

The educational role of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras da Imaculada Conceção* [Hospitaller Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception] in *Casa de Infância de Santo António* [Santo António Childhood House] – Horta

Sandro Serpa

Assistant Professor

Department of Educational Sciences

University of the Azores

Azores, Portugal

Abstract

This study approaches the educational role of Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras da Imaculada Conceção in Casa de Infância de Santo António, in the city of Horta, and their influence in the culture of this organization. To this end, an analysis was carried out to the documents existing in the archive of the institution and local newspapers. Results allow concluding that, in its educational dimension, the existence of a structured and cohesive group, with its own culture clearly assumed in an organization, may have contributed to the existence of a differentiated organizational culture, albeit functioning, usually, as subculture of the dominant culture fostered by the institution's Board of Directors.

Keywords: Educational role of a group, differentiated organizational culture, culture of religious group, dominant culture of an educational organization with boarding care.

Introduction

Casa de Infância de Santo António, established in 1858 as *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Cidade da Horta* [Asylum of the Disadvantaged Children of the City of Horta], host institution for girls and young women in need, functioned, since its establishment, and for about 74 years, with secular officials, under the supervision of a Board of Directors. This happened until 1931, when the institution admitted in its functioning *Religious Sisters*, who remained there for about 75 years, until mid-2007 (Serpa, 2013).

This work seeks to develop a cultural reading of the organization (Schein, 2004; Torres, 2004, 2006). The possibility of the presence of culture or cultures in organizations refers to the level of cultural sharing on the part of organizational members, who, during the time together in a shared history, tend to form one, or several, cultural collectives, as common patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that depend on the characteristics of each member and on the learning processes that take place either outside or inside the organization by its members, which may vary in time with some unpredictability (Serpa, 2013).

In the process of cultural shaping and transformation, a rather relevant dimension consists of the contacts established between organizational actors. The importance of the relational dimension is highlighted, for example, by Hargreaves (1998) and Lima (2002). These authors – working specifically the professional culture of teachers within the school –, considering the standards of the forms of relationship between the members of an organization in their relation with organizational culture, observe its importance for the configuration and reconfiguration of organizational culture. The importance of the relational dimension in the definition of organizational culture results from the fact that the forms of contact, either individual or collective, are considered as components of culture as its result; this result contributes, simultaneously, to the reproduction and production of culture itself.

Therefore, it may be argued that the very interaction between the actors may be both cause and effect of a collective culture. This results in two aspects that should be highlighted. On the one hand, various collective cultures may be shaped within the same organization, through the interaction between its members (cultural collectives); on the other hand, through individual relationships or relationships of a group nature, contacts may be established between the various collective cultures (where they exist), which contribute to the processes of transformation of organizational culture.

It is critical to consider that the contacts travel formal and informal spaces and contexts of action, and formal and informal groups may emerge, with individual and/or collective active and/or passive resistance that may influence each other with their different dominations. Those contacts take place in different contexts and asymmetric powers, as capacity to influence the other in the intended way by individual and collective actors, and actors always have some margin/autonomy of action that have to be considered (Serpa, 2013). The influences established within the organization, the “*margins of relative autonomy*” (Lima, 1998, p. 582) that actors have, enable them exercising their relative autonomy in close connection with the more or less conscious reading that they make of the situation, and that is conditioned by socialization, external and internal to the organization, and by their motivation, both interrelated in the sense that socializing helps defining motivation, in a social context where the social origin, gender, power and functions expected to be performed in the organization are always present.

The degree of adhesion of the organization members to the organizational culture allows Martin (1992, 2002) finding three perspectives of organizational culture, with corresponding effects and functions ascribed to organizational culture: the integrating concept, the differentiating concept and the fragmenting concept, each one of them with different implications in the role assigned to each member of the organization in the (re)shaping of organizational culture. In the integrating concept, emphasis is placed on organizational culture as the only homogeneous culture or the culture capable of functioning as a unifying dominant culture, which is intended cohesive and shared, in a somewhat monocultural vision of the organization. The differentiating concept emphasizes the importance of conflict in organizations and the likely existence of diverse group cultures, functioning as subcultures of the general culture of the organization. In the fragmenting concept, the actions of organizational members vary according to the situation, there is no uniformity in time and cultural ambiguity is to be highlighted.

The foregoing discussion allows asserting that there is a clear recursion between organizational culture and actors, as cause and effect of the configuration and reconfiguration of organizational culture. The present work results from this discussion and seeks to answer the following question: What is the role of these Religious Sisters, as a collective actor, with their arrival and influence on the education involved in the culture of this organization? This is what this article proposes to analyze, through an interpretative diachronic study for the period between 1930 and 2008 (Serpa, 2013).

1. The arrival of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras da Imaculada Conceção* in the Asylum and the signing of a contract

From 1930 to 1933, inclusive, the Asylum lived in a context of successive appointments of Administrative Boards for its management. During this period, its financial situation was fragile (Serpa, 2013). On October 22, 1931, it is possible to perceive the difficulties experienced by the Asylum and the poor living conditions of the asylees since the 1926 earthquake:

[...] it functions, since that date, in four small wooden shacks, which do not meet the requirements of an establishment of this nature. Admittedly, the government ordered the construction of a building that is not yet complete due to lack of funds [...] this institution of charity has been maintained by donations and has provided assistance, sometimes, to twenty asylees, all of them boarders (*Mail sent by Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida. From 6/3/1928 to 20/5/1932*).

