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Review article

History education in Portugal (a 25-year overview)

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Abstract

This article aims to root history education in Portugal, which is interlinked with Isabel Barca's efforts to enhance the discussion about the relationship between history, history epistemology and situated cognition. By the late 1990s, history education had begun to be taught at the University of Minho under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon paradigm, mainly Lee, Ashby and Shemilt's ideas. Important milestones were, in the 2000s, the creation/coordination by Isabel Barca of: (1) an academic master's degree related to history teaching; (2) the HiCon projects (2003–11), focused on deepening knowledge about Portuguese teachers' and students' historical thinking and historical consciousness; and (3) the Jornadas Internacionais em Educação Histórica (International Journeys of History Education), conceived to share results with national and international researchers, and that contributed to building bridges with other academies, namely in Brazil. History education has influenced Portuguese history curricula since 2001 (apart from the years 2011–2015, when there was a right-wing shift), and has inspired the competencies in

history oriented to develop students' historical thinking. As the new curricula and paradigms in history teaching were challenging to school teachers, Barca has inspired the Portuguese History Teachers Association to promote several scientific events and continuing professional development since the 2000s. This was how her workshop classroom model based on history education (the '*aula-oficina*') became known among teachers, and contributed to practice changes in schools. Through the years, Portuguese history educationalists have continued to deepen knowledge in this area, and to share the results in national and international academic communities, and also with school teachers.

Keywords history education; historical consciousness; competencies in history; teacher training; history curriculum

Introduction

In 1988, Isabel Barca was a history teaching lecturer at the University of Minho (in the north of Portugal), and she became aware of the ideas of Alaric Dickinson, Peter Lee and Peter Rogers. Following this, she decided to go to the Institute of Education of the University of London to do a PhD in the area, and she was supervised by Peter Lee (as well as Maria do Céu Melo, who had followed her). Barca and Melo looked forward to contributing to changing history teaching practices (and curricula) at a time when information reproduction prevailed. That seemed possible, because Portuguese teachers have freedom to choose their practices, provided that they respect the curricular framework defined by the state, which is similar to other European countries, according to Tyson [Retz \(2022\)](#).

In Portugal, history is a mandatory subject only during elementary education (first cycle – Years 1 to 4; second cycle – Years 5 and 6; third cycle – Years 7 to 9), although since 2009, compulsory education covers 12 years of schooling (until students are 18 years old). Nevertheless, history is part of Social Environment Studies in Years 3 and 4, and part of History and Geography of Portugal in Years 5 and 6. It is an autonomous subject only in the third cycle and in some courses of secondary education (Years 10 to 12 of courses oriented towards higher education or professional life).

The methodological options to write this article were inspired by [Flick \(2005\)](#), and consisted of a literature review on Portuguese history education and brief interviews with Isabel Barca (pioneer of history education in Portugal), Helena Pinto and Marília Gago (researchers in history education). Researchers are referred to by surname (except in the first text reference).

Dissemination of these ideas in Portugal

The publication in Portugal, in 2000, of Barca's PhD (defended in 1996), highlighted students' ideas about historical provisional explanations. She studied how Portuguese students of Years 7, 9 and 11 organised their explanations about 'why' and 'how' something happened in the past when exposed to divergent narratives, and through a process of gradually increasing complexity. Out of the data emerged a model of provisional explanation in history: (1) the story; (2) the right explanation; (3) 'the more factors the better'; (4) 'a consensual explanation?'; and (5) perspective. Most of the students' answers were located at Level 3, revealing an attitude of valuing a sum of factors (without checking its validity), close to 'cut and paste', as defined by [Collingwood \(1946\)](#); 10 per cent were in Levels 4 and 5. Level 4 shows concerns about perspectiveless neutrality and consensual explanations, while Level 5 acknowledges the diversity of perspectives, recognising the provisional nature of history explanations ([Barca, 2000, 2019b](#)). To improve Portuguese students' learning in history, specifically the use of evidence and perspective-crossing, Barca, inspired by the Anglo-Saxon paradigm, strove to promote strategies for developing what might be described as 'historical literacy among teachers'.

Barca struggled to interlink the Portuguese academy and school teachers in order to help them to move beyond traditional approaches focused on memorisation and reproduction of a single, knowable past.

