

Religion and education: the projects of the Portuguese Jesuits in times of exile in Brazil (1910-1938) ^{1 2}

Religião e educação: os projetos dos jesuítas portugueses em tempos de exílio no Brasil (1910-1938)

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Abstract:

After the implementation of the Republic in Portugal, in October 5th, 1910, secular actions of the government reached the activities of religious orders. With the decrees of the new political system, members of the Society of Jesus exiled themselves in several countries, especially in Spain, Italy, and Brazil. A choice for Brazilian cities was encouraged by the common language, cultural approaches, but mainly by the religious projects developed in the country. This article aims to understand the actions of the Dispersed Portuguese Province members in Brazil in the first half of the twentieth century, with an analysis on the relationships between their pedagogical projects, the organization of a cultural mission, and the Catholic Restoration process. From the Cultural History, we also seek to understand how the forms of education were an instrument of cultural mediation on encouraging new ideas and worships by the Jesuits.

Keywords: Jesuits, cultural mission, educational project, catholic education

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Resumo:

Após a implementação da República em Portugal, em 5 de outubro de 1910, as ações laicistas do governo atingiram as atividades das ordens religiosas. Com os decretos do novo sistema político, membros da Companhia de Jesus se exilaram em vários países, sobretudo na Espanha, Itália e no Brasil. A escolha por cidades brasileiras foi incentivada pela língua em comum, aproximações culturais, e, principalmente, pelos projetos religiosos desenvolvidos no país. O artigo tem o objetivo de compreender parte das ações dos membros da Província Portuguesa Dispersa no Brasil na primeira metade do século XX, analisando as relações entre seus projetos pedagógicos, a organização de uma missão cultural e o processo de Restauração Católica. A partir da História Cultural, também buscamos compreender como as ações educacionais foram um instrumento de mediação cultural para promover novas ideias e cultos por parte dos jesuítas.

Palavras-chave: jesuítas, missão cultural, projeto educacional, educação católica

“Eis por que, nós – os católicos brasileiros – fazemos votos para que da Constituição da República seja cancelado o contraditório, monstruoso, hypocrita e chimerico ensino leigo”.

“That is why, we- Brazilian Catholics- wish that from the Constitution of the Republic is removed the contradictory, monstrous, hypocritical, and chimerical laic education”

(Leme, 1916, p. 93)

The political, cultural, and social contributions between Portuguese and Brazilians were studied by researchers in several moments in the history of both countries. Even though there is some proximity between the countries, the investigations of such affinities, in the republican period, still needs to be deepened by historians. Our claim is reinforced when we analyze the Portuguese ecclesiastic educational projects in Brazil during the first half of the 20th century, a theme that needs an effective scientific investigation.

In the last years, the process of immigration and exile, especially by clergy members, has been the theme of some studies by historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and education researchers. Amid the discussions, the projects of members from different ecclesiastic orders have contributed to the understanding of the cultural mission implemented by these people,

besides its insertion in the public debate and in the economic development in Brazilian territory.

Based on a cultural approach, we analyze the process of exile from Portuguese members of the Society of Jesus in several Brazilian cities and the performance of part of their educational projects in the new country. We should highlight that in this text the process of expatriation or immigration was not approached as a simple geographic displacement, but we consider social, religious, cultural, and economic issues, which had contributed to this complex human movement related to different social structures (Moura, 2015).

As a political movement, but with the structures based on international religious matters, we also aimed to understand the representations on the exile of members from the Society of Jesus in Brazil. Therefore, we aimed to identify how this phenomenon was built, thought, and read, with narratives created in different spaces (Chartier, 2002; Silva, 2010).

In this sense, we observed part of the actions from Portuguese Jesuits spread in the mission on Brazilian Septentrional Providence and Bahia, mainly the cities of Salvador, Caetité, and Recife. We understand the importance of the clergymen work in other spaces locations, but this emphasis was required to discuss specific points of the work that has been analyzed here, such as: the organization of new educational projects and the devotion structures that contributed to the actions of re-catholicization.

It is important to highlight that, in this article, we emphasized part of the Jesuit educational projects in a specific geographic and time frame. However, we recognize that the members of this religious order were not limited to pedagogical actions or the organization of school spaces, as the ecclesiastic works were targeted towards a debate of international reaffirmation of Catholicism, forming congregations, and structuring new devotions.

The cultural action of religious orders in the Brazilian Republic period can be comprehended through the researches on Franciscans, Dominicans, Lazarists, Salesians, and Capuchins, besides the women orders, as the Salesian sisters. According to Rebecca Rogers

(2014), the processes of laicization of European countries reached the organization of religious orders with anticlerical measures, contributing to the “great exile” of congregations. With the prohibition of ecclesiastics teaching, part of them moved to other countries, aiming to incorporate projects and establish new institutions, especially in the American continent (Rogers, 2014).