This context prompts the emergence of serious difficulties in the relationship between the Director of the Asylum and the Administrative Board, due to the non-compliance, by the former, of an express order issued by the Administrative Board, to admit a student. This leads to the resignation of the Director and the admission of a Religious Sister coming from Hospital of Horta, as recorded in the following excerpt:

[...] the president said that he had convened this special session to inform the board of a serious act that needed urgent solution: - Having sent a written order of the director of the Asylum [...] an order related to the admission of a student, this director refused to enforce the order, allowing herself the freedom to discuss and assess it in rather inadequate terms, and, what is more, she made an assessment, which meant disobedience to a legitimate order, in front of the students and strangers to the Asylum, which is, altogether, an act of indiscipline offending the powers of the

Administrative Board that he, President, represents. The Board, after a brief assessment, decided unanimously to terminate the services of the director [...] and that she should be informed of this resolution - The member [...], as chairman of the Administrative Board of *Santa Casa da Misericórdia*¹, provided one *Irmã Franciscana Hospitaleira Portuguesa*, from those who serve at Hospital of Horta, who, together with a nurse, will take over the direction of the Asylum, until the arrival of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas* that this board will request, so that the students may attain a complete education and specialization in housework. The board accepted this provision (Special session of June 7, 1931, in *Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932*).

Even if the cause for the Director's dismissal has been unexpected, this event does not seem to have been problematic, and its consequence was the quick arrival of the Religious Sisters. As soon as July 4, 1931, the Board noted "having took over the management of this house of Charity *Irmã Franciscana Hospitaleira Portuguesa* Maria Luiza Garcia, accompanied by the assistant Paulina de Oliveira" (Regular session of July 4, 1931, in *Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932*).

The subsequent year, the following very complimentary assessment is made about the services provided to this Asylum by the Sisters of Charity:

Mr. President appreciated with words of praise the work of economy in the internal management of this house and of exemplary moral formation of the students, exercised under the careful direction of the Reverend Mother Superior of Hospital Walter Bensaude, since she was entrusted by this Administrative Board; and having noted that the religious personnel available to the Reverend Superior was insufficient for the proper education of the asylees, he proposed that the Board would officially ask some specialist religious sisters, in accordance with the needs of the House, to complement the work begun. The Board applauded this proposal. [...] And in the same spirit, the request made by the Mother Superior of the creation of an oratory in an appropriate dependence of the House, for the religious service of the students, was assessed, since the old church was destroyed by the earthquake, and considering these reasons, it was determined to write the Reverend Excellency the Governor of the Bishopric, requesting the desired grace (Regular session of March 4, 1932, in *Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932*).

A contract to be signed between the Asylum's Board of Directors and the Religious Congregation was a condition for the staff of Sisters to continue and increase, having been established a contract with the Reverend Mother Superior, who provided the Board of Directors with a set of written conditions, which were regulatory of the link between the Religious Sisters/"Nurses Association" and the leaders of the Asylum, which, although extensive, given the clarity of the division of functions it entails, is herein reproduced in its essential aspects:

In general, this Nurses Association does not accept any proposal that does not meet the conditions herein exposed, besides the others that, accidentally, it considers that should be mentioned: Fifth- That the Entity that wishes to use the services of the Association shows undue reliance in it and in its staff, and wishes to always proceed with mutual sincerity and loyalty, so that the harmony absolutely indispensable to preserve peace, without which nothing may prosper, shall never be broken. Sixth- The Director General, herself or through a person delegated by her, will verify the conditions, status, etc., of the establishment to which the call for personnel is made, prior to final acceptance. Seventh- *The entire internal Govern of the Establishment must be trusted to the Association, and it assumes responsibility for the enforcement of laws and regulations of the House, although under immediate supervision of the President*². Eighth- For all purposes, the Deputy-director or Regent appointed by the Director General represents the Association in the Establishment. It is she who takes office and manages all internal service, being, simultaneously, the sole responsible before the Association and before the President of the Establishment. Ninth- Institutions to where cannot be sent at least four members of the Association are not accepted.

¹*Santa Casa da Misericórdia* (Holy House of Mercy) is a Portuguese charity institution established in Lisbon in 1498.

² Emphasis added.

