

RECENT PRODUCTION BALANCE IN THE FIELD OF HISTORY OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS: THE EXAMPLE OF DOCTORAL THESES (PORTUGAL, 2005-2015)

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Introduction

- This presentation continues the work that was presented in the 2014 and 2015 conferences, where we made an overall production balance from doctoral theses
 - 2009-2013 (24 theses)
 - 2005-2014 (81 theses)
- This work complements a previous one by Jorge Ramos do Ó for the period between 1990-2004 (which included 44 theses)
- We have now added the year of 2015 and with the new theses we have discovered for the previous years our corpus now includes **103 theses**

- We intend to deepen the analysis already made taking as an example one of the most represented fields – that of the **History of School Subjects**
- It is a consolidated field within the historical and educational research, which has a solid foundation (Chervel, Goodson, Kliebard, Chevallard, Popkewitz, ...), a diversified and stable set of sources, and a certain research tradition (regarding methodological procedures and conceptual tools)
 - The core concept of “**school culture**” and the thesis of relative autonomy of school subjects

- We maintain the assumptions underlying this research
 - The importance of production balances for the field activity
 - Doctoral theses: an excellent source to assess production
- We also maintain the criteria set forth
 - Historical approach
 - Educational object
- We now don't provide some tables used in previous presentations: distribution by year; place and institution; scientific area in institutional context.

2. Distribution by themes (overall table updated)

- We can see that the theses on History of School Subjects (including 6 more transversal ones on history of curriculum) already represent the most numerous category, alongside with the theses on school institutions (although some of them are present in both fields)

Categories covered	Number of theses
Curriculum/ Subjects	37
Educational institutions	35
Educational actors	30
Educational policy	16
Biographies	11
Circulation and internationalization	10
Gender	7
School spaces and materialities	6
Colonial education	5
Literature	2

3. Distribution by school subjects

School subjects	Number of theses
Arts Education	7
Physical and Natural Sciences	7
Mathematics	5
History	4
Physical education	3
Philosophy	2
Portuguese and Drawing	1
Portuguese	1
Foreign Languages	1

- As you can see, the two most studied subjects in this period were **Arts Education** (in its various forms to which a thesis on Portuguese and Drawing can be added, totalling **8 theses**) and **Physical and Natural Sciences** (with **7 theses**)
- In both cases these are poorly studied subjects in the early stage of studies on History of Subjects (from the late 80s to the early years of the twenty-first century), where priority was given to Civics Education, History, Mathematics and also Languages and Literature
- **Mathematics** and **History** maintain, however, some relevance (with, respectively, **5** and **4 theses**)

3. Temporal boundaries

Temporal delimitation (centuries)	Number of theses
20 th	12
19 th – 20 th	8
20 th – 21 st	5
19 th – 21 st	3
18 th – 21 st	1
18 th – 20 th	1
19 th	1

Centuries covered	Number of theses
20 th	29
19 th	14
21 st	8
18 th	2

Duration	Number of theses
Long term (≥ 70 years)	15
Intermediate term] 30-70 years [12
Short term (≤ 30 years)	4

- The analysis of the table confirms the overall findings already put forward for the theses ensemble with one or other novelty. In summary:
 - The **twentieth century is by far the most studied period** with **29 theses** (especially if we include the theses that simultaneously study other centuries)
 - **There is no thesis for the period prior to the eighteenth century**, which is not odd if we consider that we are talking about school subjects (something usually associated with school modernity)
 - Moreover, **there is a reduced number of theses devoted to the eighteenth century** (two in this case)
 - **There is a considerable number of theses (specifically 14) that include the nineteenth century**, although most of them are associated with other centuries as well, particularly the twentieth century

- We found **11 theses that include the twentieth-first century**, which confirms the legitimacy given to the History of Present Time (despite the fact that these studies were done with a long-term perspective, not just focused on the early twentieth-first century)
- There is precisely a **strong presence of studies that aim for the long-term (15 theses, according to our criteria)**
- We also found a **considerable number of theses which delimit intermediate periods**
- There is a **reduced number of theses centred on the short-term** (which seems to mean that long-term or intermediate periods, for researchers, appear to be more suitable for research on school subjects)
- Most referenced theses define **chronological boundaries based on educational criteria**, which reveals a maturing in this kind of research (and the consideration of the relative autonomy of historical and educational studies)

