation of civilizing power, a movement that aims to control the students' behaviors through the process of interdependence marked by human relations in the context of the educational establishment. In this perspective, we bring to analysis the following memories:

*The sisters were demanding, too strict! Today I would never accept the things they imposed. For example, they didn't accept anyone wearing nail polish at school. One day I went to school wearing nail polish, as a child, and they scraped my fingernail with a razor to remove the nail polish because I couldn't go to school wearing nail polish. Nobody could go to school wearing nail polish, if they did, they would scrape it off with a razor. So, we already knew that we couldn't go to school with nail polish and nobody dared to do it anymore. The school routine was like this: there was a queue in the courtyard, where a nun was in charge of managing the entrance and checking that the uniforms were appropriate. We would line up in line, it had to be correct and so on. On Monday we sang the National Anthem and the Salinas Anthem. (SIMONE, 2020).*

Civility behaviors directly linked to religious conducts are observed, such as obedience, discipline, and the precepts that women could not express themselves through the body. The education received defended the idea that the young girls should adopt an exemplary behavior, in order to preserve their innocence, building good manners and morals. In view of this,

"according to whether the habits acquired are good or bad, a profitable or harmful education will have been achieved" (BACKHEUSER, 1958, p. 37, our translation).

Simone (2020) reminds us that the woman should adopt a modest posture, she was not allowed to announce joy and charm from her body. This would be to approve a kind of typically feminine appearance of poverty and social misery, seen as a danger to good manners and moral values. It would be the same as opening the doors to behaviors that could lead the girls to a dissolute and scandalous life. We understand these behaviors from the historical context of that time, since it was a way to practice the religious civility defended by the sisters. The formative process of the girls operated to not allow changes in the power relationship, avoiding attitudes conflicting with the vision of civilized women according to the ordinances of the Catholic sisters of INSA.

We are taught all the time to respect and use socially accepted rules, such as the correct way to sit or greet someone. These are attitudes and movements that sound strange to us in the 21st century, however, they were materialized in a certain period and context. In turn, Eva (2021) brings in her memories:

*We never had vacant classrooms as we have today, when a teacher was absent, one of the nuns would go to the classroom and teach us everyday things. Every time I go to the bathroom to pee, I remember them [smiles], because they would say: "You can't make noise when you pee! [laughs] "To go up the stairs with a boy, you go up in front and come down in front. But, like this... [pause] Those things they were teaching us, talking to us.... It was a wonderful time.*

The teachings of a specific behavioral and emotional structure for women are registered. Considering the reflections of Elias (1994), we infer that, in the supposed good society, there is an outline of a woman to be accepted by herself. Nevertheless, Eve (2021) considered that time as "*wonderful*". The training attributed excessive importance to the woman's behavior in private enclosures, where it was up to her to show restraint in her physiological needs and social behaviors. Eva's recollection (2021) presented a demarcation of inequality in the formation process of the girls, a gender issue is evident, of differentiation in the actions between the female and male sexes.

The nuns conducted a formation in order to civilize the girls, guiding the regulation of some personal conducts and moral customs. A woman making noise while urinating put her in an impolite condition and shameful exposure as a social pain. Thus, good conduct guided that it was necessary to avoid making noise when urinating, this should be done politely and without drawing attention, a habit to be developed in civilized corporeality.

A woman needed to be refined, polite, soft-spoken, and well-mannered. Otherwise, she was considered a person without good manners, culture, or education. In addition, she could be considered a person who wanted to attract attention to her body or even dispute the space occupied by men. Walking ahead of the man was a way to demonstrate that the woman should be protected by him and that she was in the condition of the fragile sex, demarcating the virility of the male sex. A sexist demarcation that placed the woman in a condition of possession, and thus, she could not be courted, admired, or desired by another boy. Francisca's memories (2020) also express this behaviors:

*They [the nuns] had a very strict moral and religious formation for us, the behavior of sitting down, the laughter that some girls kept giving, that too strong laughter, they said it was scandalous. We had to be more restrained with our words, with our attitudes, it is in this moral point that I speak. [...] The demand that there was was zeal. For dating, they told us not to keep passing it from hand to hand, to date one today, another tomorrow... They taught that this was not adequate.*

For Bassanezi (2002, p. 610, our translation), women in the golden years were "Sometimes seen as naive or dangerously inconsequential and dazzled, there was a great fear that the young girls would stray from the good path, moral education and vigilance were necessary. In this cultural clash and in the defense of values, the female sex was in a historical position of submission and gender violence. There was a whole involvement so that the woman was silenced and invisibilized (SARAT; CAMPOS, 2017).