Tenth– Besides the staff of the Association, the house will be provided with the indispensable employees for those services nurses cannot carry out, or for their assistants, when required. Eleventh– All lower internal staff, or service staff, is the free choice of the Regent, since she has to trust them, consulting, if necessary, the President of the Establishment. Twelfth– At the time sisters take office, the staff of the Association will be given an inventory of all items existing in house, checked for accuracy at the time. Thirteenth– All relationships, orders, changes, etc., between the President of the House and the staff of the Association shall be informed directly and solely to the Deputy-director and carried out through her. Fourteenth– The local Deputy-director shall always be informed about the entrance in the Establishment of any person outside the institution, in order to welcome and accompany that person for as long as he stays the building. Fifteenth– Similar procedure will be followed with the members of the entity President and with the *senhores Facultativos*³ and civil or ecclesiastical authorities, not only by due attention to these gentlemen, but also to provide them any clarifications that they may require and receive, or make each other any remarks necessary, regarding the normal progress of the House or matters of interest. Sixteenth– Should any noticeable change to the *status quo* of the current regimen in the House be required, with respect to regulations, nursing services, etc., entrusted to the members of the Association, the Deputy-director shall be heard, in order to judge whether she may or may not conform to the new change. Seventeenth– The staff of the Association shall have convenient, furnished, housing, fully separated and reserved for their use, with no interference whatsoever. This housing should be as close as possible to the service entrusted to the staff. [...] Twentieth– The Association does not receive any payment for nursing services, as its end is only the exercise of charity for the love of God and of the neighbour. Twenty-first– However, having the common needs of everyone that it has to provide to, having no reserve funds or other own resources, it cannot dispense a small monthly benefit, which shall be established at the time of the contract, and recorded in the minutes thereof, in such proportion to simply respond to those needs. Twenty-second– The trip of the staff of the Association to the Establishment and any member's, when travelling on official duty or at the Establishment's service, is made at the expense of this Establishment. Twenty-third– The Director General sends the competent personal for the occupations of the House and maintains it there for the time she sees fit, changing, transferring or displacing these personnel or any of its members, with full freedom and according to the general needs of the Association, having, however, to do that without harming neither the interests nor the conveniences of the Establishment as much as possible; she forces herself, in clear conscience, to ensure those interests, as scrupulously as possible. Twenty-fourth– Personnel from the Association, in health and disease, are treated according to their status and needs, at the expense of the House in which they provide service. [...] Twenty-sixth– In the Establishment there will be a convenient place, designed exclusively for worship, with daily chaplain for the religious service of the staff of the Association and those boarders that so freely wish. The chaplain may be external. After careful consideration of the mentioned clauses, the Board decided to accept them and, knowing that the Reverend Mother Director goes to the Mother House immediately, from where she should return within two months, the Board determines that a letter shall be written, instructing her to bring with her the Religious Sisters she sees fit in number and qualifications for the adequate education of the students. And in accordance with the conditions required, the Board stipulated that the religious personnel who oversee this House shall receive the monthly salary of one hundred *escudos*⁴ per religious sister and decided also to admit a chaplain for the religious service with a monthly salary of eighty *escudos*.

The Administrative Board also decided to write to his Excellency the Diocesan Prelate, proposing the appointment of a chaplain to this House of Charity (Regular session of April 4, 1932, in *Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932*).

These conditions were accepted by the Administrative Board, despite involving major transfer of powers and a high degree of autonomy granted to the Sisters in the direct control of the internal activity of the Asylum. This is

³Term of that time that referred to the Medicine Doctor.

⁴Monetary unit of that time.

how it was possible that a profound cultural transformation could start happening, in a short time, and through several Administrative Boards, with less legitimacy, therefore, with the arrival of the Religious Sisters, as a culturally cohesive group.

2. The opening of the Day school and disagreements in the Board

Regarding the arrival of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas*, with the contract already officially signed, the possibility of creating a Day school for girls is referred to:

We are pleased to inform Your Excellency that, from the Sisters that are coming to this Asylum, one is enabled to teach Portuguese and French up to the 5th grade of high school, teaching also English, if necessary; another Sister shall teach music and handcrafts, and may teach the elementary level, and another shall teach lace and other handcrafts, being, thus, that Asylum enabled for a good Day school for girls, which is so lacked in our setting, as I have many times spoken to some members of the various administrations of that house, if Your Excellences understand continuing the work of your predecessors as I am convinced of, and as it is expected (From Fernando da Costa, May 17, 1932).

It is confirmed that the arrival of the Religious Sisters enabled the opening of this Day school:

The Board of this Asylum approved, in today's session, given that it possesses qualified personnel who are entrusted with the education of the boarders, to request Your Excellency's permission for the functioning of a Day school in the building of this Asylum, where secondary education, handcrafts, music and piano may be taught to external students, obtaining, therefore, a very substantial source of revenue that will not only ascribe a greater comfort to the nineteen boarder students, but also lessen the fate of many abandoned little children of this district, where there is only this sole house to take in children, and at the same time, concerning the dissemination of education, the filling of a gap that has long been felt in this district (Letter to the Director General of Assistance, Lisbon, July 16, 1932, in *Mail sent from Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida "Dom Luíz". From 22/5/1932 to 11/2/1933*).

At this time, there seems to be great sharing, both internally in the Asylum (within the Administrative Board and between the Administrative Board and the Religious Sisters), and externally, with the relationship between the Administrative Board and the Civil Governor (Serpa, 2013), and, when nothing could foresee it, two months after a minute recorded his agreement (Regular session of August 4, 1932), the President of the Administrative Board expresses his displeasure, among other things, regarding the opening of the Day school run by the Religious Sisters and their participation as teachers:

After the presentation of the said budget by the secretary, the president informed that he does not agree with the amounts indicated in it regarding the revenue and expense of the Day school, claiming that, as to the revenue, it was not possible to achieve the amount of eight thousand *escudos*⁵ inscribed in that budget [...] it was not fair that the opening of the Day school in this asylum would prejudice the private teachers in this city, particularly Madams [...] who were his teachers and his children's teachers, and that, moreover, the Franciscan Sisters, taking advantage of the Day school, would certainly catechize, with great prejudice, the young feminine society from Horta. He further added that, when one of those Franciscan Sisters told him that, if the Administrative Board of that house would not strive towards the opening of the Day school, she was positive that her Director General in Tuy, given that they had to care only for the low number of nineteen boarders, would not allow their stay here, almost unproductively; he replied that they were free to leave when they so wished, and that he would immediately write a check for the expenses of return (Special session of October 3, 1932, in *Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932*).