The exile of Portuguese clergymen in Brazil was supported by the laic policies implemented in Portugal with the instauration of the Republic in October 5th, 1910. Due to the new governmental system, the activities of religious orders became regulated by the decree of October 8th of the same year, which reinstated the laws approved by the Marquis of Pombal regarding the Jesuit expulsion, in 1759 and 1767, and by Joaquim António de Aguiar in 1834, which extinguished convents, schools, mental asylums, or any other religious houses of all regular orders in Portugal, Algarve, adjacent islands, and its domains.

The article that required the removal of the orders was directed exclusively towards the members of the Society of Jesus, independently of the nationality or naturalization. To the regular ecclesiastics, the law referred to the foreigners and/or naturalized citizens. The only option for the Portuguese clerics was to follow a secular life or to live in communities of no more than three members (Proença, 2011).

According to the ideas of Affonso Costa (1871-1937), Justice Minister at the new government, there was a need to organize the Republic with new formats, ideas, and proposals of social growth. To carry out his project, there was the-urge to get rid of old monarchical traditions, among them the governmental dependence of religious institutions. The politician’s goals were not limited to the exclusion of ecclesiastic orders from Portugal, ~~as~~ for he also dedicated himself to effectively persecute the members of the Society of Jesus believing that “the biggest barriers to this objective was Jesuitism, and thus logically, the viper head of Jesuitism must be cut of, beheaded with a blow” (“Lei da Separação”, 1912).

The actions of the Portuguese Republican government cannot be summed up to the process of secularization of the State. They were actually based on laicity proposals to combat religious institutions, practices, and representatives. They manifested themselves through persecutions of clergy members, laws contrary to their activities, and the symbolic laicization of the country, such as the arrest and exile of clergy members, the closing of churches, the end

of Theology courses and of ecclesiastic references in the everyday life of the Portuguese, as in the holidays, manifestations, and names of places (Catroga, 2006).

Part of the laic actions against the Jesuits were founded on representations created about the clergymen during the monarchic period and the begging of the Republic, above all, from their relations with politics, their participation on educational issues, and the expansion of Catholic projects.³ The anticlerical laws, structured by Affonso Costa, were fundamental to restructure the “Jesuit myth” of international plot, which, for a part of the Republicans, aimed to control the institutions.

We should understand that for certain people, the sense of exile started even before the arrival in Brazil. The political persecutions, the cultural isolation, or the forbiddance of everyday practices, provoked a social, professional, and psychological removal, a mourning between the imaginary and the symbolic, mainly amongst those expatriated for religious issues (Berta, 2007; Montañés, 2013).

The historical bonds, the common language, the communication with other Portuguese, the work around the movement of Catholic Restoration, and the representations of Brazil as a problem-free nation between politics and religion, were some of the reasons which contributed to the emigration of Portuguese clergy to that country (Vitorio, 2015). The Portuguese language helped to reduce the difficulties faced in exile, mainly when we take it as the private property of a nation, mostly when creating a discourse on the Lusophony culture or establishing an “imagined community” of a group (Anderson, 2008).

The displacement of the Disperse Portuguese Province to Brazil

When boarding to Brazil, the Portuguese Jesuits shared a sense of doubt and apprehension towards the reception of the clergymen and, mainly, towards the rulers of their new place of action. Even with the freedom of religion, in the imaginary of part of the clergy,

³ At the time of the expulsion from Portugal the Society of Jesus had 360 members. It was responsible for teaching more than 4 thousand students in Portugal, India, Eastern Africa, Macau, and Timor (Sousa & Cavalcante, 2016).

especially considering the recurrent facts in Portugal, the country was still the place from where they had been expelled⁴.

The displacement of the clergy members to Brazil, mainly the Jesuits, was supported by Father Luiz Gonzaga Cabral (1866-1939)⁵ and by Brother Gomes Pereira, who had escaped to Madrid and considered Brazil as one of the best destination possibilities. The process of laicization and/or laicism in countries such as Portugal, France, and Spain contributed to the displacement of clergy members to different places in the American continent. In a letter to Father Justino M. Lombardi, it is possible to understand the negotiations between the clergymen and the attention to bypass the anticlerical vigilance when disembarking the country⁶:

I have already written to the General R. P. and the Provincial P. of this Province to invite you to send here the priests Brothers of Portugal in case of an expulsion if this letter did not reach the hands of the priest N.R. can repeat the invitation in the name of all priests from Brazil. The only necessary precaution to avoid persecution when arriving here is to come in small groups dressed as secular priests or in disguise. It would be best if some could come before the official expulsion if it happens. We should not despair of a good solution yet. The Government here protects us: only the masonic press attacks us violently, but it has been beaten so far...Regardless of what is written against us in the masonic papers, the number of students grows more and more every day. Yesterday, I received a demand for a boy from General Glicerio, head of the revolution in 1889- and one of your greatest enemies. (“Carta do Padre Justino”, 1910).

In this extract, it is possible to notice the strategies outlined by members of the Society of Jesus to avoid disputes with the republicans in Portugal. Similarly, the clergymen seemed apprehensive about their reception in Brazil, since the anticlerical proposals were not limited to a space but were part of the political debates in the transition between the 19th and 20th centuries.