4. Spatial boundaries

Spatial delimitation	Number of theses
National	25
Local	4
Former colonies	2

- From a spatial point of view, **the subjects of the national curriculum are practically the only existent object of study** in the theses of our corpus, which we find problematic
- **The international dimension is almost absent**, being only represented by the 2 theses dedicated to the Portuguese ex-colonies (one on Mozambique and another on Macau)
- There are **4 theses that define the place as an observation point**, those whose object of study are institutions (which by nature are places)

5. Distribution by level of education

Covered teaching levels		Number of theses	
Secondary	Lower Secondary	2	25
	General (Lyceum/ Upper Secondary)	19	
	Technical	4	
Primary			5
Higher Education			4
Childhood Education			1
Undefined			5
Particular type of education		Amount	
Artistic			7
Religious			1

- As it was expected, in the case of curricular subjects, **studies on secondary education are clearly predominant**

6. Distribution by types of sources

Kind of sources	Number of theses
Legislative and normative documents and other official documents	26
Textbooks and other learning materials	20
Pedagogical journals, student and specialized journals (including architecture journals, nursing journals, etc.)	19
Programs of school subjects and curricula	18
Pedagogical works and works of other scientific areas	16
Archival documentation (not specified or difficult to include in other categories)	15
Periodical press	13
Documentation from educational institutions (regulatory/ administrative reports and publications as Yearbooks)	10
Correspondence	7
Pictures (drawings and prints, films and videos, photographs, architectural plans and drawings)	7
Teachers reports and other reports (including reports from different institutions)	7
Parliamentary Proceedings	6
Oral sources (Testimonials various and interviews which include biographies, obtained by this process)	5
School exercise books and student works	5
Literature (including children's literature and literary and cultural magazines)	4
Memorialist documents (including autobiographies) / surveys	4
Statistics	3
Political and religious publications	2

- **The vast majority of authors uses a very diversified set of sources** and intends to do “data triangulation”

“I must also warn my readers that my sources/documents are of **various kinds. Legal texts, institutional documents**, educational texts published in the **pedagogical press**, several treaties, **grantees’ reports, international reports, monographies, photographs, drawings**. All of them form the archive with the positivity of the speakable, visible, assayable” (Martins, 2011, p. 40)

- As in the overall data, **legislative and normative documents maintain their traditional importance** (even in theses that aim to circumscribe new objects), though always in articulation with other kinds of sources
- It is necessary to emphasise, once more, **the role that a large number of theses give to the archive documents**, taking into account the various types of archives herein mentioned (national archive, historical archive of education, parliamentary historical archive, institutional archives of various kinds, etc.), which brings us back to the importance of the archive regarding the historian identity and the specialized character of its work

- Comparing to the previous balance, **a novelty is the relative importance assumed here by school textbooks** (used in **20 theses**), which arise as a source of choice for the research in History of Subjects; the same applies to curricular programmes
- As in the overall corpus, **pedagogical, student and teacher press appears as the source of a considerable number of theses** (in this case **19**)
- **Both visual and oral sources, despite being present in a reasonable number of theses (respectively 7 and 5), continue remitted to a certain marginality** (more accentuated here than in the overall data); the same happens, for example, regarding **literature (4 theses)** and **statistics (2 theses)**
- **The idea of “archive” as a researcher development** is present in a broad set of studies

“It is, therefore, **in this idea of *archive* as a space that can only be accessed through theoretically built issues that this work is based**” (Martins, 2011, p. 40).

- In some cases, authors propose **the creation of their own instruments to organize research sources**, namely virtual data bases

It also worth mentioning how major difficulties have provided perhaps **the most original solutions of this research**, namely the **inventory of monographs** on music and its teaching, **the repertoire of articles** of pedagogy and the **prosopography of successful musicians in Portugal**” (Paz, 2014, pp. 10-11)

7. The cases of theses dedicated to History of Arts Education and History of Science Education (a more detailed analysis of some examples)

- Most theses recognize **the need for an appropriate theoretical foundation in articulation with empirical research** and considering the research aims and the constructed object
- Fortunately, **theses that assume a distinctly descriptive character are rare**
- Although there are theses which refer to a more circumscribed theoretical foundation, **most theses assume a certain theoretical (and methodological) “eclecticism” or “hybridism”**
- Regarding the theoretical foundation, if we stick to the corpus defined herein, **the main novelty is a strong presence of approaches inspired by Michel Foucault**, particularly in the case of **Arts Education** (but also in **Physical Education**), namely with regard to the use of a **“genealogic perspective”** and the idea of **“history of the present”**, something that was not so visible in the early researches in the History of Subjects

