

Public instruction in the Pombaline period: within representations*

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ABSTRACT

Studies about pombalism are permeated by paradoxes and very often present ideological caricatures. In this sense, it is necessary to revisit the historiography that addresses this period (1750–1777), looking at it from a critical perspective. Therefore, this paper, which deals specifically with public instruction, aims to analyze the representations of Pombaline education reforms found in books and journals. Eight groups of representation emerged from the data reviewed: Pombal as a unifier, liberator of indigenous people, public school creator, revolutionary, efficient, modernizer, promoter of decadence in education, and powerful/centralizer.

KEYWORDS

public instruction; pombalism; representation.

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A INSTRUÇÃO PÚBLICA NO PERÍODO POMBALINO: ENTRE REPRESENTAÇÕES

RESUMO

Os estudos acerca do pombalismo são permeados por paradoxos e, muitas vezes, apresentam caricaturas ideológicas. Nesse sentido, faz-se necessário revisitar a historiografia que se debruça sobre esse período (1750–1777), a partir de uma perspectiva crítica. Dada essa problemática, este artigo, que trata especificamente da instrução pública, objetivou analisar as representações acerca das reformas pombalinas na instrução pública que perpassam livros e publicações em periódicos. Foram encontrados oito grupos de representação: Pombal como unificador, libertador dos índios, criador da escola pública, revolucionário, eficiente, modernizador, promotor da decadência da educação e poderoso/centralizador.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

instrução pública; pombalismo; representação.

LA INSTRUCCIÓN PÚBLICA EN EL PERÍODO POMBALINO: ENTRE LAS REPRESENTACIONES

RESUMEN

Los estudios sobre el pombalismo están impregnados de paradojas y, a menudo, presentan caricaturas ideológicas. En este sentido, es necesario revisar la historiografía que se centra en este período (1750–1777), desde una perspectiva crítica. Ante esta problemática, este artículo, que trata específicamente de la educación pública, tuvo como objetivo analizar las representaciones sobre las reformas pombalinas en la educación pública que permean los libros y las publicaciones en los periódicos. Se encontraron ocho grupos de representación: Pombal como unificador, liberador de los indios, creador de la escuela pública, revolucionario, eficiente, modernizador, promotor de la decadencia de la educación y poderoso/centralizador.

PALABRAS CLAVE

instrucción pública; pombalismo; representación.

INTRODUCTION

History of Education came to be considered a scientific course only in the late 20th century. In Brazil, specifically, the number of studies in this area grew as of 1986, when graduation programs and research groups targeting this field emerged from 1960 to 1970. Little importance was given to the Colonial Period, confirmed by the reduced number of pages dedicated to this topic in books about the history of education in Brazil. As an example, one can mention *L'Instruction publique au Brésil: histoire et législation* (1500–1889) by José Ricardo Pires de Almeida (Vidal and Faria Filho, 2003). In consonance with this argument, it is important to mention the historiographical surveying carried out by Fonseca (2009), in which she noticed the small number of research studies addressing this period compared to the ones that focus on the Empire and the Republican Period. The author also highlights that the studies about colonial education frequently address the subject in a generalized way and from a traditional approach. In addition, dichotomic stances either praise Jesuit actions and see the Pombaline reforms as a period of darkness for education or value them, arguing that the Jesuits were obstacles to modernization.

Regarding the Pombaline Period specifically, Alves (2005) argues that it is necessary to overcome the “ideological caricatures” seen in many works of historiography. In Brazil, Pombaline reforms are usually seen as having been destructive. Some authors, such as Fernando de Azevedo in *A cultura brasileira* (1964) and Theobaldo Miranda dos Santos in *Noções de história da educação* (1945 *apud* Vidal and Faria Filho, 2003), characterize Pombaline actions in education as destroyers of the Jesuit system, resulting in a period of emptiness and darkness. Considering this issue, this paper aims to analyze the representations of Pombaline education reforms found in books and journals.

This research paper seeks to contribute to the critical analysis of Pombaline studies, specifically those targeting public instruction in the period. It is linked to an investigation that has been ongoing since 2017 and aims to collect data from all pieces written about or by the Marquis of Pombal, so that a complete and updated work of Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo can be prepared, critically annotated in 32 volumes. The project is led by José Eduardo Franco, Pedro Calafate, and Viriato Soromenho-Marques, from the Centre for Lusophone and European Literatures and Cultures (*Centro de Literaturas e Culturas Lusófonas e Europeias* – CLEPUL) of the Faculty of Letters (*Faculdade de Letras*), Universidade de Lisboa (FLUL), and involves researchers from Brazilian universities, including Universidade Federal de Sergipe (UFS).

Even though different authors have produced significant research studies about the Pombaline reforms, this topic should be further researched, and more specifically, its different representations, which may be identified in texts published about Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo and the reforms undertaken under his government. This importance becomes more evident when we take into consideration the fact that Pombal invested in patronage, as argued by Teixeira (1999), and historiography lacks studies investigating the image that

was projected by him compared to the representations reproduced by scholars who study Pombalism.

THE MARQUIS OF POMBAL AND PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

According to Maxwell (1996), Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, the Marquis of Pombal, held the position of minister of Portugal from 1750 to 1777, a period coinciding with the rule of D. José I. During the years he worked as a statesman in the Portuguese government, Pombal undertook reforms in different areas. Given his experience abroad, the influences from other countries are perceptible in Carvalho e Melo's actions; for instance, in domestic architecture, the tastes developed during his stay in Austria are noticeable (Maxwell, 1996). Pombal's experiences in the countries where he lived changed his perspectives in a way that the influence from these nations can be observed in his political, economic, and social choices. For this reason, the minister is considered an *estrangeirado*. Falcon (1993, p. 204, our translation) defines the

Phenomenon of “*estrangeiramento*” as being the product of a split between those who, traveling and seeing other realities or getting in contact with those who came from abroad, the military and diplomats from other nations, could change the way they saw and felt, and the others who, isolated, remained impervious to everything that was foreign. That was the starting point for the ideological division between the nationals or ‘*castiços*’ and the ‘foreigners’¹.