⁴ During the kingdom of Dom José I (1714 – 1777), in 1759, guided by the State Secretary for the Internal Affairs of the Kingdom, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699 – 1782), the Marquis of Pombal, published a law to remove the members of the Society of Jesus of Portugal and its domains. Only after the second half of the 19th century, some members returned their activities in the Portuguese world. The event related to 1910 refers to a second process of exclusion, but which also used part of the legislation applied in the 18th century.

⁵ A Portuguese Jesuit who arrived in Salvador (state of Bahia) in 1917. In the region, he dedicated himself to expand Catholic education, with actions in *Colégio Antônio Vieira* in the subjects of Portuguese Language and Literature, Philosophy, and Apologetics. Between 1930 and 1933 he had the position of director of the institution, proposing actions that expanded the school activities.

⁶ During the translation, we tried to keep, as most as possible, the original phrasing and punctuation used in the documents, therefore, some sentences might be more difficult to understand.

Several groups demanded to ban the entrance of members of the Society of Jesus in Brazil, especially the Masons who were inspired by actions to control the clergy members instituted in Portugal since the beginning of the Republic. The *Jornal do Commercio*, from Rio de Janeiro, published many protests from members of masonic lodges on the issue, such as the one from November 4th, 1910, to the president of Brazil Nilo Peçanha (1909-1910) emphasizing that the masonic lodge “*Igualdade Florianense*...protested against the entrance [in] our country [of] Jesuits expelled from Portugal. *Igualdade*, which has as the main duty to always fight [in] favor [of] humanity interests, considered this a serious invasion, a real curse to Brazilian union” (“*Varias noticias*”, 1910, p. 4).

The disputes between the Jesuits and the government intensified after the disembark prohibition of the clergymen B. J. Rodrigues and Antonio F. dos Coutinhos in November 1910. According to Marcos Gonçalves (2014), after the decision of the federal government, public representatives and citizens joined those in favor of the “Jesuit question”, discussing the validity of the act and the freedom of religion manifestation in the country, including the foreign clergymen.

This author also considers that the prohibition of Jesuit disembark was based in laws created in other historical contexts and with specific aims (Gonçalves, 2014). The action was based on the Decree number 1.641, from January 7th, 1907, in which the article 4 established that the “Executive power can prohibit the entrance in the territory of the Republic any foreigner whose previous actions authorize his inclusion amongst those referred on articles 1 and 2”.⁷

The president’s actions were questioned by congressmen and members of Brazilian Catholic hierarchy, who defended the legality of Jesuit entrance, especially in a moment of conflict with the political representatives of their country. However, the Brazilian chief of State “declared that he was based on reasons of public order and his decision was irrevocable” (“*Hontem*”, 1910, p. 1).

⁷ “Art. 1º The Foreigner who, by any reason, compromises the national security and public tranquility can be expelled of part or of all national territory. Art. 2º Other causes for expulsion are: 1st, the condemnation or was legally processed by foreign courts by common crimes or offenses; 2nd two condemnations, at least, by Brazilian courts for common crimes or offenses; 3rd, vagrancy, begging, and procuring competently verified” (“Decree nº 1.641”, 1907).

Besides the legal motivations pointed by Nilo Peçanha, we should highlight the anticlerical positions of some intellectuals and politicians in the beginning of the 20th century. The then-president attended the Schools of Law in São Paulo and Recife, institutions with strong debates on secularization and influent on the formation of the political thought in the first half of the 20th century (Schwarcz, 1993). We should also remember that his position as a Mason was fundamental to attend the revindication of several institutions on the “Jesuit matter”.

The frictions between the government of Nilo Peçanha and the members of the Catholic church set the limits of religious freedom in Brazil in the first decades of the 20th century. The entry control of clergymen in the country, or the vigilance over them, indicated the attempt to “settle the score” of some sectors of society on questions debated during the creation of the law separating State and Church in the end of the 19th century (Moura, 2015). The actions adopted in the “Jesuit matter”, which did not present legal arguments considered valid during its application, can be understood as personal positions based on specific intellectual or religious demands.

Even with the different maneuvers from the opposition, mainly the Positivists, the Republicans, and the Masons, the Portuguese clergymen were authorized to disembark in Brazil, after the direct intervention of members from the House of Representatives, the jurist Cândido Mendes de Almeida Filho (1866-1939)⁸ and some members of police sympathetic to the cause. However, a more apprehensive group of clergymen continued their trip towards Buenos Aires, in order to avoid problems with the civilian power (Azevedo, 1914).

Jesuit cultural mission in times of exile

According to Father Luiz Gonzaga Cabral, between October 1910 and September 1911, the disembarkment of 85 Jesuits from the Portuguese Province was registered. Among those in exile there were specialists in different areas of knowledge, such as naturalists,

⁸ Jurist, Professor at the Law School of *Universidade do Brasil* and political representative, his first years of study were in *Colégio Pedro II*, in Rio de Janeiro, and *Colégio São Luís Gonzaga*, in Itu, in the state of São Paulo. He was given the noble title of Count Mendes de Almeida in honor of his father, who defended Bishop Dom Vital de Oliveira during the Religious Question in 1874.

biologists, and educators. Part of the production from these clergymen was registered in the journal *Brotéria*,⁹ the main vehicle of cultural and scientific communication of the Society of Jesus (Romeiras, 2016).

