VALUES AND CODES OF CONDUCT IN EUROPEAN EDUCATION: FROM MORAL CUSTOMS TO SOCIAL COHESION

APOSTOLOS KARAOULAS

Laboratory Teaching Staff, University of Ioannina, School of Education Sciences,
Department of Early Childhood Education

ABSTRACT

This article examines the long historical trajectory of normative texts aimed at shaping the moral behavior of young people, from medieval monastic education to the contemporary technocratic forms of pedagogical discourse. Focusing on the term "moral customs" (chrēstoētheiai), as it is conceptually rendered within theological, pedagogical, and cultural contexts, the analysis explores their function as vehicles of a normative discourse capable of forming models of identity and subjectivity. Moral customs are comparatively situated alongside mores (moral norms), which, despite their different origins, also operate normatively within educational processes.

The analysis traces historical examples, from the educational structures developed in religious and aristocratic environments of early European society to later systematizations of moral codes through normative handbooks addressing the family, the classroom, or public administration. In every historical phase, these texts act as mirrors of regulated identities: the ideal of the noble, the obedient believer, the nationally responsible student, the disciplined citizen. Despite variations in the form and communicative strategies of normative discourses, shaped by historical circumstances and cultural parameters, their fundamental function remains unchanged: they assist in molding individuals according to behavioral standards deemed acceptable and necessary for the smooth functioning of society.

In the 21st century, this discourse does not disappear but transforms as it adapts to new communicative and technological conditions. Ethical principles are incorporated into skills and citizenship programs and into digital platforms, thereby shaping new forms of guidance.

This study aims to contribute to the reflection on the role of moral rules in education, not as mechanisms of compliance, but as tools for the formation of moral consciousness. The analysis highlights the enduring character of these educational forms and explores whether the discourse on moral behavior expresses a social consensus or, conversely, operates as a mechanism of power and discipline.

Keywords: Moral customs, normative standards, educational system, social values, school culture, normative texts.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The shaping of moral behavior rules and the concept of moral customs within the educational process constitute fundamental elements of social and cultural discipline in Europe, influencing

citizens' values, behaviors, and perceptions over the centuries. Moral customs are not merely texts describing appropriate social behavior or a set of regulations; they also function as tools through which society seeks to cultivate desirable moral values, defining individuals' way of life and consciousness according to prevailing social demands. From the late Middle Ages, when regulations were embedded in ecclesiastical ethics and religious education, to contemporary societies, these regulations have served as instruments of discipline and social organization, shaping the everyday life of students and citizens at large.

The conceptual approach to the terms moral customs and normative texts highlights the tension between moral values and social requirements, as well as the interplay between religious and political discourses that guide the formation of individual behavior in society. Moral education, developed as an organized system of rules and guidelines for individual and social conduct, has been one of the earliest and most powerful means for maintaining social order and discipline. Its normative dimension incorporated and reflected social hierarchies, religious beliefs, and political structures, directing individuals' lives through school regulations and texts focused on shaping the "proper" citizen for society and the state (Foucault, 1977; Elias, 2000).

The methodological approach of the present study follows the line of cultural history to understand the relationship between power discourse and education. On the one hand, the analysis of normative order through the lens of power discourse as it emerges from the contradictions and interactions of social and political structures, reveals the broad function of moral education. On the other hand, this approach also highlights cultural dynamics: how society perceives and manages the individual's relationship to the body, the family, and education as fields of control and character formation (Foucault, 1978).

Normative texts and moral guidelines influence how individuals and groups perceive authority, their relationship with society, and their position within the educational process. As Europe evolves from the Middle Ages toward the modern era, regulations are no longer limited to ecclesiastical guidance or monastic training. Instead, they are developed and shaped through courtly society, the spread of printing, and the establishment of nation-states, in response to the growing need for social discipline and educational regulation (Bourdieu, 1996). The penetration of moral education discourse into different social strata and the role of normative handbooks highlight the significance of educational texts as forms of social integration and power.