Pombal became a minister with formed ideas, diplomatic experience, and scientist friends, as Maxwell (1996) explains. The Pombaline reforms, in this sense, are not the work of a man. Besides the antecedents of the reign of D. João V, many other figures were directly or indirectly involved with the changes undertaken. In the words of Carvalho (1978, p. 2, our translation), Pombalism is rather “a common denominator of opinions than the expression of a will imposed top-down, uncompromisingly, and in a determined and inflexible way”. Moreover, the author explains that the Portuguese enlightenment — comparable to the Italian one — is expressed in the Pombaline ideology. Its reformist and progressive essence was linked to Catholicism.

The changes undertaken by Pombal also affect the Portuguese colonies. Regarding education in the Brazilian territory, instruction was the responsibility of the Society of Jesus² since 1549, whose Christian pedagogy sought to civilize indigenous people. In fact, the Jesuits decided to learn the *Língua geral* (General Language), spoken by the Indians, and use it in their teaching practices. Initially, as Saviani (2005) explains, a basilica pedagogy — that is, suited to a given context — guided the practice, but it did not please all Jesuits. After a long process of elaboration,

1 The authors are responsible for the translation of quotes from Portuguese to English.

2 As Santos (2010b) explains, in 1534 the Society of Jesus was founded to strengthen and disseminate Catholicism, which was losing followers due to the Protestant Reform.

initiated in 1584, the *Ratio Studiorum*³ was published in 1599, presenting a general plan for instruction. The Jesuits concentrated great power in the Brazilian colony, not only in economic and political terms, given that they kept the monopoly of education, especially of secondary instruction, as Carvalho (1978) contends.

The control over the Indians by Jesuits, combined with the wealth they acquired, displeased Portugal and led Pombalism to promote anti-Jesuitism, blaming the priests of the Society for Portugal's state of "backwardness". This situation led to accusations of Pombal being a heretic (Carvalho, 1978). The Jesuits were ousted in 1759; the Charter of June 28, 1759, provides a justification:

Considering that the study of Human Letters is the basis of all Sciences, one sees in these Kingdoms, which have extraordinarily fallen from their apogee, in which they found themselves when the Classes were entrusted to the Religious Jesuits, in account of their dark, and fastidious Method, which was introduced in the Schools of these Kingdoms, and its Domains. (Portugal, 1830, p. 673, our translation)

The Charter that regulates Minor Studies (*Estudos Menores*) criticizes the method employed by the Jesuits, characterizing it as fastidious and questioning its effectiveness. The Law of September 3, 1759, exterminates, denaturalizes, and expels the Society of Jesus, in addition to prohibiting any communication with them under the death penalty (Portugal, 1830). In this sense, the aim is to put the authority of the Portuguese State over that of the Church, in a process of laicization, according to Falcon (1993).

The Pombaline reforms implemented as of 1759, as Saviani (2005) states, reflect the pedagogy of rationalist humanism, even though it is still linked to Catholicism. The system deployed refers to *aulas régias*, that is, separate classes funded and controlled by the State, which were taught in Brazil until 1834. The Royal Teachers should teach their classes in Portuguese and use grammar books approved by the Royal Board of Censorship (*Real Mesa Censória*) — instituted in 1768 to control the publications and books that could be used. As Santos (2010a, p. 69) claims, books should "contain clear and concise explanations, with no excesses of rules and exceptions".

When analyzing the Pombaline legislation, Oliveira (2010) concludes that discursive strategies were used to build a national identity, with the argument of recovering the past, which is actually mythical. Therefore, the narrative of a nation is constructed.

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the nation — or narration

3 *Ratio Studiorum* expresses pedagogical ideals that seek to shape the human essence to achieve the universal and the divine, God's creation, being, therefore, an essentialist perspective. It is based on Thomism — from Saint Thomas Aquinas — which is defined as "the articulation between Aristotle's philosophy and Christian tradition" (Saviani, 2005, p. 6, our translation). In addition to despising literature from the epoch, given its anti-Catholic essence, grammar was taught in its details.

— might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the West. An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force. (Bhabha, 2000, p. 1)

An image of the past is painted; it is romanticized and imagined to develop the feeling of unity. In Pombalism, Oliveira (2010) identifies the construction of the idea which portrays Portugal as ‘tardy’, compared to other European nations, due to the Jesuits — being Europe the representation of modernism. Besides, the legislation advocates redemption through the creation of tradition and projection towards a glorious future. Oppositions, like the contrast between light and darkness that is present in Enlightenment, are also employed. Education is a way of achieving this illumination — still connected to the Church — which would lead to the formation of merchants and government employees. Therefore, there is a utilitarian end.

In line with this perspective of analyzing historical events through a mythical construction that orientates the studies, the New School movement in the 1930s seeks to establish a foundational myth. It reinforced the idea of an educational organization starting from their present, somehow denying the importance of the actions taken in previous centuries. Azevedo (1964), for instance, when referring to the 18th century, characterized this period as an educational ‘gap’ that should not be given attention due to its lack of meaning. According to Bontempi Júnior (1995) and Nascimento (2003), this claim was responsible for diminishing, until the 20th century, the number of studies that address education in the 18th century.

To better illustrate the Pombaline reforms in public instruction, we present Chart 1 where the main legislative pieces of the period about instruction (including discussions on teaching and language use) can be found in chronological order.

Chart 1 – Main legislative pieces from the Pombaline Period that address public instruction (1750–1777).