The clergymen from the Portuguese Province took a space that was little occupied by other ecclesiastic orders. Due to the territorial size and number of people in Brazil in the 1910s, 23,651,551 inhabitants, the Catholic institutions needed members in regions far from the main urban centers (Moura, 2015).

Rodolfo de Roux (2014) claims that in 1889 the Catholic Church had 10 Franciscans, 170 clergy members from different orders, and 520 secular priests to attend a population of approximately 14,500,000 inhabitants. A project to strengthen the movement of recatholicization in various places, based on social, political, and educational issues, Italian, French, German, and Belgian congregations disembarked in Brazil until 1900 to work in different missions (Roux, 2014).

On the Society of Jesus, specifically, until 1909 the works were done by members of the Roman and German Provinces. The operation of this order was divided among 99 clergymen from the Roman Province in Central and Septentrional Brazil (48 priests, 15 academics, and 36 coadjutants) and 199 Jesuits from the German Province in southern Brazil (108 priest, 24 academics, 67 coadjutants) (“Catálogo dos Jesuítas Portugueses”, 1911).

To reinforce the Project of ecclesiastic expansion in the country, the first installations to receive the Portuguese were *Colégio de Nova Friburgo* (Rio de Janeiro), *Ginásio Santo Inácio* (Rio de Janeiro), and *Colégio São Luís* in Itu (São Paulo), coordinated by the Roman province of the Society of Jesus (Azevedo, 1914). In these places the clergymen started their pastoral activities and contacts to establish themselves in different dioceses. Thus, we can affirm that the work of the Portuguese Province in Brazil, especially in the educational area, initiated the collaboration with the clergymen from these institutions.

With the arrival of the Jesuits, some bishops took advantage of the occasion to strengthen their clergy, since there was a lack of priests specialized in theological and philosophical studies, and a deeper experience in ecclesiastic administration. In the first years

⁹ Due to the laic politics implemented in the first years of the Portuguese Republic, part of the production from these clergymen was lost during the expulsion of the ecclesiastic orders from the country. About the journal *Brotéria*, see Rico e Franco (2003).

of the 1910s, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus Franz Xavier Wernz (1842-1914) received many requests to send clergy members to work in Brazilian dioceses, helping, in a way, to structure a cultural project in a new space of action.

The actions of several clergymen, not only Jesuits, were fundamental to the project of Catholic Restoration in Brazil- an international movement to reaffirm the values of the Church and restructure the political power of the institution. The work of clergymen was important to combat modernity and left-wing doctrines as well as to form a neo-Christianity committed to the ideas from Rome. To do so the work on educational issues, the implementation of a catholic order, and the control of everyday questions, such as literature, family support and the management of social spaces were vital for the objectives of the Roman Curia in Brazil (Moura, 2015; Roux, 2014).

However, some Brazilian clergymen did not immediately accept the Portuguese. Dom Joaquim Arcoverde (1850-1930) was one of the bishops who indicated some reservations to the “interference” of foreigners in the religious issues of the country (Azevedo, 1986). The Roman Curia had to intervene in the problem and Cardinal De Lai sent a letter to the leaders of the Catholic hierarchy in Brazil presenting the political difficulties in Portugal and the importance of receiving the “brothers” who could overcome the difficult moment in that country (“Nunziatura”, 1921).

Part of the clergymen reaction to the immigrants was promoted by the nationalist movement structured among the members of the Catholic church hierarchy and the pastoral letter of Dom Sebastião Leme (1882-1942), published when assuming the Archdiocese of Olinda in 1916. The bishop’s text contributed to the organization of ideas that valued a patriotic feeling, signaling a Lusophobia of cultural, social, and political character (Mendes, 2010).¹⁰

Among the attitudes that characterized the refusal of the Portuguese work, we can highlight the denial of bishops to receive the exiles in their dioceses. In other ways, the Portuguese Jesuits were welcomed for temporary work, without the possibility to be permanently hired, which would guarantee their establishment in the country, contrary to the “negotiations” established with clergymen from other nationalities (Moura, 2015).

¹⁰ Even though the document presented a nationalist character, since 1917 Dom Sebastião Leme was one of the main supporters of the educational projects from the Portuguese Jesuits in his archdiocese.

As well as presenting the need to form a nationalist movement, the *Carta pastoral saudando a sua arquidiocese* (Leme, 1916) has also structured the movement of recatholicization in Brazil. The proposals were essential to organize the educational projects of the Jesuits, since part of the operations of the members of the order was based on different forms of education.

In the document, the Bishop highlighted the need of organized actions committed to the projects of the Roman Curia, emphasizing that

to a Catholic it should not be indifferent if his country is or not an ally to Jesus Christ. It would be a betrayal of Jesus; it would be a betrayal of the nation! That is why, with all the energy of our souls of Catholics and Brazilians, it urges to rupture the atrophying marasmus with which we are accustomed to be the *nominal majority*, forgetting our duties, with no awareness of our rights. It is a great evil; the cure is urgent. To endeavor is an act of Faith and an act of patriotism (Leme, 1916, p. 8, author highlight).