In addition, Barca questioned the widely accepted view that young students could not understand the complexity of history before the age of 16 years, and also disseminated the results of British history education research, such as the School History 13–16 Project (SHP) of the 1970s, presented by Denis Shemilt (1980), and the Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches: 7 to 14 (CHATA) project of the 1990s, of Lee, Rosalyn Ashby and Alaric Dickinson, highlighting that: (1) the use of epistemological concepts (evidence, significance, empathy, change/continuity, cause/consequence, multiperspectivity and narrative) helps students to deal with historical sources and to mobilise substantive knowledge to produce more contextualised reasoning – influenced by Collingwood's (1946) 'reconstruction knowledge' about the past; (2) students who understand methodological procedures deal better with sources (even contradictory ones), and make more meaningful inferences and explanations than those who regard them as mere information; (3) the use of challenging tasks (or questions) helps students to develop rational understanding, and to produce more sophisticated ideas (even among the weakest); (4) peer interaction facilitates argumentation and contextualised explanation; (5) the knowledge of students' preconceptions is important to clarify fragmented, disorganised or common-sense ideas, and to avoid obstacles to the learning of epistemological and substantive concepts; and (6) assessment should be focused on students' ideas, progression and conceptual changes (Ashby and Lee, 1987; Cooper, 1992; Dickinson and Lee, 1978, 1984; Lee, 2001, 2004, 2005; Lee and Ashby, 2000, 2001; Lee and Shemilt, 2003; Shemilt, 1987).

Barca also introduced the ideas of the American psychologist Sam Wineburg (1991) about the assessment of historical sources when considering questions of evidence, and Jörn Rüsen's perspective of historical consciousness. Barca drew on Rüsen's thinking through an article by the Canadian Peter Seixas given to her by Lee and Ashby in London, where she met Seixas when he was discussing historical understanding (Seixas, 1996).

Rüsen's disciplinary matrix of the science of history gave to school history a transformative and critical dimension. (The translations into Portuguese since 2001 by Estevão de Rezende Martins, a Brazilian philosopher, historian and teacher, made it easier to understand Rüsen's thinking in Portugal.) Through interpretation and historical culture, students can make sense of history, and grasp some answers to their needs for orientation (and identity) in practical life (*Lebenspraxis*), inspiring temporal orientation. This implies the narrative competence – that is to say, the use of historical understanding, aligned with critical realism – to contextualise the diversity of perspectives and to (re)think human actions/experiences in the past, based on evidence. This is expressed in different ways, revealing four types of historical consciousness (traditional, exemplary, critical and genetic), between which the progression is not linear (Rüsen, 2001, 2004, 2007).

To Barca (2015), Anglo-Saxon history education and Rüsen's historical consciousness (in the sense of the possibility of making sense of history to generate scenarios of the future based on interpretations of the past and perceptions of the present), are important to enhance students' understanding of the relationships between past and present, and the complexity of history.

Inspired by these ideas, Barca proposed a classroom model grounded in situated cognition.

The aula-oficina

The '*aula-oficina*' is a workshop structured in several steps: (1) the teacher uncovers students' preconceptions or misconceptions about a topic to help them to grasp new concepts and information; (2) the teacher challenges students to produce multifactorial explanations of historical sources (diverse in their status, language and message); (3) students should use inference and mobilise substantive/factual knowledge to interpret sources and build evidence, expressing it through a contextualised narrative; (4) during the process, the teacher should give feedback to improve students' historical thinking, and, at the end, should elicit students' conceptual changes by explaining why some ideas are valid in the historical context while others are not; and (5) a meta-cognition exercise should enlighten students about what and how they have learnt. Thus, the teacher acts as a social researcher, and enables students to think historically: the goal of historical literacy (Barca, 2004).

The academy and research (until 2017)

By the late 1990s, history education was already part of the Methodology syllabus of the graduate degree in History and Social Sciences Education in the Institute of Education of the University of Minho.

From 1999 until 2012, Barca coordinated an academic Master's Degree in Education, Pedagogical Supervision and Methodology of History Teaching, which interlinked history, historical epistemology and situated cognition. It aimed to research Portuguese students' ideas about second order concepts, and teachers' practices and history conceptions (Gago and Lagarto, 2021).