Date of implementation	Legislative piece	Main elements
May 3, 1757	<i>Directorio, que se deve observar nas Povoações dos Indios do Pará, e Maranhão em quanto Sua Magestade não mandar o contrario</i> ⁴ — known as Law of the Directory.	Introduced the language spoken by the Prince — Portuguese — to the conquered peoples, which had to be used in every school while the General language was forbidden. It also institutes that there should be two public schools in each village, one for boys — which teaches the Christian doctrine, reading, writing, and counting — and another for girls — instructing them with the Christian doctrine, as well as “reading, writing, spinning, lace making, and all other activities specific for that gender” (Portugal, 1830, p. 509). It also demands the presence of a male and a female master in schools for their respective genders.

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4 It had its effects extended to all Portuguese colonies with the Charter of August 27, 1758.

Chart 1 – Continuation.

Date of implementation	Legislative piece	Main elements
May 19, 1759	The Charter that confirms the Commerce Classes, which were proposed in the Charter of April 19, but were envisaged in the Charter of December 12, 1756.	The Statutes of Commerce Classes are instituted. They address the training of perfect traders; preferably, students should be sons of merchants. The study of arithmetic is understood as essential in this process. Although there is no explicit mention of language teaching, Oliveira <i>et al.</i> (2010) argue that knowledge of French and English was probably required.
June 28, 1759	General Law of Minor Studies.	The work of the Jesuits in education is discontinued; the following classes are created: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Rhetoric, which should be taught in Portuguese; the position of Director of Studies is established; it is ordained that teaching practices have to follow the “old method” — simplicity and clarity in the approach to grammar with emphasis on use and exercise.
January 11, 1760	<i>Alvará declarando o 7 de julho de 1759 acerca do Director Geral dos Estudos, e Exames.</i>	It determines the exams that should be taken by teachers who want to become Directors of Studies.
March 7, 1761	<i>Carta de Lei com os Estatutos do Real Collegio dos Nobres.</i>	The College of Arts becomes the Royal College of the Nobles. The statutes of the latter are published in this legislative piece. It also institutes that “the familiar dialogues will always be, either in the Portuguese Language, or in French, Italian, or English” (Portugal, 1830, p. 779, our translation), but never in Latin.
April 5, 1768	<i>Lei criando huma Meza de Censores Regios para examinar os livros, que houveram de correr no Reino.</i>	It creates the Royal Board of Censorship to control the circulation of books.
September 30, 1770	<i>Alvará determinando por que livros e manuscritos se ensine nas Aulas de Latim, e Primeiras Letras.</i>	It institutes that the Portuguese grammar (recommending the use of Reis Lobato’s <i>Grammatica Portugueza</i>) must be taught for six months before the study of Latin begins.
December 23, 1770	Royal Charter.	It creates the Board of Literary Providence to study the causes of university decay, as well as to propose reforms.
August 18, 1772	Royal Charter.	The statutes of the Royal College of Mafra, where Portuguese, Italian, and English should be taught.

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Chart 1 – Continuation.

Date of implementation	Legislative piece	Main elements
August 28, 1772	<i>Carta Regia ao Marquez de Pombal declarando-o Lugar-Tenente de Sua Magestade na Fundação da Universidade.</i>	It corroborates the <i>Compêndio histórico da Universidade de Coimbra</i> (1771), ratifying the “New Statutes for the Courses of Theological and Juridical Faculties, and for that of Natural Sciences, and Philosophical ones” (Portugal, 1858, p. 605, our translation). Living languages teaching, especially English and French, was recommended to the Medical and Mathematical courses.
November 6, 1772	<i>Lei fundando novas Escolas de Estudos Menores, e multiplicando-as na fôrma do Mappa, que as acompanha.</i>	It grants the Royal Board of Censorship jurisdiction to “proceed with the aforesaid School Establishments; qualifications; and nomination of Masters, who ought to govern these schools; and the determination of Places, where they have to practice” (Portugal, 1858, p. 612, our translation). It also anticipates public notices to convene masters who must be approved in an exam to exercise the function full-time.
November 10, 1772	<i>Lei abolindo as antigas consignações para a instrução dos Estudos, e estabelecendo o Subsídio Literario.</i>	It establishes a tax whose revenue must be used for public teaching.

Source: adapted from Portugal (1830, 1858), Hilsdorf (2005), Oliveira *et al.* (2010), and Santos (2010a).

The Pombaline legislation was the first to address living languages, which gained more emphasis as Latin decayed (Oliveira *et al.* 2010; Santos, 2010a). However, the actions are not equally implemented in all places, as Fávero (2006) explains. This fact reinforces the importance of studying the effects of the reforms locally.

Besides, Hilsdorf (2005, p. 22-23, our translation) states that, based on an “illustrated, pragmatic, and operative science”, “Pombal’s measures indicate a rupture with the Aristotelian-Thomistic humanism in effect, due to the Jesuit tradition, and the adoption of an empiricist theory of knowledge and of an inductive-experimental method”.

Pombalism is understood from different perspectives, given that Pombal is a paradoxical figure (Maxwell, 1996). In the following topic, we discuss the methodology employed in the research, which is grounded on the New Cultural History (NHC), with emphasis on the concept of representation, so that, in the subsequent topic, we can analyze the representations of public instruction during the Pombaline period.

METHODOLOGY

The conception in which this research is grounded is NHC. It is based on microanalysis, a methodological tendency that emerged in the 1970s in contrast to

macro models, the dominant method. Macro models involve the search for broad and generalizable patterns, with the recurrent use of quantitative methods and the analysis of documentation — focusing on ‘generalities’ and, consequently, disregarding particularities, in addition to not recognizing power relationships, which permeate the production and the access to documents (Ginzburg, 2007; Burke, 2008; Teixeira *et al.*, 2014).