As a conclusion of this episode, the President requested his resignation to the Chief of the District, having the remainder of the Committee "decided, as resolved in the session of August 4, to carry out at the expense of the members of this Board the inauguration of the West Pavilion of this Asylum, on October 5" (Special session of

⁵Monetary unit of that time.

October 3, 1932, in *Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932*).

Concerning the opening of this Day school in March 1933, the Directorate General of Assistance of the Ministry of the Interior authorized the *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta* to open the Day school, for the secondary school of boarder students. The Order of the Ministry also recalls the need to consider an amendment to the Statutes, in consequence of the creation of this new facility. This was done, and the new 1933 *Statutes of Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta* were approved by Permit No. 6 of May 12, 1933, by the Civil Governor of the District of Horta (Serpa, 2013).

In these new statutory regulations, there is the explicit possibility of the Asylum to receive either external students – “2nd - The education and instruction of external students” – or boarder students – “3rd - The internment [boarding on April 23, 1933], education and instruction of boarder students” (Article 3, Chapter 1). The type of teaching provided in the Asylum “will be the elementary and the secondary, or any of the classes of the latter, work, music, handcrafts, cooking, etc., according to the conditions of the house, means that the Brotherhood possesses and teachers or educational staff that the Asylum may possess or is able to acquire” (Article 2, Chapter VIII).

The possibility of the admission of paying students, not helpless ones, proved to be important also for its relevance, provided for in the funding sources of the Brotherhood and Asylum, with the addition, in relation to the prior statutes, of an article that includes “5th - The income for the admission of external and boarder students” (Chapter 1). The need to comply with regulations, both internal and external, is stressed in these 1933 Statutes: “Similarly to what regards its means, the administration of the Brotherhood and Asylum is done in common, and its Board, Management and Supervision, according to these Statutes and the applicable laws and regulations” (Article 5, Chapter 1), as well as “the Asylum Board, regimen and policy will be made in accordance with the regulations specified in number seventh, Article 3 of Chapter 6.” (Article 1, Chapter VIII).

3. The opening of Colégio de Santo António and the centrality of the Religious Sisters

Despite several Administrative Committees, Administrative Boards and Presidents that have functioned in the Asylum, the central role of the Religious Sisters in its organizational structure and internal functioning has always been evident in the period from 1932 to 1969.

Another illustrative example was the opening and functioning of *Colégio de Santo António*, encompassing elementary and secondary education, which “was authorized by provisional Permit no. 430 of October 13, 1947 and in October [1949] [...] the 1st cycle of high school started functioning, with final approval of the Inspectorate of Private Education being communicated on the 17th of the same month to the Rectorate of the National College of Horta, admitting boarders, external and semi-internal students” (Art. 4) (*Colégio de Santo António annexed to Asilo de Infância Desvalida “D. Luís” of the City of Horta. Regulation, 1949*).

The opening of this college was also due to the presence of the Religious Sisters. In the 1949 Regulation of *Colégio de Santo António (Colégio de Santo António annexed to Asilo de Infância Desvalida “D. Luís” of the City of Horta. Regulation, 1949)*, it is found that:

- “In addition to the faculty and its director, the administrative part is delivered to *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas*, who are also in charge of the elementary, moral, physical, religious, artistic and domestic education of all students” (Art. 3);
- This same document is signed, on November 22, 1949, by the President of the Asylum’s Administrative Board, Francisco José Machado, by the Director of the College, Maria do Rosário Soares de Oliveira Machado de Sousa (not Religious Sister), but also by the “Superior Sister of the Asylum”, Sister Adília da Silva Santos.

The role of these Religious Sisters, in this culture, is often explicitly assumed by the Administrative Boards, as noted in the following examples:

- In a request for the maintenance of the Reverend Director, at least until this boarding house is in full operation, which may be considered “the first of the archipelago, such is the fame it has attained [...] in addition to the economic and literary part, children receive the religious part in perfect coexistence with the Kindly Sisters. These children, sent afterwards to society, are a focus of true morality and example” (August 7, 1950);
- In an appeal to the Bishop of Angra, Guilherme Augusto (October 15, 1951), in which the President refers that, in this school, results “are so comforting, that have led the Administrative Board to fully support the charitable

Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas, who superiorly run this establishment”. However, the Reverend Mother Director of this house is forced to leave on February 2, as the canonical period of six years expires, being “her departure likely to cause serious embarrassment to the life of the College” and the “lack of teaching religious personnel must be made up with secular teachers, which requires greater vigilance on the part of the Board of Directors”. Therefore, the President asks the intercession to the Holy See so that this Religious Sister remains longer, at least until the arrival of graduate Religious Sisters for the Teaching, which is promised for the next three years, and the response from the Bishop of Angra himself is that this request should be addressed to the Holy See by the General Mother Superior, and if the Holy See requests his opinion, it will be very favourable to this appeal (Bishop of Angra, Dom Guilherme de Augusto, 29-10-51).