The first master's dissertation of this course was defended, in 2001, by Gago. Focused on students' narratives of Years 5 and 7, she distinguished five profiles: (1) to count – a story; (2) knowledge – correct narrative; (3) difference – correct/more complete narrative; (4) author – opinion or consensual narrative; and (5) nature – perspective; these were linked more to students' competencies than to their age, which was close to the conclusions of Barca and Lee (Gago, 2021).

Promoting history education

Barca conceived the Jornadas Internacionais em Educação Histórica (International Journeys of History Education) to share Portuguese research results and to update the knowledge of what had been done abroad. The first event, in 2000, was organised around two axes (historical cognition and heritage): Barca approached the multiplicity of explanations in history, and Melo addressed the students' tacit ideas. Lee and Keith Barton were invited, and they spoke, respectively, about the model of progression of students' ideas in understanding, and about students' ideas of change in Northern Ireland and the USA (Barca, 2001). In the following events, Ashby, Hilary Cooper and Rösen were also invited.

The Jornadas contributed to building bridges between Portuguese universities, specifically those involved in teachers' initial training: Olga Magalhães (Évora), Luís Alberto Marques Alves (Porto), Raquel Henriques (NOVALisbon) and João Paulo Avelãs (Coimbra) were invited to contribute to several events.

The Jornadas also strengthened relationships with Brazilian researchers (Maria Auxiliadora Schmidt, Tânia Braga and Kátia Abud, among others) and Spanish researchers (Joaquin Prats, Pedro Mirales, Rafael Valls and Ramon Facal, among others).

From 2006 to 2012, the Jornadas took place alternately between Portugal and Brazil, and its growing internationalisation enabled three Jornadas in Spain (2013, 2018 and 2023), and one in Colombia (2019). This continues to be an important academic event among Ibero-American-speaking researchers, which is reflected in the growing number of participants and the need to plan simultaneous presentation panels (which also happened in 2021, when the Jornadas were carried out using live technology during the Covid-19 pandemic). No less important is the opportunity of speaking, and of writing in the *Actas* (of Jornadas), in participants' own language.

The relationships with the Brazilian academy were also reinforced through an exchange programme in 2003 between the University of Minho and the University Federal of Paraná (Nascimento and Schmidt, 2020).

Barca has also been responsible for interlinking Portuguese and Brazilian history education researchers with the History Educators International Research Network (HEIRNET) since 2004 (Cooper, 2021).

History education doctorates

Barca supervised various master's degrees, doctorates and postdoctoral theses in history education in Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde and Mozambique. In this article, only the doctorates supervised in Portugal from 2001 until 2017 will be approached, because they are close to the HiCon (Historical Consciousness – Theory and Practices) projects.

The first doctorate was the quantitative research of Magalhães (in 2001) about teachers' conceptions of history and of history teaching. Among teachers, six conceptions of history emerged: (1) positivist science; (2) non-science; (3) relative knowledge; (4) comprehensive science; (5) social science; and (6) temporal science. Although the notion of history as a science (but without problematisation) prevailed, some teachers still accepted a positivist history. While most of them preferred to use practices of autonomous work or guided activities, some preferred passive work. Thus, Magalhães defended the

need to deepen knowledge about teachers' conceptual frameworks and classroom practices (Gago and Magalhães, 2009).

From 2003 to 2011, Barca supervised five doctorates within the scope of the HiCon project, the theoretical and methodological framework of which merged the Anglo-Saxon paradigm (namely, the importance of a systematised knowledge of teachers' and students' historical ideas to improve teaching and learning quality) with Rösen's perspective of historical consciousness (the use of the narrative competency as a cultural practice of interpreting time) (Barca, 2019b). HiCon I (2003–7) and HiCon II (2007–11), financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, also produced six master's dissertations and one postdoctorate (Gago and Lagarto, 2021). The aim was to explore teachers' and students' historical and meta-historical thinking about second-order concepts (and conceptual progression), historical consciousness, and teaching and learning practices (Gago and Lagarto, 2021). HiCon doctorates were mainly qualitative studies, inspired by grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), and some quantitative methods were also used (Riazi and Candlin, 2014). The research techniques were paper-and-pencil tasks (to analyse sources and produce explanations/narratives), classroom observation, enquiries and interviews. The literature reviews contributed to updating approaches on historical thinking, such as Chapman's studies on causal reasoning (Chapman, 2003), Seixas's model of historical thinking (Seixas and Peck, 2004) and Rösen's humanism (Rösen, 2013), among others.