According to Burke (2008), the cultural history, despite being rediscovered in 1970, has been practiced for more than 200 years in Germany. The author suggests a division into phases, emphasizing the existence of continuities among the groups, which are: “The ‘classic’ phase; the ‘social art history’ phase, which began in the 1930s; the discovery of popular culture history in the 1960s; and the ‘new cultural history’” (Burke, 2008, p. 15-16, our translation). Researchers practice the NHC in different ways. As Burke (2008) argues, they share an interest in symbols and interpretations. Another concept, that of representation, is considered crucial because it holds that our comprehension of reality is a construction, resulting from systems of representation that are socially built in cultural contexts. In this sense, it is impossible for historians to report facts as they really happened, given that their understanding, as well as the report itself, is a production of the event, that is, a representation — defined as “the production of meaning through language” (Hall, 1997, p. 16, our translation). This concept will be summarized in the topic concerning data discussion, once publications were analyzed for their representations.

The procedures adopted consisted of: gathering data on books and publications in journals that were written by Brazilian scholars, using CAPES Portal of Journals and Google Scholar. In this step, we used four keywords, “Pombaline reforms”, “Pombaline reforms in education”, “Marquis of Pombal”, and “Pombalism”. The texts found were put into a spreadsheet that includes the following items: type, title, author, area of study, where it was published, electronic address, institution to which the researcher is linked, and the keyword used to find the text. To ensure data consistency, repetitions were checked — before adding new productions into the spreadsheet, we searched to see if they had already been added and, when data gathering was complete, the results were double-checked to guarantee there were no duplicates. This spreadsheet was separated into two parts. In one of them, we placed all texts that addressed the Marquis of Pombal; therefore, we included research studies with diverse focuses (Architecture, Administration, Naval Reforms, Economy etc.). The other part includes only texts about or directly linked to public instruction. In this paper, we analyze data concerning the latter. The following step involved examining the representations (re)produced in the texts. In this case, quotes that show the authors’ representations were highlighted and, subsequently, grouped, based on similarities.

DATA GATHERING ON BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS IN JOURNALS

Regarding data gathering on books and publications in journals written by Brazilian authors, the first step of the methodological procedures, we found 498 texts. Two hundred and forty-five of them (49.2%) address public instruction, which

is the focus of this research. For this reason, only 245 papers will be discussed in the research study. The number of results by keyword is presented in the Figure 1. During the research, some publications appeared in more than one keyword; in such cases, the texts were not duplicated and were linked, in the spreadsheet, only to the first keyword to which they were related.

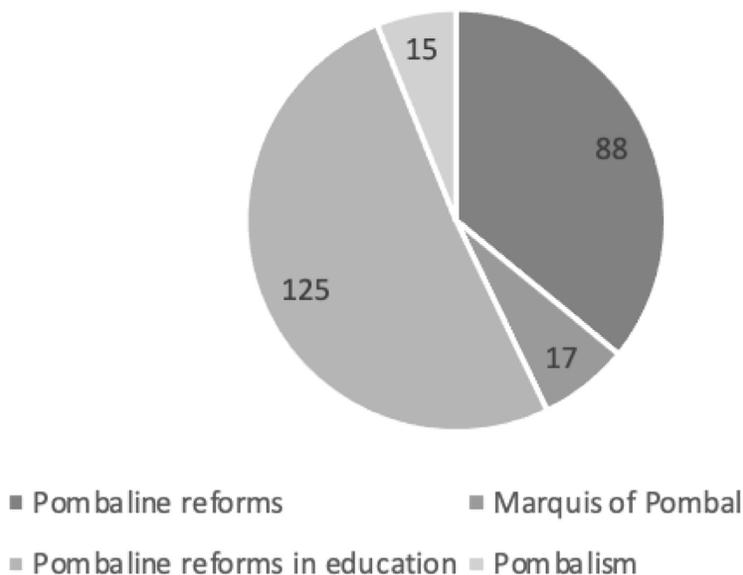


Figure 1 – Number of publications by keyword.

We found books, papers, abstracts, reading notes, reviews, and archives and documents, as the Figure 2 illustrates.

Paper was the type of work with the highest number of results (86.53%), followed by book (6.53%). The texts were written by Brazilian authors, but in some specific cases, there are Portuguese coauthors, or the authors were visiting professors in Brazilian universities despite not being Brazilian. A total of 88.17% of researchers were linked to public universities (as professors or undergraduate/graduate students); 1.63% were not linked to any institution; and 10.2% were from private universities. The institutions, from a total of 89, with the highest number of works are, respectively, Universidade Federal de Sergipe (23), Universidade de São Paulo (22), Universidade de Campinas (14), and Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (11).

As for the year of publication, works are distributed, with no big concentrations in specific years, except for 2016 and 2019, as shown in the Figure 3. This data agrees with the results of research studies conducted by Bontempi Júnior (1995) and Nascimento (2003) stating that few studies had addressed the history of education in the 18th century until the 1980s. By looking at the numbers, we can see

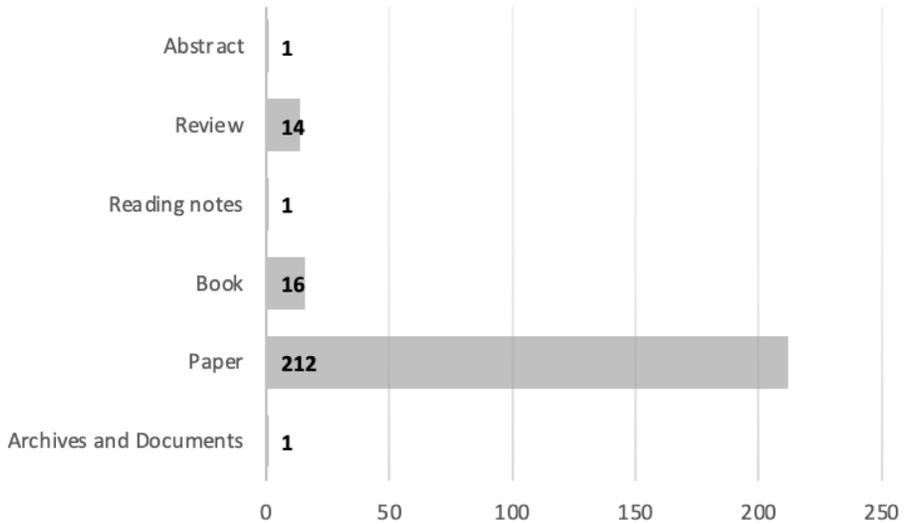


Figure 2 – Types of works.