The transition from religious to secular values in the 19th century, within the new social framework of nation-states and mass education, set the tone for necessary reforms in school discipline. The school regulations of this transformative period, reflecting the demand for a more refined and rationalized control system, show how school discipline and the integration of the individual into the social fabric presupposed the guidance of school ethics and patriotism (Taylor, 2004).

The end of the 20th century and the entry into the 21st century bring new challenges for educational and social discipline, as contemporary regulations incorporate the values of democratic participation, digital integrity, and citizenship. The social dimension of regulations is no longer confined solely to students' bodies and daily routines but extends into the digital realm, emphasizing the new needs and priorities of modern society (Giddens & Birdsall, 2001). The school regulations of the 21st century now focus on a holistic regulation of well-being,

integrating individuals' rights and obligations within the educational system, with the aim of securing social cohesion and democratic prosperity.

2.0 THE LATE MIDDLE AGES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MORAL CUSTOMS

During the Late Middle Ages, in a Europe continually reshaped by famines, plagues, institutional crises, and struggles for religious authority, powerful models of daily discipline and internalization of morality were formed through practical texts guiding everyday life.

The need for moral conformity, surveillance of passions, and discipline of the body and speech was articulated through so-called manuals of moral conduct, later known as moral customs (chrēstoētheiai). These texts, often written in a vernacular style with an emphasis on practical application, became an organic part of the Church's broader mission to regulate discourse, the body, desire, and the subject's relationship with the world. Priestly discourse extended beyond dogmatic or liturgical dimensions, permeating every aspect of life and creating a web of expectations regarding how one should stand in church, dress, remain silent, work, raise children, or sit at the table with reverence and simplicity. The Church thus functioned both as a moral educator and a supervisor of behavior, linking moral control to the promise of salvation and the threat of punishment. Catechetical manuals, moralistic sermons, and confessional texts, which multiplied from the 13th century onwards, bear witness to the continuous cultivation of moral formation and behavioral control among the faithful (Le Goff, 1988; Tentler, 2016).

Of particular interest is the gradual infiltration of moral customs into the pedagogical and educational sphere. Medieval education, though limited, primarily served the goal of religious conformity. In monasteries, where the first scholarly centers operated, the principles of discipline and order were transmitted through daily practices, embedded in both the curriculum and the ritualistic aspects of school life. The discourse of the monastic orders, particularly the Benedictines and the Cistercians, was imbued with the goal of shaping individuals into conscientious and disciplined beings, submissive to God's will, ready to eradicate any sign of pride or disorder. Moral instruction, stripped of any theoretical abstraction, incorporated specific guidelines on bodily posture, control of speech, avoidance of excess, and cultivation of humility (Southern, 1990; Constable, 1998).

At the same time, the public sphere became a stage for surveillance and conformity. The gaze of others, not only God's but also the community's, gained normative significance. Behavior in school, church, and even in public squares was governed not merely by habit but by a detailed moralistic framework. Children and adolescents were taught silence in the presence of elders, patience in listening, modesty in dress, and respect for rules governing distance, posture, and gaze. Christian education permeated all aspects of social life, even everyday meals were accompanied by prayers, fasting, acts of restraint, and prohibitions. The communal table became a space for self-discipline and a measure of moral maturity (Bynum, 1988; Duffy, 1992).

The regulatory function of norms is already discernible in the monastic schools and communities organized around the explicit commandment of discipline and austerity. Particularly notable is the Regula Benedicti, a text that for centuries served not only as a guide for organizing monastic life but also for educating young people's morals. According to the

Rule of Saint Benedict, monks and students practiced daily obedience, restraint, avoidance of laughter, silence as a sign of wisdom, and manual labor as a path to humility (Benedict of Nursia, 2018/530). The pedagogical function of the Regula was not based on the transmission of knowledge but on the shaping of the soul through regulated practices and ritual forms of discipline, such as sleeping schedules, silent meals, and the division of labor (Southern, 1990; Constable, 1998).