In the forming conception of INSA, the well-educated, refined and civilized girl needed to demonstrate a behavior based on the self-control of pulsion that would guide her actions in social life. This was a sign of distinction that separated one social group from another considered inferior, it was understood that people from "cradle" had education and good manners. It was not decorous for a woman to sit the way she wished. Laughing was an act of discourtesy, and if she chose to flirt with more than one guy in a short period of time, she would be exposing herself to society and could be "badmouthed".

These issues can be read as decorous and/or indecorous conditions expressed by the body, concepts about the behaviors that could be accepted or not by society. In the social specificity of Salinas/MG, in that period, it was about the civilizing process itself. And the INSA was a figuration for concrete changes in the students' behavior and the propagation of conservative actions in society to avoid "uncivilized" attitudes. On the other hand, unquestionable rules were still in circulation, such as organization in lines and impeccable dress of the uniform.

*The nuns forbade us to use face painting, they didn't accept it, there were some [students], those naughtier ones (smiles), they put on more discreet makeup. They [the nuns] were very demanding, you know? The skirt had to be the right size, if the skirt was a little above the knee it was not accepted. It had to be below the knee, three-quarter stockings... We had three uniforms, one for physical education, another for daily use, and the gala uniform. The gala uniform was the uniform we wore for special events, like the Sete de Setembro parades, parties... This was with short socks and black social shoes. Now, the daily uniform was with three-quarter socks, a white blouse, and a pleated navy-blue skirt. But I couldn't wear any adornments in my hair, nothing. Everything was always very simple, you know? (MARIA, 2021).*

There were instructions for expected behaviors and morality in the education of female students. "It looked bad on a young woman's reputation, for example, to wear very daring, sensual clothes, to go out with many different boys or to be seen in dark places or in a situation that suggested intimacy with a man" (BASSANEZI, 2002, p. 612, our translation). In evoking her memories, Maria (2021) presented notes of a somewhat conservative and regulating civilizing process. The girls were required to adjust their behavior, their clothes should be well-behaved, they could never show an inch of their legs above the knees. The nuns made rigorous reviews of the students' clothing to ensure their power gradients and the repressive control of attitudes considered deviant or promiscuous. The idea was the regulation of behavior, control and self-control over themselves and their actions in the social figures. At a given moment of the interview with Eva (2021), she reported facts that express these aspects:

*In my class there were many "leggy" girls who would hike up the waistband of their skirts and put their skirts way above their knees. This was only until they got to the school. Once, one of them came in and forgot to lower her skirt, when her sister saw... She [the sister] came in and took the hem of the skirt and tore the entire hem of the skirt. When she tore the hem of the skirt, by putting force to it, the skirt came down and even a little below the knees, because it was rolled up (laughs).*

The "educative" way of the nuns operating on transgressions, disrespect for rules and prohibitions was an exacerbated act in the regulation of customs. Moreover, the actions were directly linked to the issue of repression. Girls were censored in such a way that disobedience to social rules determined who would not fit into the ideal of a good girl, wife, and mother. It was not by chance that in the school curriculum there were the disciplines of Manual Work, Home Economics and Childcare (INSA, 1951a). This was precisely the social space of women, the space of domestic work under the background of social controls that articulated feminine roles and attitudes properly historical, hegemonically standardizing modes and customs

unbalanced in the "balance" of power moved by the relations between different genders, especially between boys and girls.

Figures 1 and 2 present the behavioral characteristics related to clothing reported by the interviewees.

**Figure 1** – Independence Day Parade in 1960



Source: Maria Elza Sarmiento's personal archive (1960)

**Figure 2** – Procession and coronation in celebration of Our Lady of Aparecida in 1960.



Source: Maria Elza Sarmiento's personal archive (1960)

There was a certain rigor in the organization of the students in parade figurations. The girls were positioned in rows, with their bodies erect in order to demonstrate attention and concentration on the tasks they had to develop in the context of a public presentation. In figure 1, the uniform skirt was at knee height - as reported in the interviews - and the blouses had long sleeves, so that most of the body was not exposed. In figure 2, besides these characteristics, the clothes were white, in order to reflect purity, and the flowers in the hair expressed docility, fragility, femininity, and delicacy. Still, the clothing of figure 2 also expressed devotion and Catholic faith, because they were practicing a religious ritual.