The actions around a militant Catholicism were not summed up in the archdiocese of Dom Sebastião Leme, whose activities, even with an initial apprehension towards the Portuguese work, helped to coordinate a national project to Catholics and the politization of the clergy in a fundamental moment in the relationship between the religious and political spheres.

Despite the difficulties presented here, the Jesuits continued the cultural project in their new space of action. One of the first actions undertaken by the exiles of the Society of Jesus started in May 1911, with the creation of *Colégio Antônio Vieira* in Salvador. The institution was part of the educational actions of Bishop Dom Jerônimo Tomé da Silva (1849-1924), who offered residence to the clergymen in Santo Antônio da Barra. The teaching establishment was the starting point for other Jesuit ventures in the North of Brazil¹¹, with the collaboration of Marist and Salesian orders which already had projects in the region (Casali, 1995; Monteiro, 2011).

The testimonies of Father Luiz Gonzaga Cabral, based on the contributions of members of the Society of Jesus to the sociocultural formation in Brazil, are essential to understand some objectives of the members of the order in the country. To the clergymen, “the *civilization*, in its *pedagogical* work does not mean only *teaching*, but also - and especially-

¹¹ We use the term “Brazilian North” because the concept of Northeast started in the 1940s, with the organization of new geographic divisions in latter decades. The documents of the period corroborate with this claim, using two geographic divisions: North and South (Albuquerque Junior, 2001).

what deserves the title of *education*. Through *education*, *intelligence* is formed; through *education itself*, *character* is formed” (Cabral, 1925, p. 176, author highlight). Besides the contributions to the intellectual formation of Brazilian, the actions of the Jesuits were also presented as a civilizing proposal and a way to lead society through the “right paths” (Sousa, 2016, p. 169).

In the educational issues, the work of the Society of Jesus members in the Septentrional Province was based on forming a “good citizen”, a militant catholic committed to the teachings of the Church. The structure of this “model man” started in the family organization but had, in the educational spaces, important collaborators to the ecclesiastic projects. Such measures were also fundamental to the organization of the State, especially through times of political and social control, such as those in the Vargas period (1930-1945).

Still in Bahia, inspired by a civilizing institution, through educational actions and the recommendations of Monsignor Luís Pinto Bastos, the Jesuit activities reached the region of Caetité, becoming one of the main connections to the missions dedicated to the Outlands (Assunção, 2003; Foulquier, 1940). The Society of Jesus members arrived in the region in 1912, aiming to combat the activities of *Escola Americana* (American School), founded by the Presbyterian Henry John McCall, with the financial support of local politicians. Intending to promote a Catholic education, in the same year, they founded the *Instituto São Luís Gonzaga*, which was briefly active due to the reorganization of the *Escola Normal* in the city (Monteiro, 2011).

The movement towards the inland of the Jesuit activities in Bahia attended a political demand, mainly the affirmation of catholic education faced by a protestant or laic one (Azevedo, 1986). It is important to emphasize that, after a year of Jesuit activities in Caetité, the region became the headquarters of a new diocese, with the reconfiguration of ecclesiastic divisions (Matos, 2016). The creation of a bishopric, published on October 20th 1913, from the papal bull *Majus animarum bonum* of Pope Pius X, made no reference to the Jesuit work, who were in the forefront of educational issues until 1925, but we can not dismiss the importance of their work in the process of strengthening and independence of the ecclesiastic space (Moura, 2015).

Besides the educational activities that started in the institutions, which received the exiled Jesuits and the projects developed in Salvador and Caetité, the Portuguese who acted in the Septentrional Province structured action in Belém, São Luís, Baturité, Fortaleza, Aracati,

among other cities (O'Neill; Domínguez, 2001).¹² In the North region of the country, the activities in Salvador and in Recife were featured more prominently among the projects of the Roman Church, as a result of their locations being attended by a system of transport and communication that helped the organization of projects targeting education, politics, and the formation of a new-Christianity.

In Recife, the action of the members of the Disperse Portuguese Province were followed by the establishment of a devotion towards Our Lady of Fátima. The priest José Aparício da Silva (1879-1966), an exiled Jesuit and one of the confessors of sister Lúcia de Jesus (1907-2005),¹³ was the first disseminator of the messages from the “Lady of the Rosary” outside Portugal and found in Recife the main point to implement and disseminate the practice to other places (Cunha, 1953).

We should highlight that the structuring of the worship of Fátima was also followed by the organization of an educational space. The proposals for a new devotion in the country, as well as the organization of a pedagogical project, indicate that the mission of the Portuguese Jesuits had a broad spectrum, with actions in different fronts, which helped with the international projects of political and social reaffirmation of the Roman Curia.