Meanwhile, in aristocratic and courtly circles, moral guidance took another form through the Specula Principum ("Mirrors for Princes"). These mirrors are characteristic examples of early political and moral pedagogy, offering young aristocrats, models of virtue, restraint, prudence, respect for hierarchy, and self-control (De Benedictis & Pisapia, 1999). They were not political programs but models of ethical behavior, aiming to teach young princes first to govern themselves and then their kingdoms. In texts such as John of Salisbury's Policraticus and Isidore of Seville's Etymologiae, this pedagogical function of power is evident: the young noble was expected to embody a balance between strength and moderation (John of Salisbury, 1990; Isidore of Seville, 2006; Carruthers, 2008; Nederman, 2009).

With the gradual spread of the practice of confession from the late Middle Ages onwards, monastic and aristocratic institutions did not merely serve spiritual or administrative roles but acquired an intense pedagogical dimension. Confession functioned as a means of shaping individual conscience, cultivating in the individual a sense of moral responsibility and the obligation to account for their actions, thoughts, and intentions, even those that remained private. From the 13th century onwards, the Catholic Church standardized the form of confession and produced specialized manuals for confessors. These works, aimed at helping priests understand, control, and guide, meticulously documented the surveillance of behavior, interiority, and moral acts in daily life. The practice of confession reinforced internal control over passions and thoughts, fostering forms of self-observation and discipline that surpassed mere external compliance (Tentler, 2016; Foucault, 1977).

From monastic schools to mirrors for rulers, moral customs constitute a continuous mechanism of discipline and normativity. Through these texts, models of the "good child," the "modest student," the "obedient daughter," and the "humble father" were gradually formed. The Church cultivated a culture of moral everyday life, where every act, from how one sat to how one responded, was embedded within a morally charged network of actions. These were not abstract moral principles but practical schemas defining the posture of sitting, the sequence of the gaze, the order of speech according to age and gender, the permissible posture at the table, and even the rhythm of breathing during prayer. The discourse on behavior was not external to power; it carried it. Through these textual forms, the Church and secular institutions shaped models of subjects capable of internalizing order as natural normality. The body, speech, and desire were not merely objects of regulation but also the mediums through which the disciplined society of the late Middle Ages was created (Elias, 1982; Duffy, 1992). This silent yet systematic discipline constituted a preparation for the internalization of authority and contributed to the smooth integration of the individual into their social and theological roles. The lasting influence of these practical discourses both within the Church and broader culture, foreshadowed the later forms of secular discipline that would emerge from the 17th century onwards (Foucault, 1977; Elias, 1982).

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3.0 THE RENAISSANCE AND THE EMERGENCE OF MANUALS OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL CONDUCT

The Renaissance period marked a crucial transition from medieval collectivity to a culture that began to favor individual cultivation, the formation of manners, and the regulation of social behavior through texts. The emergence of manuals of individual and social conduct, known as Conduct Books or Conduct Literature, shaped a new behavioral paradigm closely linked to the individual's position within the social body, their appearance, and symbolic presence (Elias, 2000).

The courts of the Italian principalities, the French and German states, and the emerging urban centers functioned as laboratories of social propriety, reflecting a strong need for distinct codes of behavior. The concept of decorum was no longer confined to religious or moral demands but gradually became associated with social status and the image of the cultivated person. Adherence to rules of decorum and self-control was considered a sign of education and seriousness, qualities essential for participation in public life as defined by the dominant conceptions of the time (Burke, 1995; Elias, 2000; Chartier, 1994).

A characteristic example of the transition from external conformity to internalized behavioral norms is Giovanni Della Casa's Il Galateo (Della Casa, 1558/1795). This brief Renaissance treatise, written in the form of a dialogue, records rules of propriety and social behavior, such as cleanliness, modes of speech, and gestures in social settings. The work emphasizes behaviors that are not merely imposed by the social environment but are adopted as personal attitudes, becoming part of the individual's identity (Tenenti, 2022; Burke, 1995).