The modes of behavior have different social origins. In the case of INSA, in particular, they were a result of the social destiny in which the woman would be inserted, with a modest and docile attitude, and impeccably fitting the prototypes of good morals. In this sense, Cardozo and Honorato (2020, p. 149, our translation) argue that:

The education of the body is conducted through changes in the structure of the personality and conduct of individuals. Instincts, emotions, and compulsions also vary according to the structure of the society in which the individual is inserted and is part of. In this way, the educated individual transforms his behavior and feelings in order to fit in socially and respond to new demands on his conduct and personality.

Elias (1994) considers that the individual civilizing process takes place by marks of a particular social group, thus, for the social existence of the being, civilization is essential. Through adults and the "[...] thousands of other instruments, it is always society as a whole, the whole of human beings, that exerts pressure on the new generation, leading it more perfectly, or less, towards its ends" (ELIAS, 1994, p. 145, our translation).

The memories evoked by the former INSA students reveal relationships that allowed them to recognize the excess of regulations, orders, and authorities practiced by the nuns. However, the former students deal with these issues in a perception of naturalization, as a habitus. Moreover, they still believe that the norms should prevail today. They believe that if the students today are undisciplined and show little interest, it is because there was a loosening of the behavioral and formative rules.

Therefore, the civilizing process in the formation of girls by INSA connotes that the school strongly brought marks of the Catholic Church. Thus, the civilization in the school occurred in a way to soften their manners, to establish urbanity and politeness in their actions, a private education that demanded the annulment of conflicts and habits specific to the feminine public. Sophistication, subtlety, sensitivity, concealment and modesty were expected from the girls. It was up to them to take care of the family and home routines and to zeal for the domestic space (DIAS, 1984). On the other hand, they had as civilizing power to dedicate themselves to professions that were in the range of caring and educating the child as if it was a maternal condition, in the case of INSA, the normalist formation focused on the teaching of first letters.

## **Final remarks**

In our study, we worked with individual and collective memories linked to an educational institution, the Instituto "Nossa Senhora Aparecida" (INSA) - of confessional character, belonging to the Catholic Church, private, and with exclusive teaching at that time for girls in the city of Salinas/MG. These are memories of a junior high and high school education that were relegated by scientific research, so that they were historically invisible.

The study was carried out in the memory field, with document analysis in the light of oral history. We sought to understand the formation and civilization process of the former students based on Eliasian theories. The memories revealed that the training carried out by INSA in that context was part of a model of social organization and civilization. After all, according to Norbert Elias (1993, 1994, 2001, 2012), we live in groups, in societies that carry moral precepts, values, customs, and habits, which need to be passed on to new generations for a better social organic structure. In this line, we understand that the school is one of the figures that operates in the civilization process, in the interdependence relations and in the personality formation.

The role of INSA was to civilize the girls by promoting mechanisms of control and self-control of their habits. They would have to demonstrate in their behavior skills in subtlety, delicacy, obedience and discipline. It was understood that the woman's function was to avoid conflicts, so they were not allowed to expose themselves, to question, to express themselves through their bodies. We noticed that in this formative process there was a relation of strength, control, and power for the maintenance of a social order put into perspective by the Catholic church and by the local hegemonic groups. The analysis of the sources revealed us that, in terms of gender, the woman in school between 1950 and 1970 was treated as the fragile sex, and should always be submissive to the male virility - an understanding that is being questioned nowadays.

We conclude that at INSA the civilizing process of the girls took place in a formative perspective in the regulation of behaviors, control and self-control of feelings and emotions of being a woman in contexts of gender inequalities and Catholic orientation issued by the Franciscan Poor Clare nuns. The school figuration was surrounded by strict rules that had to be followed, by religious images and a chapel inside the school. The students felt that they were in a sanctified and devout environment and, therefore, the least they should do was to act with respect and obedience. The girls lived daily under an accusing gaze of those behaviors that were considered an offense to good feminine education and religious precepts. Even in her privacy,

the student needed to demonstrate modesty, subtlety, and discretion. The memories pointed out a markedly religious education, of rigor, formation of habits, and rigorous moral conduct.

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