Religion, education, and devotion

The first Portuguese exiles from the Society of Jesus arrived in Recife invited by the Bishop of Olinda Dom Luís Raimundo da Silva Brito (1840-1915), with the purpose of organizing an educational institution. However, when arriving in the city, they noticed that the work was in fact to collaborate with the administration of *Colégio Diocesano*, which was not the main interest of the members of the order (Monteiro, 2011). The activities only took shape with actions targeting an independent educational project, with a cultural proposal focused on

¹² Since the 1940s, the Jesuit provinces presented a new division and the actions of the Portuguese expanded to the regions of Amazonas, Piauí, and Espírito Santo (O'Neill; Domínguez, 2001).

¹³ Together with Francisco Marto (1908-1919) and Jacinta Marto (1910-1920), Lúcia de Jesus was one of the three children who witnessed the events around the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima between May and October 1917 in Portugal (Moura, 2015).

teaching, political organization, and the strengthening of the worship of Mary, ideas conceived during the bishopric of Dom Sebastião Leme (1916-1921).

The works which established the affinities between the educational actions and the worship of Mary in Recife legitimized the presence of Portuguese clergymen, either structuring a project based on education, one of the main pillars of the recatholicization process, or organizing a new devotion in Brazil. It is important to highlight that the educational activities and the worship of Fátima were structured in parallel, establishing a cultural mission of the group in a new area of action.

Even though his *Carta pastoral saudando a sua arquidiocese* had contributed to the reaction of some clergymen against the actions of exiled Jesuits, Dom Sebastião Leme was the main articulator of projects from the order in the region. Regarding the educational issues, the clergyman did not limit himself to the implementation of a basic education school or the work with school-age youngsters, but he intended to organize actions towards the different levels of formation of “his congregation” (Leme, 1916).

The objectives of the bishop had already been presented in his pastoral letter of 1916, when he emphasized the need for a broad educational project based on Catholic values and the dialogue with recatholicization proposals. In the document, the bishop of Olinda highlighted that:

It was with excitement that has arrived to us the resolution taken by the Archbishops and Bishops from the Brazilian Septentrional Ecclesiastic Provinces, when assembled in Bahia under the presidency of the venerable and illustrious Archbishop Primaz, in which they agreed to found in the city of Recife a Catholic University. We find it superfluous to say that we will make all the efforts to second the vote and the proposal of all venerable brothers from the Episcopal polity (Leme, 1916, pp. 102-103)

The decision to organize a Catholic higher education institution in Recife showed the importance of the ecclesiastic work in the region. The projects developed by Dom Leme, the affinities with the political forces in the area, and the work of the religious orders, besides factors such as location, academic demand, and dialogue with sectors of the clergy, have contributed to the establishment of the institution in the city instead of other regions.

As part of the international projects, the pedagogical actions in the first half of the 20th century were fundamental to the formation of new-Christianity commuted with Catholic values. With the creation of a higher education institution, the Roman Church hierarch helped in the formation of men and women in various levels of education, through religious discussion on basic education, vocational teaching, and university training.

To contribute to the actions developed in the ecclesiastic region of Olinda and Recife, 13 Jesuits arrived in the capital of Pernambuco on 1917, 6 of them priests, 6 brothers, and one academic. With the support of the bishop, the clergymen acquired a space to start their devotional, educational, and cultural activities, inaugurating the *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega* on March 19th, 1917, located in *Palácio da Soledade*, the official residence of the bishopric (Azevedo, 1986).¹⁴

The institution followed the model already used by clergymen in other cities, with a Catholic education focused on the moral formation of young boys and the collaboration with recatholicization activities in society (Sousa, 2013). Simultaneously to the construction of a school area, the Jesuits started building a temple dedicated to Our Lady of Fátima. We should remember that this devotion was one of the main proposals to reconfigure Catholicism in the first decades of the 20th century in the Luso-Brazilian world, especially during the Catholic reaffirmation after the instauration of a laic policy in Portugal.

Even though the ideas to build a temple dedicated to the “Lady of the Rosary” were thought during the bishopric of Dom Sebastião Leme, it was during the management of Dom Miguel de Lima Valverde (1922-1951)¹⁵ that the activities were taken into action. Father Joseph Foulquier led the initial project, but, due to health issues, granted his position to Father Domingos Gomes (Azevedo, 1986).

The construction of a temple was meaningful to the Jesuits of the Disperse Portuguese Province. Since 1917, Fátima was the reference in the combat against anticleric ideas and the laic culture, becoming the main symbol in the process of recatholicization of society in Portugal. After the recognition of its worship in 1930 by the Bishop of Leiria, Dom José Alves

¹⁴ With the development of the activities in *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega* and the increase on the demand for clergymen, as from 1925 part of the clergymen that finished their works in the region of Caetité transferred to Recife.

¹⁵ On the management of Dom Miguel Valverde in the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife, see Silva (2006).

Correia da Silva (1872-1957), and the political positioning of the attributed messages, many other places started to pay homages which contributed to the internationalization of a Mary worship started in Portugal (Azevedo; Cristino, 2007).