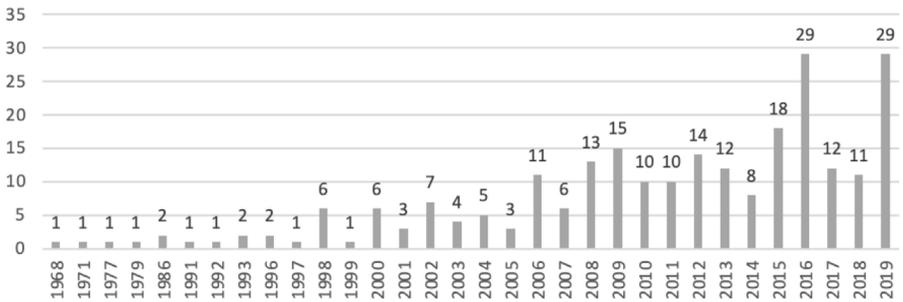


Figure 3 – Year of publication.

that until the 1980's only six papers were written about Pombal and, in the 1990s, there were eight publications. The number of works started to increase in the 21st century. From 2000 to 2010, we found 83 papers, and in the following nine years, 143 texts were published. Putting these numbers into perspective, an increase of almost 1,600% from the 20th to the 21st century can be observed. We highlight, however, that these data were gathered online, which has implications for the number of publications, considering that printed works that were not available online have not been included.

As shown above, the years 2016 and 2019 each have 29 publications, being the years with the highest number of works. The Figure 3 illustrates a growth in the number of studies as of 2006, which can be due to the fact that the data were gathered online. Some of the hard-copy publications might not have been published online and, consequently, were not listed in this research. Additional research is

required to review the references have been used since 1968 and identify any materials offline that were published in specialized journals to provide a better overview of what was written about the Pombaline reforms.

Another hypothesis is possible. The interest in studying the Pombaline period can have grown, resulting in more research studies about this period. Besides, thematic issues in journals contribute to increased results in some years, such as 2016 and 2019, especially because of *Revista de Estudos de Cultura*, linked to the research group *Núcleo de Estudos de Cultura* (UFS), which concentrates 21 publications (13 of them from 2016 and 5 from 2019). The second journal with the highest number of texts published is HISTEDBR, linked to researchers from the Universidade de Brasília (UnB), with 15 works. The next journal is *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, which gathers nine publications. Overall, 160 journals include works about public instruction in the Pombaline period.

Scholars with papers published about Pombalism come from different areas; however, most of them are from Education (155), followed by History (43) and Letters (12), as the Figure 4 illustrates.

Given that the texts address public instruction, the high number of works in Education is justified, and so are the ones in History. Publications linked to other areas usually address Pombaline reforms within their fields of study (for instance, Philosophy or Physics teaching). In the following topic, the texts are analyzed based on the concept of representation.

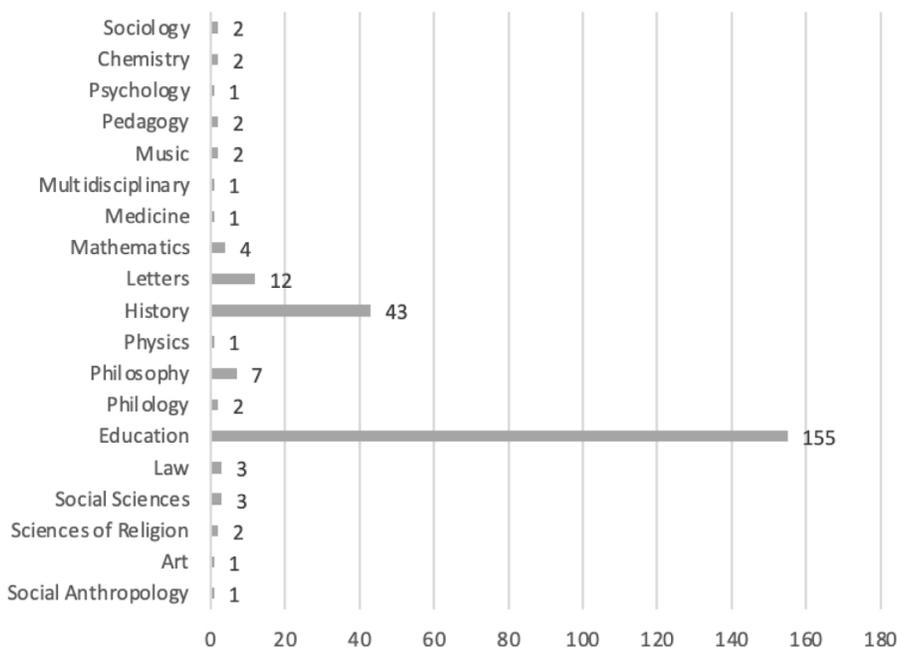


Figure 4 – Area of study.

REPRESENTATIONS ON POMBALINE REFORMS IN PUBLIC INSTRUCTIONS

Representation, a central concept in NHC, holds that meanings are constructed based on socially shared systems, and this requires the role of historians to be thought over. A historian — unlike the argument defended in the analytical-inductive method, for instance (Teixeira *et al.*, 2014) — is not the only one capable of finding the truth of historical facts in a neutral way because, as Carr (1987, p. 22) explains, “the facts of history never come to us in their “pure” form, since they do not and cannot exist in a pure form: they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder”. Neutrality, therefore, is impossible.