A similar function is found in De civilitate morum puerilium (1530) by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, one of the first pedagogical manuals addressed to children and young people, aiming to shape character through social practice. As a thinker within the Christian humanist tradition, Erasmus did not limit himself to teaching good manners; he pursued moral and intellectual cultivation, using courtesy as a means of fostering the development and proper formation of behavior. Through simple advice on dress, bodily posture, cleanliness, and table manners, Erasmus outlines a model of the child who must embody a civilized self, recognizable and accepted among the educated and the elite (Greenblatt, 2005; Schilling, 1992; Shuger, 1998).

The invention of printing, as a technological innovation that radically transformed communication and access to knowledge, was a pivotal factor in disseminating these behavioral norms. The printing, circulation, and continuous reprinting of manuals of decorum targeted various social strata, from the nobility and educators to the petty bourgeoisie, helping to make social behavior a field of learning and regulation. Individuals, regardless of social standing, were trained to follow commonly accepted rules of politeness and morality, integrating the social values and standards of their time. The "rule" thus ceased to be merely oral or embodied (through imitation or observation) and was transformed into a literate form, elevating the value of the written word and the codification of rules, which now shaped behavior in a more systematic and formalized way (Chartier, 1994; Febvre, 1985).

The development of Codes of Conduct (Verhaltenskodex) in Germany, most notably Adolph Freiherr von Knigge's Über den Umgang mit Menschen (c. 1788), extended this practice into

the German-speaking world, linking decorum with rationality, political education, and the moral formation of citizens. Knigge's book, published in 1788, is not simply a guide to good manners but a philosophical treatise on human interaction (von Knigge, 1788). Knigge did not seek to impose etiquette in the conventional sense but rather aimed to guide individuals on how to coexist with others, based on moral principles and rational thought. In his work, he emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding, respect, and self-criticism as foundations of harmonious social life. He encourages readers to view their relationships with others as reflections of their own inner development and self-awareness, rejecting prejudice and social inequality, and insisting that every interaction be grounded in sincerity, rationality, and human dignity. Contrary to the common association of his name with simple etiquette rules, Knigge's work invites deeper reflection on how people can create a society based on mutual respect and understanding (Rudloff, 2022).

Also notable is the relationship between child-rearing and the regulation of the body and senses. The emergence of an emphasis on cleanliness, proper posture, appropriate eye contact, and the avoidance of unseemly gestures and sounds testify to the gradual imposition of a "culture of the body" that regulated daily life down to the smallest details. The child's body, instead of being a field of freedom and spontaneity, became an object of control, formation, and discipline. Elias (2000) describes this process as the "civilizing process of manners," which has long-term effects on the construction of individual and collective identity.

Examples such as Il Galateo, Erasmus's De civilitate, Knigge's works, and other lesser-known texts of the period, such as Stefano Guazzo's La Civil Conversazione and Baldassare Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, highlight the pedagogical character of these manuals, not in the narrow sense of school education, but as social apprenticeship and embodied cultivation. The courtly and urban cultures produced a new ethos where morality was no longer based solely on theological discourse but became entwined with social role, self-representation, and visibility within the new social structures of the Renaissance (Javitch, 1991; Burke, 1995).

A major contribution to the shaping of the ideal model of individual and social conduct also came from Baldassare Castiglione's Il Cortegiano (The Book of the Courtier, 1528). Presented as a dialogue among nobles at the court of Urbino, it defines the ideal courtier as a person of aristocratic prudence, self-restraint, inner nobility, and cultivated behavior. Although The Courtier is not a manual in the strict sense of a linear list of rules, it serves as a model of self-formation where courtesy functions as an internalized attitude rather than an external practice of behavior. Castiglione's style is highly rhetorical, avoiding didacticism, and thus influences more through the model it proposes than by explicit normative injunctions (Burke, 1995; Javitch, 1991).

Stefano Guazzo's La Civil Conversazione (1574) also made a significant contribution, focusing on the importance of language, discourse, and communication in social education. Unlike the more aristocratic Castiglione, Guazzo adopted a more urban and practical tone, focusing on interpersonal relationships and the management of social coexistence. His work reflects the deeper social changes brought about by the rise of the bourgeoisie, who no longer sought merely to imitate courtly nobility but instead sought functional tools for daily social life and integration into the culture of literacy, conversation, and persuasion (Chartier, 1994; Goodman, 1996).

