

## Presentation note

# The History of the Teaching Profession in Brazil and Portugal: similarities and divergences

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The set of articles that comprises this edition of the *Sísifo* journal are the result of the joint work of Portuguese and Brazilian researchers on the CAPES/FCT project: “The History of the Teaching Profession in Brazil and Portugal: similarities and divergences”, which took place from 2007 to 2010.

The project aimed to analyse the history of the teaching profession in the Portuguese-Brazilian world, from a long-duration perspective, attempting to understand it in a twofold context, characterised on the one hand by the process of the formation of the modern States, in which the constitution of the national education systems – which, in turn, became feasible upon the universalisation of the school *form* or school *model* (Vincent, 1980) – is undoubtedly one of the most significant aspects; and on the other hand by the process of the institutionalisation of the education sciences, which goes hand in hand with the process to professionalise the teacher.

As such, the central reference point taken is the interpretation model constructed by Nóvoa (1987), in his study on the teaching profession in Portugal, considering that, while on the one hand it is necessary to take into account the specificities of each of the two countries (and also the internal differences, especially in the case of Brazil), on the other hand one cannot fail to acknowledge, as the same author states (Nóvoa, 1994), the *transnational character* of the issues concerning the profession.

An effort is also made to understand the comparative history from the perspective proposed by this author (Nóvoa, 1998), as a *history of the meanings*,

and not a systematised arrangement of the facts. In this shift from an analysis of the facts to an analysis of the historical meaning of the facts, we intend to work within the scope of a new epistemology of knowledge, which defines the research perspectives centred not only on the materiality of the facts, but also on the discursive communities that describe them, interpret them and locate them in a given space-time.

The choice of the term *history of the teaching profession* was intentional, considering what this expression incorporates in its most enlightening sense, as a “unifying notion of the various dimensions of the teaching profession, the design of which requires the simultaneous and integrating analysis of these same dimensions” (Catani, 2000, p. 587).

From that point of view, the research programme that we carried out encompassed the analysis of a set of factors linked to the history of the profession, including the official policies for teaching, the study of the circulation of knowledge and the appropriation of cultural products by these historical agents, observation of different forms of manifestation of this professional category in the light of the demands of exercising the profession, as well as the social representations that impacted on and still impact on the constitution of a specific teaching identity (or multiple teaching identities).

The diversity of the articles brought together in this edition of the journal exemplifies these different dimensions and is indicative of the fertility of this kind of approach. Using different documental sources, which include official documents, pedagogical

journals, verbal statements, the articles look at aspects that have not yet been deeply discussed in the trajectory of the profession, considering its distinct segments (primary school, secondary school and professional education teachers), issues concerning teacher training, the organisation of the teaching category, the images attributed to these professionals throughout history and over more recent times in Portugal, Brazil and also Mozambique, in one of the texts, thus enlarging the analysis to another region that is part of what we call the *lusophone* world.

We invite the readers to delve into these analyses with us, seeking to identify the *similarities* and the *divergences* between the different national realities and to find out the underlying ideas, projects and models in circulation in the different contexts and historical moments, as well as their different forms of appropriation.

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