With the arrival of the Religious Sisters, the opening of the Day school and, later, the College, with own funding, private donations and agreements with the State, the financial situation of the Asylum has improved substantially, which is noted by the number of asylees, which raised from 19 in 1932 to 44 in 1947, and to 70 in 1953 (Lemos, 1958). Concerning the movement of students from 1953 to 1968, the total number was 70 in 1953, and the maximum value of 75 was attained in 1964, whereas the minimum was reached in 1968, with 57 asylees. This is the year when the number of arrivals (22) and departures (18) reached its highest level (Minutes of the Regular session of January 5, 1969). The Administrative Board justifies the reduction in the “Asylum” “boarders” by the lack of “petitions” (Minutes of the Regular session of January 2, 1968, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

In short, regarding the income of the College, “with that amount we made most of our expenses with our seventy-three boarders in this House of Charity and eleven Sisters of Charity” (Minutes of the Regular session of August 2, 1964, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*). In this period, there is some financial breathing space that enables the activity of the Administrative Board, thanks to substantial own revenues (coming mainly from the College and State financial investments) and to annual ordinary and extraordinary subsidies from the District Committee of Assistance of Horta, the General Board of the District of Horta, the Unemployment Fund and other entities, and from individual or collective private donations, whether in cash or in goods and services. These donations are visible, for example, through the various works undertaken and improvements in the life conditions of the Asylum and College, and even changes in the workforce, with increasing salaries of the Religious Sisters, Chaplain, clerk and servant (Continued from the minutes of the Regular session of October 14, 1956 and Minutes of the Regular session of November 3, 1957, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*).

In this period, the public image of the Religious Sisters is, indeed, positive:

[...] poor children whom, having lost the vigilance and affection of their parents, would find in the scabrous path of their misfortune evil, addiction, destruction, if they did not have the cosy ceiling of the Asylum and if they did not have the charity of the Sisters in charge of their education [...] joyful, radiant asylees (*O Telegrafo*⁶, year: 43, December 28, 1935, no. 10937, p. 1);

AN EVENING OF ART in the Asylum-College of Santo António [...] [with the presence of the Civil Governor of the District and other authorities, with a full room, the students of this College performed an art program with music, theatre and dance] [...] charming party. [The *Telegrafo* thanks the kind invitation and] congratulates the Honourable Sister Director, as well as her dedicated assistants for the brightness of her party, so appreciated by those who saw it and brought the best impressions from the Asylum-College of Santo António (*O Telegrafo*, year: 54, December 30, 1946, no. 14148, pp. 1 and 2).

Concerning, still, the external image of the College, it is recalled that, under the management of the Religious Sisters, this image is very positive.

On a visit to this “House of Charity”, made by Dr. Carvalho da Fonseca and the Civil Governor, Dr. Freitas Pimentel, they “went through part of the building praising how everything was” (Minutes of the Regular session of October 7, 1962). All classes of the College are at full capacity and with applications that cannot be met (Minutes of the Regular session of October 6, 1963, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*). In 1965, the College is authorized to receive 50 more students and the Board plans to open, later that year, an “Early Childhood College”, to accommodate 40 children, with the foreseen arrival, still

⁶Local newspaper of that time.

for that school year, of a teacher Sister, who will also be the professor of Physical Education in the College. This motivates the need for expansion works (Minutes of the Regular session of May 2, 1965). In 1968, the Board assesses the results of the College as “magnificent” – “students taken to exam 48. Approved 43. Excluded from the 2nd year 3 and from the 5th year 2. Dispensed from oral exam 22” (Minutes of the Regular session of July 7, 1968, in *1965-1978 Minutes S. António*).

The following favourable assessment may be found in documents of that time:

In the Asylum-College of Santo António a traditional festival was held on Sunday in honour of the Patron of that care institution. From 11 to 13 hours, all dependencies of the Asylum-College were open to numerous public who visited them, and also appraised the exhibition of works made by the students.

The way facilities were presented deserved the highest praise on the part of visitors; thus, it is fair to congratulate the dedicated Sisters and the Administrative Board, who have so carefully continue a work in all respects worthy of the best support (*O Telégrafo*, year: 61, June 21, 1954, no. 16359, p. 1). The commemoration of the centenary of the foundation of “*Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*, a charity institution that has so highly fulfilled its noble purpose of receiving and preparing for life, within the sound principles of Christian morality, the unprotected children” (*O Telégrafo*, year: 66, November 30, 1958, no. 17706, p. 1), was a high moment of the celebration, attended by numerous civil and religious dignitaries, and the general public. The Silver Jubilee of the arrival of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas* in the Asylum (1932) was incorporated in this celebration, in a very clear reference to the weight ascribed to the Religious Sisters by the Administrative Board.

In the official printed program of the celebrations of the centenary of the establishment of this Asylum (*Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta, Commemorative celebrations of the first centenary of its establishment, December 28, 1858 to December 28, 1958*), the Religious Sisters not are forgotten, with, among other moments, a solemn session commemorating the “Silver Jubilee” of the arrival of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas* in this Asylum, being unveiled, in this ceremony, the portrait of the Reverend Mother General of the Congregation of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas*.