The examples of Guazzo and Castiglione reveal the variety of expressions that education took during the Renaissance from courtly idealism to urban pragmatism. Nevertheless, both share a common core: the need to cultivate a self-capability of presenting itself in public with propriety, self-restraint, and eloquence. Whether courtier or townsman, the individual was now educated to perceive and reconsider their demeanor, to control their language, to regulate their bodily expressions, and to integrate into networks of social recognition.

4.0 CHRISTIAN RATIONALISM AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

During the 17th and 18th centuries, moral education and the normative formation of children became systematically integrated into the school environment, not merely as ancillary practices but as essential objectives of the educational process. The establishment of a model of order and discipline was directly linked to the increasing influence of Christian rationalism, which no longer emphasized solely the moral dimension of example or repentance but instead organized a comprehensive network of rules, gestures, postures, and discourses to systematically control students' behavior. Education ceased to be limited to the transmission of knowledge and acquired the character of a disciplinary mechanism aimed at regulating the body and public behavior.

In this direction, the contribution of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, founder of the Christian Brothers' Schools, was decisive. He composed Les Règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne (1736). His work did not confine itself to general admonitions or abstract moral teachings but instead provided a detailed guide to behavior, rigorously defining how a student should sit, speak, remain silent, stand before the teacher, and conduct themselves in church, at school, or even during meals. The body was no longer formless and uncontrolled but subjected to strict discipline, becoming the principal indicator of internalized rule. The notion of decorum here is not conceived as an element of social distinction but as a sign of Christian education and inner order, in absolute alignment with Church discourse and the strictures of the school environment (La Salle, 2018/1736).

The influence of La Salle's work is closely linked to a broader shift observed in the school culture of the 17th and 18th centuries: the incorporation of normative discourses into the very environment of instruction. Pedagogical practice was no longer neutral or merely transmissive; it became imbued with a rhetoric of moral construction and behavioral adaptation according to predetermined standards. The classroom was transformed into a field of continuous supervision and control, where behavior was evaluated with the same strictness as learning. This process laid the foundation for the future development of mass education in the 19th century, when discipline and the establishment of norms would become key mechanisms for the formation of citizens (Foucault, 1977; Tröhler, 2011).

The linking of children's behavior with codes of propriety was not an innovation of the 18th century. Already by the 16th century, educational manuals were in circulation, notably De civilitate morum puerilium (1530), attributed to Erasmus of Rotterdam and directed at young nobles. These texts did not describe behavior as a spontaneous manifestation but rather structured it as the result of learning and systematic cultivation, emphasizing control of the body, speech, movements, and social manners. In this view, the child was not treated as an autonomous subject but as an object of formation, who must discipline themselves according to models of politeness, modesty, and self-restraint. Silence, the elegance of the gaze, and

modesty in expression were not merely matters of moral or aesthetic significance but conditions of social survival within a system where acceptance presupposed strict conformity to established behavioral norms (Erasmus, 1530; Shuger, 1998).

The normative discourses formed during this period were not limited to the school environment or to children but extended to all levels of social life. The birth of a new form of rationality, influenced by both Christian theology and emerging scientific thought, made it necessary to regulate all social roles: the father, the teacher, the subject, and the civil servant.

Manuals of decorum and behavior proliferated, covering every aspect of daily life, from speech to cleanliness, from clothing to sitting posture, from respect for superiors to self-control in public spaces. Behavior ceased to be a private matter and became a marker of civilization, social integration, and moral formation (Tröhler, 2011; Burke, 1995).

The works of Erasmus and La Salle prepared the ground for those school and social manuals that would reappear in the 19th century, now fully embedded within the institutional function of schools and the state's control over education. Manuals of civility do not belong to a bygone form of culture; rather, they constitute enduring mechanisms of discipline through which the individual internalizes the rule not as an external threat but as an organic part of their identity (Foucault, 1977; Elias, 2000).