The projects to build a temple dedicated to Fátima in Recife started before the worship was officially recognized by the Catholic Church in Portugal. Since 1928, the Jesuit Father Manuel Rufino Negreiros was the main supporter of a construction in Recife in honor of Mary's apparitions. Funded by the Portuguese community, the work started on October 15th, 1933 and the temple was inaugurated on September 8th, 1935.¹⁶ The church was built in the same grounds of *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega* becoming one of the main places of circulation of Catholic intellectuals in the city (Azevedo, 1986; Boletim Mensal da Arquidiocese de Olinda e Recife, 1935).

The activities of *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega*, as well as other secondary-education institutions founded by the Jesuits in the Northern region of Brazil, assembled groups from the local economic elite. Having a program focused on students' intellectual formation, the graduates had as their main destinations the Schools of Law, Medicine, or Engineering academic paths who represented *status* on the discourses of modernization and legal order in the country (Silva, 2015).¹⁷

The Jesuit school occupied a place in society that up to that moment need an effective action of the Catholic Church. Recife had Protestant schools, such as *Colégio Americano de Pernambuco* (1904), nowadays called *Colégio Presbiteriano Agnes Erskine*, and *Colégio Americano Batista* (1906), besides Catholic institutions focused on girls and boys education, respectively *Colégio Damas* (1901) and *Colégio Marista São Luís* (1910), as well as spaces of laic education. All

¹⁶ In fact, the work was done in the last five months, as right after the inauguration of the foundation stone, the Jesuits faced problems to raise funds to build the temple. Part of the historiography about the importance of the church dedicated to Fatima in Recife, as the books of Father Ferdinand Azevedo, highlights that the temple was the first one build in the world, even before the one in Portugal. However, the institution in Recife was the first church in a large scale, because between April 28th and July 15th, 1919 the Little Chapel of Fatima was built (Fernandes, 1944). The current *Basilica do Rosário* started to be built in 1928 and was consecrated in October 7th, 1953.

¹⁷ When analyzing the debates on the constitution of a Catholic Higher Education in Pernambuco, from the *Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras Manuel da Nóbrega*, founded in 1943, the historian Newton Cabral (2009) presented the changes on the educational focus of *Colégio Nóbrega* as an access to the new educational institution. According to the author the *Faculdade* was considered the "continuation of the educational apostolate for the students of *Colégio Nóbrega*" and the "crowning of the recatholicization process" (Cabral, 2009, p. 28).

these institutions presented themselves as tools to form social ideas based on education, protestant, catholic, and/or non-devotional.

The institutions aforementioned, at first, represented the definition of three manners of education, competed not only for the number of students enrolled, but the possibility of forming a group of individuals committed to the values they defended. Thus, *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega* established itself as one more institution whose objective was to contribute with the revindications and execution of international projects to structure a devotional education committed to the values of the Catholic Church in the first half of the 20th century.¹⁸

We should understand the educational institution as a space to create the proposals of re-Christianization. The actions of the Society of Jesus members, as a project of Catholic teaching defending a social and political moral, were essential to validate the educational activities of the religious orders, which can be seen in the number of students enrolled in their first years of activity.

In table 1 we can see the evolution on the number of students enrolled in the first seven years of *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega*. In it we have the final numbers of each school year, considering full-board, weekly-board, and school-day students.

Table 1 – Evolution on the number of enrolled students in *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega*, during its first seven years

School year	Total of enrolled students
1917 ¹⁹	27 (beginning of school year) 93 (end of school year)
1918	190
1919	310
1920	306
1921	228
1922	212
1923	249

Source: Azevedo (1986)

¹⁸ During the research, we tried to examine the material that showed the curricular content of *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega*. However, due to a reorganization of the Jesuit archives in the Northeast region, the documents are forbidden to be consulted for many years now.

¹⁹ In 1917, the first students enrolled were 9 full-board, and 3 weekly-board, and 15 school-day students. In 1918 the students were composed by 62 full-board, 23 weekly-board, and 105 school-day students.

The numbers clearly show the strengthening of the project and the result of rigorous actions of the coordinators in *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega*. The decrease in the number of students enrolled, starting in 1921, was the result of Father João Batista Gonçalves's actions after he assumed as a rector in 1920. Among his actions, in the end of his first years as the ruler of the institution, he expelled the students who "had no hope to be educated", that is, those who would be reprovado in the "annual exams" – besides this, several students transferred spontaneously criticizing the "demanding" educational model adopted by the new principal (Azevedo, 1986, p. 117). To Ferdinand Azevedo (1986), the clergyman's action might seem excessive, but answered to the objectives of the order in maintaining the quality of education and that of the members of the school.²⁰

The actions of Father João Batista Gonçalves showed that the educational concept of the Jesuits did not have the number of students enrolled as the main goal. His activities targeted a broader project of social and cultural reorganization, to form "good Catholics" committed to the projects of the clergy. Therefore, the students of the institution needed to attend a demand based on strengthening Catholicism in a laic State.

Another crucial point to the decrease on the number of students enrolled was the transfer of Bishop Dom Sebastião Leme to the Archdiocese of São Sebastião in Rio de Janeiro in 1921. As the main supporter of the actions from the Society of Jesus members in Recife, the activities of the clergymen needed to readapt to follow a new leadership structure.