These good relations were fostered by both sides. In an interview with the Reverend Mother Adviser, Delegate of the Congregation of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas*, at the time of this commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Asylum, she refers, with great praise to the Administrative Boards:

The work performed by the various Administrative Boards and, in particular, by the present one, is certainly admirable. Raising in a small location a charity work that would be good in any big city shows a great spirit of organization and of extreme tenacity and dedication. Only those who work in similar works are able to properly appreciate all these efforts, sacrifices and work entailed in the work erected and performed in this Asylum of Disadvantaged Children from the founding fathers to the present members of the Administrative Board (*O Telégrafo*, year: 66, January 10, 1959, no. 17738, pp. 1 and 4).

In another moment, in the session of the Chapel’s inauguration, the photography of the Sister “currently Director of the Asylum-College” was exposed, along with three other benefactors (Minutes of the Regular session of February 2, 1964, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*), in a token of appreciation from the Administrative Board and its President for the activity carried out by this Sister. Concerning the opening of this Hermitage or Chapel of Santo António, *O Telégrafo* publishes an appreciative record of this session “that took place amid great religious elevation”, referring that the “Asylum-College of Santo António was celebrating”, as a “care and teaching model establishment [...] with visibility even outside the four islands of the District”, praising the Administrative Board and *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas*, and congratulating all who are erecting “in the Asylum-College St.º António one of the most beautiful charitable and educational works of the Archipelago”.

Moreover, “the District Chief commended the Administrative Board for the great work being carried out, and these greetings were extended to the Director and *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas* who work there” (*O Telégrafo*, year: 71, January 7, 1964, no. 19248, pp. 1 and 4).

In sum, this is a period of great dynamism, publicly acknowledged by the authorities of the Asylum and by the outside, with a key role of the Religious Sisters in the administration of the “Asylum-College of Santo António”

after, in 1956, the Administrative Board had proposed to the Congregation, and achieved, the replacement of the Director for disagreeing with her actions (Lemos, 1958).

This appreciation for the action of the current Director is visible in the words of the President of the Administrative Board, when he states:

I [also] thank [...] Mother Director [...], who has so intelligently and faithfully matched our wishes, thus facilitating the administration of our Board (Minutes of the Regular session of December 16, 1956, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*).

The presence of the Religious Sisters is desired with gratitude by the various Administrative Boards, in general, as is evident in the following arguments:

Besides the reasons above, with the non-return of aforesaid Sister, this House would face great difficulty in her replacement because it would have to admit a secular graduate, which, besides being difficult, would not offer this House the advantages that come from the above mentioned position being carried out by a Franciscan Sister (To the Superior General of the Portuguese Franciscan Sisters, August 20, 1945).

There are a number of factors that seem to account for this choice, which is also sought by the Administrative Board. Firstly, at the financial level, the presence of the Sisters allowed a much lower cost with salaries, as well as the fact that these are defined, from the outset, in the actual Contract signed between the Religious Sisters and the Asylum. Therefore, the Administrative Board actively sought their presence, with the largest possible number of Religious Sisters. Secondly, at the pedagogical level, two situations are enlightening of this desire for the presence of the Religious Sisters. Hence, it is proposed to build a Gym and an Early childhood school, “awaiting the arrival of two Sisters to teach Physical Education and Childhood Education, as promised by Mother General” (Minutes of the Regular session of January 5, 1964), with the request, to the Reverend Mother General, of a Sister to teach Physical Education (Minutes of the Regular session of October 6, 1963, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*).

Regarding, also, the “Early Childhood School”, after several years of requests by the Administrative Board for a Teacher Sister to be sent for this level of education, only the arrival of this Teacher Sister of the Early Childhood course and Physical Education has enabled the opening of this facility. In 1966, the “Early Childhood School” was inaugurated – “Since the official teacher for the Early Childhood School is already among us [...], the Board decided, according to the Director, to inaugurate it on Sunday, February 13” (Minutes of the Regular session of February 6, 1966, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

These are factors that lead the staff of the Asylum and College to be composed of Religious Sisters, and the Administrative Board only hires secular employees to carry out functions for which there is not a Religious Sister available. However, even in these cases, the position of the Director is carefully considered. For example, in the appointment of the teacher to the official school of the Asylum, the President and Director are responsible for seeking a person for the job, and a session attended by the Director of the Asylum takes place: “the Board, in view of the above, decided unanimously, considering especially the opinion of the Honourable Director of this Asylum, to indicate as teacher of this Asylum’s school for girls – Centre of Santo António, Municipality of Horta – the referred one” (Minutes of the Extraordinary session of January 12, 1958, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*).

4. The internal functioning, under the scrutiny of the Board of Directors

The internal functioning, under the scrutiny of the Board of Directors, is clearly marked by the presence of the Religious Sisters. This trust and empowerment are granted by the Administrative Board, justified by the competence of the Religious Sisters, with whose work the Administrative Board was much pleased (Minutes of the Regular session of August 6, 1967, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

And on July 20, 1967 the work of this Sister Director was highly praised:

[...] because the Administrative Board always found in Sister [...] the best cooperation and understanding in every moment of its administration, it would record here its thanks for the very much she has done for the children of these Islands (Minutes of the Extraordinary session of July 20, 1967, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

On December 3, 1967, the new Superior of the Congregation of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras da Imaculada Conceção* is appointed: “the Board is pleased with such a happy choice, hoping that between the new Superior and the Board all subjects are dealt with the utmost frankness and seriousness as was being done” (Minutes of the Regular session of December 3, 1967), or “[...] to be developed according to the Board” (Minutes of the Regular session of January 2, 1968, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