5.0 NATION-STATES, MASS EDUCATION, AND MANUALS OF MORALITY

The consolidation of nation-states during the 19th century was accompanied by the development of a unified and strictly structured educational mechanism, which extended beyond the transmission of knowledge to include the normative regulation of student behavior. Reading series such as Lectures Morales in France and Moral Lessons in Britain functioned simultaneously as tools of moral education and as mechanisms for internalizing socially desirable forms of behavior. National identity was constructed not only through language or history but also through moral education that emphasized obedience, charity, cleanliness, and respect for hierarchy. The didactic nature of these manuals served to shape a disciplined and compliant citizen, linking individual responsibility to collective progress (Thamin & Lapie, 1903; Altick & Rose, 1998).

Moral education gradually distanced itself from religious authority and was incorporated into a new secular value system compatible with the principles of the liberal state. This transition was neither abrupt nor sudden; rather, it unfolded gradually through a process of the gentle integration of moral standards into a system that favored universality, individual responsibility, and public orderliness. Secular morality became an integral part of the school routine, and students were expected to accept rules not because of religious belief but as necessary conditions for social coexistence and national progress (McClelland, 1962; Bell & Grafton, 2018).

The school classroom was transformed into a field for instilling specific forms of social behavior. Movements of the body, ways of speaking, use of space, and relationships with authority were regulated by detailed rules, which were no longer informal or oral. School regulations began to be printed, posted in classrooms, and became a stable part of daily

experience. The standardization of moral and social behavior took on the character of a formalized program, fully integrated into state educational policy (Tröhler, 2011; Green, 2013).

Justice and equality within the school environment were crystallized through the regulatory power of manuals and rules. Posture, tone of voice, forms of addressing teachers, behavior during lessons, and cleanliness were linked to the broader image of the "good student," and by extension, to that of the future citizen. Individual conformity became an indicator of cultural and national maturity. The school, as a microcosm of the state, demanded regulations that reflected the broader ambitions of the modern nation for a disciplined, productive, and morally structured population (Emerson, 1998; Lawn & Grek, 2012).

6.0 IDEOLOGICAL MECHANISMS, NORMATIVE ORDER, AND DISCIPLINE

The 20th century is characterized by the increased linkage of the school with the state apparatus. In both authoritarian and democratic societies of Europe, moral education was transformed into a tool for shaping citizens according to the dominant ideological model. The educational process was enriched with manuals, regulations, and ritual practices aimed at regulating daily behavior both inside and outside the classroom (Foucault, 1977; Giddens & Birdsall, 2001).

The prevailing code in schools gradually ceased to function merely as a means of pedagogical guidance and evolved into a technique of power. Clothing, bodily posture, the use of visual imagery, and participation in various activities took on a decisive role in instilling a disciplined and compliant subjectivity. The rule was no longer abstract but was incorporated into every aspect of school life from morning prayers during assemblies to the orderly alignment during school dismissal (Bourdieu, 1996; Foucault, 1978).

The political use of moral education acquired distinct characteristics depending on the ideological orientation of each regime. In France during the first half of the 20th century, the separation of Church and State (1905) did not eliminate the use of schooling as a field for reinforcing fundamental democratic values, based on political virtue, devotion to the common good, and the moral formation of citizens according to principles that ensured the cohesion of democracy (Carsin, 2016). Respect for authority, diligence, discipline, and patriotism were presented as qualities of the ideal citizen, embedding state values into the educational process (Jennings, 2011; Durkheim, 1995/1912).

In the fascist regimes of Italy and Spain, political and moral education was organized in full alignment with the values and goals of the regime. School textbooks, organizational regulations, and the materials of youth organizations were systematically incorporated into education to instill models of obedience, loyalty to the nation, and devotion to the leader.

In Italy, Benito Mussolini's own writings, combined with publications directed at children and adolescents, presented the ideal of a young person who was hardened, devoted, courageous, and disciplined, an individual who did not question but instead embodied the moral and political virtues of the fascist ideal, offering their body and character in service of the nation and regime (Mosse, 1999; Lyttelton, 2002).