“The theoretical framework continues to have **A. Chervel** and the contributions of **I. Goodson** as a reference, but it has been redesigned and consequently revalorized according to the perspectives of **Chevallard & Joshua** (1991) [...] for the process of subject formation or rather the actual curriculum of subjects, known for the expression «**didactic transposition**» and other contributions, particularly in association with **studies of school materiality**” (Beato, 2011, p. 19)

“Throughout this dissertation, **the contextualist approach of pedagogy of sciences**, in line with **Olesko**, is complemented by **the historiographical guidelines systematized by Livingstone** to defend two theses [...]” (Marques, 2015, p. 8)

“**It is in a well-defined tribe of authors that I find the will and urge to write this thesis [...].** Firstly, in **Michel Foucault** I find a first way to approach the research around a certain object. This approach begins to be conceived from **the questioning of the truth regimes** that enclose the ways in which we perceive, see and talk about those same objects” (Martins, 2011, p. 26)

“To think about the becoming of arts education compels us **to do the history of its present. The genealogical perspective** allows me decipher lines of continuity in the present, in the ways of thinking arts education, but also differences in its configuration” (Martins, 2011, p. 12)

- The decisive importance of a clear and rigorous research question

“Finally, the research ended up having a **broad question as a driving force**; a question that could take into account these great discursive movements: **How has the idea of genius been constituted in the musical imaginary and how did it work in the Portuguese music education between 1868 and 1930?**” (Paz, 2014, pp. 9-10)

“Based on the stories from **Colégio de Campolide, Colégio de São Fiel** and the journal *Brotéria*, this thesis is mainly focused on the reasons that led a religious order to actively engage in teaching and sciences’ practice, and in the impact that this undertaking had for science in Portugal” (Romeiras, 2014, p. iii)

- There are several theses, some of them particularly interesting, inserted into the **History of Sciences**, but where **the History of Education** is clearly present (even when that is not assumed) in articulation, in some cases, with other areas

“This thesis is not intended to be a **history of education work**, but instead **a thesis of history of science** that seeks to be included in the most recent historiographical currents, which recognize that **scientific teaching, popularization and science can hardly be considered independent realities**” (Romeiras, 2014, p. 1)

- Example of Marques’ (2015) thesis: **History of Sciences / History of School Subjects / History of Institutions / Political History**

- The admission, in those theses, of **the “innovative” or “constructive” part of teaching regarding scientific research**

“The greatest historiographical potential of pedagogy of sciences thus resides in ability to emphasise **the constructive part of teaching in its articulation with the different spheres of society**” (Marques, 2015, p. 6)

- Specific attention is given, particularly in those theses, to **the problematics of the “circulation of knowledge” and the creation of “networks of scientists”**

“Indeed, **scientific dissemination is central to peer communication, networking and the circulation of scientific knowledge**, largely contributing for the development of science itself” (Romeiras, 2014, pp. 1-2)

- The awareness of the interpenetration between **knowledge** and **power**

“On the one hand, it is argued that **the creation of appropriate spaces for zoology and botany teaching and research** at EPL [Escola Politécnica de Lisboa] was determinant for the development of both subjects in Portugal during the twentieth century; on the other hand, it is argued that **the creation of both academic subjects and the scientific practice developed** in the aforementioned areas also **allowed some EPL professors the recognition of their authority in the political arena**”
(Marques, 2015, p. 8)

“In this thesis, **the analysis of the relations between science and political power will have a prominent place**” (Romeiras, 2014, pp. 26-27)

- **The importance given to school stakeholders** (particularly **teachers**) within **the history of subjects' context** in a considerable number of theses
- The pioneer study of **Lígia Penim** (2008), dedicated to **Portuguese and Drawing**, draws our attention to **the need of promoting more studies linking two (or more) subjects** within the **History of Curriculum**
- In a field that has attained a certain stability, and that could take the risk of some stagnation, we were able to identify **new challenges, renewed approaches and trends that are opened to future research**, assuming the specificity, but also the exemplariness, that this field of research in History of Education comprises