NHC also expands source possibilities, which were traditionally limited to written documents, such as legislation. Chartier (2002) criticizes the postulates that defend the neutrality and objectivity of intellectual products. He explains that there is no transparent relation between an author’s intentions and the reading constructed based on his or her text because “a production [...] is a *representation* and it is never identical to the one a producer, author, or artist invested in their work” (Chartier, 2002, p. 59, our highlights and translation). Therefore, texts of documents are interpreted in diverse ways, not according to the intention of who wrote them. Besides, reality is understood through representations, in such a way that “no text — even if apparently more documental, even the most ‘objective’ one [...] — maintain a transparent relation with the reality it apprehends” (Chartier, 2002, p. 63, our translation). The implication of that is the impossibility of neutrality both in the documents studied and in its analyses.

According to Hall (1997, 2016), representation is the construction of meaning which happens through a language. Therefore, language is a signifier, that is, it produces meanings that can be reproduced; many are naturalized and come to be seen as the only way of understanding something. Hall (1997, p. 19) also explains that

At the heart of the meaning process in culture, then, are two related “systems of representation”. The first enables us to give meaning to the world by constructing a set of correspondences or a chain of equivalences between things — people, objects, events, abstract ideas, etc. — and our system of concepts, our conceptual maps. The second relies on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages, which stand for or represent those concepts.

The relation between “things”, concepts, and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call “representation”.

The system of representation refers to the way concepts are organized and related to each other. These systems are directly related to culture, given that they are shared among individuals, allowing communication (which is always partial). We attribute meaning through the manner we represent, that is, the way we see reality. As Barros (2011) explains, this concept is related to that of practice, which

concerns the attitudes and customs of a group of people. To exemplify that, the author mentions beggars. In the 13th century, they were represented as important in the process of soul salvation. So people used to help them, offering food, medical care etc. Unlikely, in the 16th century, beggars started to be seen as undesirable. People used to cast them out, keep them away. In this sense, representations generate practices and vice versa.

Ultimately, it is vital to state that representation, as a category, was chosen by the authors of this paper taking into consideration that it may explain the different voices that echo when we talk about the Marquis of Pombal.

Regarding the Marquis of Pombal, his representations are frequently polarized; those who despise him and argue in favor of invalidating what was undertaken during the Pombaline period — the antipombalists — and those who acclaim him — the philopombalists (Franco and Rita, 2004). There are three main forms of understanding Pombal's performance as a minister over the last centuries:

A first trend has considered Pombal's actions as catastrophic for the country, which needs to be protected against governors who are like him in nature or ideology. Another trend sees him as the precursor of anticlerical laicism. He would, from this perspective, have touched "a sore spot" with regard to the causes of Portugal's downfall. Therefore, to remove such a decadence, it was necessary to 'keep' him. Due to practical issues, the authors evaluate. A third trend (where Camilo Branco bravely stands) understood that Carvalho e Melo should be 'judged' for his means of governing and for the content of his activities regarding their connection to morality. (Macedo, 1983 *apud* Franco and Rita, 2004, p. 24-25, our translation)

The perspectives of antipombalists and philopombalists, according to Franco and Rita (2004), began during the rule of D. Maria I, who took over the throne after her father, D. José I died. She imposed a policy against Pombaline measures, which came to be called "*A Viradeira*" — an attempt to reverse the actions initiated by the Marquis of Pombal (Cerqueira, 2014). To many authors, "*A Viradeira*" was never able to annul Pombaline reforms, but the antipombalism grew strong (Silva, 2006). Some representations continued being reproduced in historical studies, even if in a less exacerbated way.

Henceforth, we discuss the representations of Pombalism found in the 245 scientific works under analysis. They were grouped according to their similarities and will be presented in ascending order (from the least to most recurrent). Some quotes are reproduced to exemplify the interpretations of each group. Due to space limitations, it is not possible to list them all.

A few representations appeared only once and were not similar enough to others to make up a group. For this reason, they were grouped as outliers, that is, representations that did not fit in other groups. Some of them are presented below:

- "Pombal, with his measures, which were applied systematically during his ruling consulate, can be considered a *proto-founder of Brazil*" (Oliveira and Franco, 2016, p. 35, our highlights and translation);

- “Sebastião José is known in history for his noble title granted in 1770, that of Marquis of Pombal, and became *by far the greatest Lusitanian personality of the 18th century*” (Silva, 2012, p. 4, our highlights and translation);
- “Pombal’s actions, inferred more intensively in the reeducation and domestication of nobility and the subjects than in the formation of intellectual, literate and instructed men, represent the scope of the current educational system” (Trinchão, 2009, p. 103, our translation);
- “Pombal’s illuminist project aimed at the progress of Portugal happened at the costs of *serranos* being exploited within the colonial system” (Briskievicz, 2019, p. 9, our translation).

In the first quote, Pombal is characterized as a “proto-founder of Brazil”, having his importance to the country elevated. In this case, Pombaline actions are appreciated. In the second excerpt, Pombal is represented as “the greatest Lusitanian personality of the 18th century”; Carvalho e Melo is highlighted as incomparable to other figures of the century. On the other hand, Trinchão (2009, p. 103, our translation) describes Pombal’s actions as those of a tamer instead of those of “intellectual, literate and instructed men”, questioning Pombal’s intentions in undertaking them. Carr (1987) considers the historian’s attempt to understand the intentions of the person about whom he or she is writing as “imaginative understanding”. It is “imaginative” because it is impossible to know what someone else thought or wanted to do; one can only speculate, based on evidence. The last quote, finally, represents the Pombaline project as a project that exploits *serranos*.

Pombal is represented as a unifier (group 1), both from the lines of the Treaty of Tordesillas and the Brazilian territory: “After solving the last pending issues around the line of Tordesillas, Pombal worked to unify it in the mid-18th century” (Weffort, 2005, p. 23, our translation).