In Spain, Francisco Franco's regime promoted moral education through the ideology of "National Catholicism," with particular emphasis on family and religious morality. School textbooks and decrees propagated the image of the woman as mother and wife, highlighting ideals of submission, silence, and discipline (Chislett, 2013).

In Britain, although schools were less authoritarian, they remained connected to Christian principles and the values of social decorum. At prestigious Public Schools such as Eton and Harrow, moral values were taught with a strong emphasis on self-discipline, modesty, and social responsibility. The figure of the "Gentleman" was shaped through school regulations that imposed strict moral conduct and courtesy (Roberts, 2004).

Finally, in the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, although religion was rejected, schooling was transformed into a tool for shaping the "socialist man." The notions of collectivity, industriousness, and solidarity emerged as normative values that structured students' daily lives, while their participation in organizations such as the Pioneers became a means of enforcing Soviet ideology (Serov, 2023; Gorbachev, 1987).

7.0 CODES OF SCHOOL LIFE AND THE SHAPING OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The 21st century has been accompanied by significant transformations in education and the normative character of the school institution. Faced with the challenges of an increasingly globalized and digitized society, school regulations have been transformed, moving away from a logic of bodily discipline and strict enforcement and shifting toward practices that promote democratic inclusion, active participation, and respect for individual rights. Today, the content of school regulations encompasses a wide range of provisions concerning students' daily lives, structured according to the principles of ethical inclusion and the recognition of the value of diversity.

The concept of citizenship, deeply rooted historically, is renewed in the modern school through codes of life that focus on students' interactions and their responsibility toward the community. Modern "codes of life" define how students should communicate, negotiate, and collaborate. From daily behaviors such as how they greet each other to how they use mobile phones and engage with public spaces, regulations emphasize the importance of responsibility and social participation (Caldwell & Spinks, 2013).

In today's world, the school is not limited to reproducing values and norms related to daily life and social discipline; it also extends into a framework that seeks to cultivate the notion of democratic inclusion. Inclusion, as a fundamental value in 21st-century educational policy, ensures that students from diverse social, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are not marginalized but participate equally in the educational process. The implementation of rules that promote equality and solidarity strengthens the potential for a society that acknowledges and respects diversity, ensuring that students have equal rights and opportunities to participate (Slee, 2011). The goal is to build a school that serves as a mirror of society, promoting freedom of expression, acceptance, and mutual respect.

Moreover, the digital age has added a new dimension to school regulations. The use of the Internet, social media, and new technologies has disrupted students' daily lives, introducing new challenges for the educational community that require adaptation and innovative

approaches. The regulation of mobile phone use, the prevention of cyberbullying, and the promotion of digital responsibility have become crucial issues addressed through updated regulations. School communities are called upon to ensure that students understand the importance of respectful online behavior and the protection of their personal identities. Integrating rules for digital behavior into school regulations aims to cultivate critical thinking and ethical behavior in the digital world (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008).

Another noteworthy development in contemporary school regulations is the shift from moral rules toward rules promoting well-being. Today, healthy living, proper nutrition, physical exercise, and mental well-being are no longer simple recommendations but are incorporated into the rules of the school community. Rules promoting well-being encourage students to take responsibility for themselves and for the wider society, while also contributing to the prevention of mental health issues among young people. Well-being, in its conceptual dimension, is closely linked to the personal development of the student and their ability to interact with the school and social environments with respect and responsibility (Sallis et al., 2015).

The normative transformation of schooling in the 21st century highlights the ongoing evolution of the school institution from a strictly regulatory mechanism to a space that fosters participation, creativity, and responsibility. Modern school regulations are embedded within a broader social framework that enhances students' active involvement in shaping their school environment and the rules that govern it. These regulations combine the democratic ideals of inclusion and equality with the need for personal responsibility, creating a dynamic school environment that reflects the values of the 21st century.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS- CRITICAL REVIEW

The study of moral customs, normative texts, and moral education from the Late Middle Ages to the contemporary era reveals the deep connection between education, the shaping of social values, and the imposition of discipline. From the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and into the 20th century, social and religious mandates influenced education and child-rearing practices, promoting obedience and guiding individuals through specific normative discourses. This process is closely tied to systems of power and the forms of domination developed within various social structures, as well as to the construction of the "good" citizen or the "good" student, as reflected in the various types of normative texts, from religious and political ethics to pedagogical instructions.