Just as *Colégio Manuel da Nóbrega* was fundamental to the disputes of space and actions against the Protestant and and/or laic education institutions, we should highlight that the school had also collaborated with a broad project of Catholic education of boys and girls in Recife. It organized confessional schools, such as *Colégio São José* from the Dorothean Sisters, *Colégio Nossa Senhora do Carmo*, and *Colégio das Filhas de Maria Auxiliadora* in the central area of the city, or even the Marist Schools and *Colégio da Imaculada Conceição* in regions farther from downtown. Other institutions were strengthened, such as *Colégio Salesiano de Artes e Ofícios do Sagrado Coração*, which worked since 1895.

²⁰ This objective was based on the commitment with the ideas of the Catholic Church, with actions that would contribute to the development of ecclesiastic projects of the institution

With the growth of the Jesuit mission in the north of Brazil and the difficulties to fund the clergy, the Society of Jesus faced a series of challenges to maintain the structure of the Jesuit Septentrional Province in Brazil. To reduce the expenses, some ecclesiastic divisions were declared independent, as the one coordinated by the Portuguese in Brazil, because it was considered one of the most mature in its missionary work. Thus, from December 8th, 1938, the institution started to act with its own resources and organize the administrative body independently (Azevedo, 1986).

The main criticism to the independence of the Province was the possibility that the institution would not finish the projects started in 1911, as the organization of *Colégio Antônio Vieira* in Salvador. In 1938, the Society had 60 priests, 40 students e 53 brothers. However, the main concern of some leaders of the order was the possible lack of experience of young Jesuits to substitute the clergymen who were in the various missions (Azevedo, 2006).

Even with this apprehension, the members of the Society of Jesus who continued with the projects developed by their predecessors were successful in the activities related to education and the expansion of the Catholic worship. The continuation of the Jesuit activities contributed to the strengthening of a cultural exchange among clergy members, parishioners, and Brazilian and Portuguese intellectuals in the first half of the 20th century. Despite their specificities, the clergymen developed essential exchanges to the cultural formation of both countries, especially those related to the Roman Church.

The clergymen's project was fundamental to an international movement of political and social restructuring of the Catholic Church. So, the Jesuit mission was important to the actions of Catholic Restoration, especially the creation of proposals for a devotional education, committed to the teachings of the Roman Church. During the first half of the 20th century, the movement of the Catholic Church in Brazil, also composed by exiled Portuguese Jesuits, worked as a model to organize the proposals of recatholicization in Portugal.

The work done by Dom Sebastião Leme, the actions of the Society of Jesus members in Brazil, and the dialogues established by the Portuguese Patriarch Dom Manuel Cerejeira (1888-1977) consolidated the collaboration among intellectuals, clergymen, and part of the Catholic Church in both countries. The approximations were essential to the solidification of the international project of the Roman Curia, which had in the Luso-Brazilian world an important space of action.

We should highlight the fact that the numbers here presented do not limit our conclusions on the cultural mission of the Society of Jesus members. We emphasize that the way a “group appropriates itself of...a cultural form is more important than the statistical distribution of this reason or this form” (Chartier, 2002, p. 44). Therefore, differently from what has been claimed by part of the historiography, as the proposals defended by Antonio Candido (Gobbi, Fernandes, & Junqueira, 2002), even without having a deep knowledge on the regions they acted, the exiled Portuguese Jesuits did a planned ecclesiastic work, integrated to the international project of the Catholic Church.

Besides the proposal of a cultural mission, the work from the exiled Jesuits in different Brazilian cities can be understood from the concepts of cultural mediation. The members of the Society of Jesus actively acted, proposed ideas, reinforced the activities of recatholicization in society and in the institutions, organized a new worship, and structured an educational project which valued a Catholic tradition. The clergymen’s work contributed to the insertion of a religious teaching model, aiming to form individuals in the “right pathways” defended by the clergy (Ginzburg, Castelnovo, & Poni, 1991).

More importantly than the results of the projects, which can also be translated into numbers, are the cultural dialogues, the organization of a religious mission, and the cultural mediation that aided on the creation of essential representations to the history of the Society of Jesus in Brazil. The activities developed by the Jesuits should be understood from an international project, partially interrupted in Portugal in October 5th, 1919, but that presented other configurations with the exile of its representatives in various countries.

Since its foundation, the Society of Jesus presented itself as an international order, with projects not limited to one place or ecclesiastic intention (Sousa, 2016). In this sense, the work done by the clergymen can be understood from the perspective of transcultural components, and this text emphasized especially aspects specific to education (Cavalcante, 2016). However, this particularity cannot be understood in isolation, as its characters are part of the political, cultural, and social context of the first half of the 20th century.

The work of the Society of Jesus in the North region of Brazil helped to expand the mission developed by the representatives of the order in various countries. In this sense, the clergymen's activities were fundamental to strengthen the Catholic proposals and projects around a movement of recatholicization of society, as well as of institutions. The actions organized by the Jesuits were indispensable to the cultural exchange in a part of the Luso-Brazilian world, contributing to the work developed by the Disperse Portuguese Province in the country.

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