It is important to remind that, in the relationship between the Administrative Board and the Franciscan Sisters, the *Contract* is, indeed, important as a regulatory element. In 1965, the Director announced that the Reverend Mother General wishes to “update a new contract. The Board considered it fair”, and, in this same session, the Administrative Board decides to also update the clerk’s and the servant’s salary (Minutes of the Regular session of July 4, 1965, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

Regarding the new contract between the Asylum and the Religious Sisters, the Sister Director considered that, “as everything has gone satisfactorily to both parties, she was convinced that the Board’s resolution would please Mother General”. The following changes, which come into force in October 1965, are highlighted:

1. The Sister Director will continue in charge of the internal administration of the Asylum, in collaboration with the Administrative Board.
2. The Directorate of the College of Santo António, which is property of *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Cidade da Horta*, shall be exercised by the Mother Superior of the Asylum and when questions arise in the administrative part, they will be solved with the cooperation of the Board. [...]
3. Within the guidelines ordered by the Diocese of Angra, the Asylum commits to maintaining at its expense the religious service in its Chapel inside the institution.
4. The Sisters, in addition to their salaries, set in paragraph 8 of this contract, are not entitled to any other remuneration for the work performed, whether studies, piano lessons, work done in the handcraft classes or in the boarders’ Room.
5. Should any questions not recorded in this agreement emerge, they shall be resolved between the Sister Director and the Administrative Board (Minutes of the Regular session of August 1, 1965, in *1965-1978 Minutes S António*).

The College itself ends up enabling a certain production and reproduction of the action of the Franciscan Sisters:

The Administrative Board of this Brotherhood was pleased with this unanimous resolution of the Reverend Mother General of the Congregation of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras Portuguesas*, assigning to teach in the College of this institution Sister [...] who had been a student in the same College and who had recently graduated in Theological Sciences (Minutes of the Regular session of October 2, 1960, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*).

The last minutes of the book of *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964* finishes with the reference to the significance of the work carried out by the Religious Sisters in fostering an education with a strong “moral formation”:

Upon finishing this book of *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta* and in the beginning of a New Year, may God bless this House of Charity with His effluvia of grace, so that the children hosted here may continue receiving the education they are given by the unveiled Sisters and Director and, under the protection of their patron *Santo António*, they may acquire a sound moral education that may always guide them in their future life (Minutes of the Regular session of December 6, 1964, in *Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964*).

However, there is an increasing need and choice of employees that are legally entitled in the respect for State standards, being the State the major funding entity of the functioning of the Asylum (since 1971, *Casa de Infância de Santo António*), in a *Triangulated Culture* (1969-1993) between the Board of Directors, the State and the Religious Sisters (Serpa, 2013).

The President of the Board of Directors refers, during the celebration of the 125th anniversary of this institution, in 1983, on the role of the Religious Sisters, “that, with kindness and competence, treated and guided with equal affection all children who have been here, taking advantage of vocations and perfecting skills, aiming at a better

future for our children. [...] being our Sisters creditors of our utmost respect and appreciation” (Minute no. 12, Minutes of the Extraordinary session of December 14, 1983, in *Book of Minutes of Casa de Infância de Santo António. 1979-1990*).

More recently, there has been a gradual diminishing of the activity of the Religious Sisters in the House for Girls of this organization, favouring the presence of specialized staff through State support, and the Religious Sisters eventually left the institution in mid-2007, being replaced by secular employees, some with specialized training, who increased their relative weight in *Casa de Infância de Santo António* (Serpa, 2013).

Conclusion

The present paper puts forward an overview of the educational role of *Irmãs Franciscanas Hospitaleiras da Imaculada Conceção*. They were admitted to the Asylum in the early 1930s by an Administrative Board that, while having resigned, signs the Contract with the Religious Sisters, condition of their continuity in the Asylum, with the voluntary cession of great autonomy to the Religious Sisters in the direct management of the activity of the Asylum. In this context, more Religious Sisters were also asked to come, which contributed to a profound change of staff and, later, of the culture of this organization, by incorporating a group that tends to be very cohesive, as responsible for the direct management of the asylum, even allowing the opening of a Day school and, later, a College, all functioning with broad autonomy granted to the Religious Sisters, legitimized also by the contract with the Asylum’s Board of Directors. However, and given also the influence of the State, over time, the prospect of increasing need for specialization of employees of *Casa de Infância de Santo António* makes the place of the Religious Sisters in the institution more and more complex and difficult. This professionalization fits perfectly in the proposals put forward by Rocha, Medeiros, Diogo and Diogo (2008), which point towards the need for higher professional qualifications of the staff working in this type of institutions, a trend also found by Martinez, Carvalho, Vissram, José and Farinha (2005), in a broad study in Western Europe.

The obvious role of the Religious Sisters, either during their stay or by the way they left the institution, is indicative of a strong cohesion as a group, forming a subculture where, clearly, the amplitude, frequency and extent of interaction between the group members is plausibly recognizable (Lima, 2002). In the case of the Religious Sisters, the suggested level of cultural cohesion as a group is high, both in the sharing and in its intensity, functioning almost always as a subculture of the dominant culture. According to Schein (2004), the degree of cohesion (or strength) of the culture, as homogeneous adhesion of the members of the organization, depends on factors that may enable the consolidation of the basic assumptions: the duration of its existence, the degree of stability of the belonging to the group, the degree of emotional intensity of experiences shared over time, as well as the belonging of each member to several other groups. This strong culture may foster an organizational identification, both internally and with external recognition.