It might seem weird that the Marquis of Pombal is considered one of the historical protagonists of a unified and immense Brazil that speaks only one language, like it is today, with the additional risk of presenting a stereotyped easily questionable perspective, with all the risks of simplification that it presents. However, this idea is not totally out of purpose, as we seek to show. (Oliveira and Franco, 2016, p. 27, our translation)

By the representation of Oliveira and Franco (2016), Pombal was a central character in unifying a country. They also claim to be aware that this interpretation can seem “stereotyped” but argue that it is possible.

In another group, Carvalho e Melo is associated with the freedom of Indians (group 2); described as the one who ended their slavery: “Pombal included the freedom of Indians in its first great attempt to make an intellectual and cultural reform in modern Portugal, with consequences on the territorial unity of Brazil and its independence” (Weffort, 2005, p. 19, our translation); “Pombal extinguished Indian slavery in Maranhão, where it was more common than in the rest of the colony” (Seco and Amaral, 2006, p. 4, our translation).

In the third group, Pombal is represented as the creator of public schools in the Brazilian territory and, from Morais and Oliveira's (2012) viewpoint, in the entire West:

- “He was the creator of public schools under the responsibility of the State” (Boto, 2010, p. 284, our translation);
- “The origin and historical development of public education in Brazil are strictly linked to the reformist actions undertaken by the Marquis of Pombal” (Medeiros and Pereira, 2019, p. 4, our translation);
- “A new phase of education reforms began, from which the Marquis of Pombal [...] created the first public system of teaching in the West” (Morais and Oliveira, 2012, p. 84, our translation).

The education reforms are described as revolutionary (group 4) and renewing, as we exemplify below:

- “One can say that the reform of studies conceived and executed by Pombal, in its different stages, *revolutionized* the structure of Portuguese teaching” (Boto, 2010, p. 293, our translation and highlight);
- “The Pombaline project was *renewing* and *revolutionary*” (Dias, 1966, p. 380, our translation and highlights);
- “Pombal reveals his *revolutionary/futurist* spirit” (Santos Filho, Andrade and Santos, 2015, p. 10, our translation and highlight).

Pombal is also characterized as efficient (group 5), playing his role as a minister with great ‘competence’, which, as Teles (2019) defends, resulted in the conquest of his titles, granted ‘for merit’.

His remedial performance with the matters for which he was responsible brought to Carvalho e Melo the title of Count of Oeiras (1759) and, later, the commendation of Marquis of Pombal (1769), always for merit, as a reward for his services to the Portuguese State. (Teles, 2019, p. 41, our translation)

In this moment of great challenges, the career of a man was consolidated, the minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, who took on, with *enough competence and discernment*, the tasks demanded by the situation, ascending enormously in prestige in the eyes of the *fearful and insecure monarch D. José I.* (Marques, 2004, p. 40, our translation and highlights)

“If it was not for Pombal with his sharp vision and administrative force to allow Portugal to gain control over the colony again, the Jesuits, in a short period of time, would turn Brazil into another barn of the Society and the Church” (Santos Filho, Andrade and Santos, 2015, p. 6, our translation).

Marques’ (2004) remarks exemplify the contrast between Pombal’s and D. José I’s representation. Considering the actions of the minister who dealt with his tasks actively, the author describes the king as “fearful and insecure”. There is yet another contrast; between Pombaline and Jesuit actions. Santos Filho, Andrade and Santos (2015) portray Carvalho e Melo as the one who saved the colony from becoming a “barn” under the control of the Society of Jesus.

Group 6 gathers representations related to modernization which, according to Damasceno (2014), was only started in Portugal after Pombal's reforms:

- “This process was slow and decisively delayed the advances of modernity which, in Portugal, would only take place as of Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo, minister of D. José I” (Damasceno, 2014, p. 347, our translation);
- “If the figure of the Jesuits, was the icon of the beginning of education in Brazil, and the Marquis of Pombal was the icon of modernity in education, which, so to speak, was necessary at that point” (Andrade and Souza, 2019, p. 11, our translation);
- “The Marquis of Pombal was a *man ahead of his time*” (Bezerra and Lima, 2018, p. 354, our translation and highlight).

Andrade and Souza (2019) contrast Pombal and the Jesuits, but not in an antagonistic way; the latter are represented as founders, while the minister of Portugal is described as the modernizer of education, in a reform that the authors consider necessary. Regarding the last quote, Bezerra and Lima (2018) define Carvalho and Melo as “a man ahead of his time”, suggesting that the modernizing actions of the Marquis were unusual for his epoch.

On the other hand, the second group with the highest number of occurrences (group 7) includes representations of Pombalism as a setback for education, with the dissembling of the Jesuit teaching system:

- “The reform proposed by Pombal was a disaster, and education went through moments of ‘darkness’ in this period” (Fortes, 2012, p. 12, our translation);
- “The Pombaline reform was a *setback for education, destroying an educational that had already been consolidated* without implementing a new model that could replace it” (Shigunov Neto, Strieder and Silva, 2019, p. 125, our translation and highlights);
- “The Pombaline reform in instruction fixated a *fragmented teaching system*” (Duran, 2013, p. 82, our translation and highlights);
- With the expulsion of the Jesuits and the Pombaline reforms in Portugal, we watched a *complete dismantling of Brazilian education*. [...] If teaching laicization was an advancement to Portugal; to Brazil, the Pombaline reforms meant a setback in terms of school education (Zotti, 2006, p. 137-138, our translation and highlights).
- “The Pombaline reforms downgraded the level of teaching and the consequences of this reform are felt until today, given that we have an Education directed to the State and its interests” (Ribeiro, 1993, p. 16, our translation).