The analysis of the evolution of these regulations highlights the ideological and social dimensions carried out by rules. Through regulatory texts, behaviors and attitudes are prescribed, shaping students' perceptions and influencing their daily lives and ways of interacting with others. The influence of the Church in the Late Middle Ages, the revival of human dignity during the Renaissance, and the imposition of the school disciplinary system in modern times confirm that social and educational discipline serves not only to regulate behaviors and exert control but also to recognize humanity and promote well-being (Foucault, 1977; Elias, 1982).

The transition from Christian rationalism to the social norms of the modern era, particularly amidst the radical social and political changes of the 19th and 20th centuries, shows the

diversification and evolution of normative frameworks. As education became increasingly mass-oriented and secular, regulations had to adapt to new political, social, and cultural demands. The shift moved from subordination to religious values toward a national morality, where the educational process became a tool of political manipulation and the training of the "good" citizen and soldier (Altbach, 2005; Gramsci, 1971). Today, with the move from ecclesiastical education to education that promotes "well-being" and democratic inclusion, the tendency toward guidance remains but shifts emphasis from the exercise of authority toward cultivating individuals' awareness of their rights and obligations (O'Toole & Simovska, 2022; Said, 1979).

The works of Foucault and Elias help us understand how power and social rules influence personal identity. Through discipline and the regulation of behavior, the individual's ways of thinking, acting, and relating to others are gradually formed. Foucault highlights how power is not confined to institutional impositions but operates primarily through systems of discourse that define what is true, what is normal, and what is acceptable behavior. Through these discourses, social power relations are embedded within institutions and regulations, profoundly influencing how individuals construct their identity and consciousness (Foucault, 1977). School discipline, and social discipline more broadly, shape both the body and ethos of individuals, as dominant values and rules are gradually internalized and influence behavior and self-perception (Elias, 2000).

The evolution of normative discourses, from religious moral instruction to contemporary practices of bodily discipline, reveals the continuous presence of social and political values affecting both education and society. Meanwhile, changes in the school environment and social reality, especially with the advent of new technologies and communication media, are producing new forms of regulation and reshaping the value systems of successive generations (Burman et al., 1998).

The journey from the Middle Ages to the 21st century highlights the persistent need for normality and social order, determined both by power dynamics and by the ongoing negotiation of the moral values that sustain them. The critical question that arises, beyond the historical evolution of education, is: Who has the power to construct the "useful" morals that shape social perceptions and educational values? There is an ongoing tension between the influence of the dominant class or institutions and that of broader society in the imposition of moral standards. The construction of moral values is undoubtedly a tool that can be determined by power, whether from political, religious, or educational systems. Yet, the influence that society in general, or even the underlying mechanisms of schools themselves, may exert could offer a different dimension to moral guidance.

In the school environment, moral guidance often emerges from a strict protocol dictating enduring values associated with social order and the function of the school as a site of socialization. Schools, as microcosms of society, often act as carriers of these values through highly regulated frameworks, shaping subjects within specific boundaries. The values formed within schools are not only the result of political or social pressures but often incorporate ideological models associated with the formation of individuals as active citizens, through processes of internalization and self-discipline.

The human trajectory, from the imposition of external rules and models within the school context to broader social consensus, highlights the role of modern regulations and new forms of normative discourse in the society and education of the future. Thus, an important question remains: How will evolving regulations and new forms of communication affect values and social relations in the future? Will the school continue to play the same role in shaping moral standards, or will new spaces and methods emerge for renegotiating moral values in an era of constantly shifting social realities? Recognizing these issues underscores the need to rethink or revise the notions of normality, order, and moral guidance that shape human behavior, both within educational settings and in broader society.

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