However, this same strong cultural cohesion may have hindered the adaptation of the Religious Sisters to the reconfiguration of organizational culture that, progressively, with breakthroughs and setbacks, took place in *Casa de Infância de Santo António*. Although there may be different levels of sharing of the elements from the same culture (Torres, 2004, 2006), the uncertainties, external and internal to the organization and to the individual and collective actors themselves, generate unpredictability, which may translate into changes in external or internal factors, with which the members of the organization, even if they share a cohesive and strong culture, may not be prepared to deal. In this situation, a culture clash may occur and the strong culture may become ineffective vis-à-vis the new developments, and instead of being an advantage, it may become a resistance to change in the organization. Therefore, the need for a cultural cohesion in any situation emerges as problematic. In other words, there are no cultures good or bad *per se*, as the present paper sought to demonstrate with the situation of the Religious Sisters in *Casa de Infância de Santo António*.

References

- 1965-1978 *Minutes S António*.
Appeal to the Bishop of Angra Dom Guilherme Augusto, October 15, 1951.
Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta, Commemorative celebrations of the first centenary of its establishment, December 28, 1858 to December 28, 1958.
Bishop of Angra, Dom Guilherme de Augusto, 29-10-51.
Book of Minutes of Casa de Infância de Santo António. 1979-1990.
Colégio de Santo António annexed to Asilo de Infância Desvalida “D. Luís” of the City of Horta. Regulation, 1949.

Copy of the contract between *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida “D. LUIZ” da Horta* and the Reverend Mother Director of *Associação Portuguesa de Irmãs Enfermeiras*; transcribed and approved in Minutes of the Regular session of April 4, 1932 (September 26, 1946).

From Fernando da Costa, May 17, 1932.

Hargreaves, A. (1998). *Os professores em tempos de mudança. O trabalho e a cultura dos professores na idade pós-moderna*. Alfragide: Editora McGraw-Hill de Portugal.

Lemos, R. R. G. de (1958). *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. 1858-1958*. Manuscript work celebrating a century of existence.

Lima, J. Á. de (2002). *As culturas colaborativas nas escolas: estruturas, processos e conteúdos*. Porto: Porto Editora.

Lima, L. C. (1998). *A Escola como organização e a participação na organização escolar. Um estudo da Escola Secundária em Portugal (1974-1988)*. Braga: Centro de Estudos em Educação e Psicologia, Instituto de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade do Minho.

Mail sent by Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida “Dom Luíz” - From 22/5/1932 to 11/2/1933.

Mail sent by Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida - From 6/3/1928 to 20/5/1932.

Martin, J. (1992). *Cultures in organizations: three perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martin, J. (2002). *Organizational culture: mapping the terrain*. London: Sage Publications.

Martínez, R. (Coord.), Carvalho, M. J. L. de, Visram, N., José, T. M. de S., & Farinha, V. (2005). Estruturas de acolhimento de crianças e jovens em Lares. Contributo para o estudo de modelos e modos de resposta. In Conselho Técnico-Científico da Casa Pia de Lisboa, *Casa Pia de Lisboa – Um projecto de esperança. As estratégias de acolhimento das crianças em risco* (pp. 395-522). Cascais: PRINCIPIA, Publicações Universitárias e Científicas.

Minutes of Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 14-10-1956 to 6-12-1964.

Minutes of Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932.

O Telegrafo, year: 43, December 28, 1935, no. 10937, p. 1.

O Telegrafo, year: 54, December 30, 1946, no. 14148, pp. 1 and 2.

O Telégrafo, year: 61, June 21, 1954, no. 16359, p. 1.

O Telégrafo, year: 66, January 10, 1959, no. 17738, pp. 1 and 4.

O Telégrafo, year: 66, November 30, 1958, no. 17706, p. 1.

O Telégrafo, year: 71, January 7, 1964, no. 19248, pp. 1 and 4.

Rocha, G. P. N. (Coord.), Medeiros, O. H. R. de, Diogo, F., & Diogo, A. M. (2008). *Socializações alternativas. Crianças e jovens em instituições nos Açores*. Ponta Delgada: Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade dos Açores.

Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Serpa, S. (2013). *Dinâmicas nas (re)configurações da cultura organizacional. A Casa de Infância de Santo António (1858-2008)*. Angra do Heroísmo: Dissertation presented at the University of the Azores for the PhD in Education, specialty in Sociology of Education.

Statutes of Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta, of 1933.

To the Superior General of the Portuguese Franciscan Sisters, August 20, 1945.

Torres, L. L. (2006). Cultura organizacional em contexto escolar. In L. C. Lima (Org.), *Compreender a Escola. Perspectivas de análise organizacional* (pp. 133-195). Porto: Edições ASA.

Torres, L. M. de L. (2004). *Cultura organizacional em contexto educativo. Sedimentos culturais e processos de construção do simbólico numa escola secundária*. Braga: Centro de Investigação em Educação do Instituto de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade do Minho.