While Shigunov Neto, Strieder and Silva (2019) claim that the Pombaline reforms did not result in the implementation of an effective system, Duran (2013) defends that teaching was “fragmented”. Zotti (2006), in turn, regards Pombaline initiatives as “dismantling” education in the Brazilian territory, but with benefits to

Portugal. Ribeiro (1993), however, justifies his argument that education declined by stating that the interests of the State became the priority.

Finally, group 8, which includes the more frequent representations, refers to Pombal as powerful and centralizer, often associating his actions with impositions. Seco and Amaral (2006), for instance, state that Pombaline doings reflect a certain perversity:

- “Pombal by taking over *in an absolute way as a plenipotent minister* pushed the clergy away from the status of supremacy of decisions” (Silva, Simões Neto and Rodrigues, 2018, p. 639, our translation and highlights);
- “The sometimes wicked practicality of Pombal is reflected in the activities and reforms established by the Marquis in defense of the absolutism” (Seco and Amaral, 2006, p. 9, our translation);
- “Education in the second half of the 18th century in Brazil was affected directly by the enlightened despotism of the Marquis of Pombal in his political leadership in Portugal” (Briskievicz, 2019, p. 3, our translation);
- “The place of origin where certain discourses are produced is always decisive for the creation of rhetoric for personal gain. This strategy worked as a representation of power held by the Marquis of Pombal” (Nunes, 2019, p. 107, our translation).

Nunes (2019) associates Pombal’s position of power with the production of discourses that favor him. Chartier (1991) explains that representation and power are associated, in a way that “representatives” (dominant groups or individuals) can impose, especially on minority groups, their representations, forging an identity construction that often stereotypes them. In the case of Pombal, the discourses produced and disseminated were a means to exert his power and control the narrative about himself. The (re)production of representations can also generate submission, reinforcing certain interpretations as the only possible ones, as being *the* reality. In the words of Chartier (1991, p. 185-186, our translation), “representation becomes a machine for manufacturing respect and submission, in an instrument that produces an interiorized demand, necessary exactly where the resource of brutal force is not possible”.

Teixeira (1999, p. 47, our translation) discusses the so-called “Pombaline patronage”, that is, “the propagation of Pombaline ideals [...] which implies the purpose of strengthening power based on the full adherence of the subjects of the Crown, *i.e.*, through a wide campaign of public opinion-making, which involved the press and the arts in general”. The author focuses on how this process happened in the literature, through dedications, for instance. One work is to be highlighted, according to Teixeira (1999), *O Uruguay*, by Basílio da Gama, considered to be a Pombaline writer. The book praises Pombal’s actions and depreciates the Jesuits. Teixeira (1999) demonstrates the effort of Carvalho e Melo to produce and propagate representations that favored him and contributed to the submission of the Portuguese people. This did not, however, result in the absence of writings which criticize him.

The representations of the Marquis of Pombal in the historiography, as we have shown, vary and include perspectives that praise the actions of the minister and despise them.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, minister of Portugal from 1750 to 1777, undertook reforms in different areas, especially in education which, in the Brazilian territory, was under the responsibility of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits were blamed for Portugal's backwardness and expelled from the country and its domains.

The Pombaline reforms reflect enlightened ideas, but it is important to state that this Enlightenment is similar to the Italian one, given its strict relation with the Church, and not to the French one. The system of *aulas régias* was implemented. Teachers were required to hold a license (be approved in an exam) to be able to work. In addition, living languages were the object of legislation, being recommended at schools. Grammar should be taught through exercises and in a simplified manner, with the prohibition and condemnation of Jesuit works, accused of being too voluminous and unpractical. Moreover, the use of Portuguese became mandatory, including in Latin classes. Finally, with the creation of the Royal Board of Censorship, books under circulation in the kingdom were supervised and controlled.

Studies on Pombalism are historically marked with exaltation and rejection, including in the Brazilian historiography. To contribute to renewing Pombaline studies with a critical review, data were gathered preliminarily from books and works published in journals, and the texts were analyzed based on the concept of representation. We found 245 results that address public instruction, being nearly half of the total of results (which includes works on Pombalism, regardless of whether public instruction is addressed). This indicates greater interest in this area and importance attributed to the reforms in education, undertaken when Carvalho e Melo was a minister of Portugal. Moreover, 88.17% of the publications were written by students or professors linked to public universities, illustrating the importance of the research studies on Pombalism conducted in these institutions.

With regard to representation, all texts refer to Carvalho e Melo by using the title "Marquis of Pombal", which he was granted in 1769. Some do not even mention his name. Maxwell (1996), for instance, recognizes he is aware of this substitution and highlights that he decided to refer to Carvalho e Melo by the title for which he is known. Therefore, the practice of calling him Pombal reinforces this representation and vice versa.

In addition, the authors frequently represent Pombalism as the actions and ideas of Pombal, who is considered "a man ahead of his time" (Bezerra and Lima, 2018, p. 354, our translation). Therefore, the understanding that the minister was responsible for all the reforms and conceptions of Pombalism is reinforced, when, in fact, it was not the work of a single man, but the result of a process with precedents in the rule of D. João V and with the influence of authors like Verney and Sanches.

From the eight groups of representations (unifier, liberator of Indians, creator of public schools, revolutionary, efficient, modernizer, promoter of the decadence of

education, and powerful/centralizer), the most frequent ones were, respectively, those that characterize the minister as powerful and those that understand the reforms in public instruction as a setback and destroyer of the Jesuit system.

Finally, it is important to highlight that we did not analyze representations in terms of comparing them to an alleged reality, given that the representations are related to the author's perspective and to the language use, which was consciously employed by the researchers, and reveal their beliefs about the role of the Marquis of Pombal for educational historiography. The study of the representations associated with the Pombaline reforms shows how they were (and still are) understood in the Brazilian historiography and contributes to the development of a critical perspective on the theme, in a way that allows revisiting and questioning concepts related to Pombaline studies.

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