Each doctorate (presented by year of PhD defence) highlighted several aspects of history education in Portugal.

1. 2006 – Júlia Castro studied students' ideas (Years 10 to 12) about interculturality and historical consciousness, using the epistemological concepts of significance and empathy/perspective taking. Out of the data emerged different levels of understanding: (1) restricted; (2) decentred emerging; (3) decentred; and (4) integrative decentred. Although most of the students used interculturality to give meaning to the human past, their ideas were poorly contextualised and/or fragmented, with a few revealing more sophisticated ideas. A tendency to mix history and citizenship was also revealed, and, to prevent this, Castro (2008) suggested that the aims of these subjects should be clarified.
2. 2007 – Marília Gago studied teachers' historical thinking through historical narrative, and distinguished four conceptual profiles: (1) substantive past; (2) lessons of the past; (3) lessons of a past in evolution; and (4) continuities and differences between times. Most of the teachers' answers were close to Rösen's exemplary type of historical consciousness, due to their teaching practices being based on positivist ideas, revealing the prevalence of Annales's conceptions of neutrality and impartiality in Portugal, which until the 1990s had a strong influence on the history departments of various Portuguese universities, and on the Portuguese History National Curriculum (Gago and Magalhães, 2009). To enhance the use of diversified perspectives of history, and to develop students' understanding, Gago proposed that teacher training (initial and continuous) should be focused on epistemology, and on teaching and learning practices (Gago and Magalhães, 2009).
3. 2007 – Ana Catarina Simão studied the use of evidence, mainly when students of Years 8 and 11 use opposing sources to build historical inferences. Out of the data emerged six levels of students' ideas of evidence: (1) copy of the past; (2) information; (3) testimony or knowledge; (4) proof; (5) restricted; and (6) contextualised. Most of the Year 8 students' ideas were in Levels 1 and 2, and most Year 11 students' ideas were in Levels 3 and 4, and revealed a tendency to naive relativism. To enhance an understanding with multiperspectivity, Simão (2021) proposed that teachers should develop tasks with divergent sources more often.
4. 2011 – Helena Pinto interlinked history education and heritage to research how students of Years 7 and 10 use evidence in a historical site and build more inclusive senses of identity, both at local and at wider levels. From the data emerged two progression models of students' ideas. One model was about evidence: (1) alternative idea; (2) inference from existing details; (3) inference from context; and (4) questioning. The other model was about historical consciousness: (1) ahistorical consciousness; (2) consciousness of a fixed past; (3) consciousness of a symbolic past; (4) emerging historical consciousness; and (5) explicit historical consciousness. Most of the teachers considered that the contact with evidence reinforced students' knowledge, but that they were close to Rösen's exemplary type of historical consciousness, although a few could be related to the genetic type.

Thus, [Pinto \(2013\)](#) proposed the articulation between history education and heritage education to improve students' historical understanding.

5. 2012 – Helena Veríssimo studied how the use of evidence by students of Year 12 influenced their results in national examinations, mainly when dealing with sources in which the author expresses contradictory perspectives. From the data analysis emerged the relationship between the use of sources by students and their visions of the past, revealing different levels of empathy: (1) fragments/anachronisms; (2) fixed past; (3) presentism/stereotypes; (4) temporal orientation (minimal context); and (5) temporal orientation (multiperspectivity). As most of the ideas were in the first three levels, [Veríssimo \(2012\)](#) suggested a more systematic use of historical thinking strategies to deal with plural messages.

Barca also supervised three more doctorates, apart from HiCon, but with the same methodological assumptions.

1. 2014 – Isabel Afonso studied the use of history textbooks by teachers and students of Year 10. It was clear that textbooks were the privileged didactic-pedagogical resource. While most of the teachers favoured tasks with sources, the students preferred to read the author's narrative. Regarding source analysis, students found it easier to deal with issues familiar to them, such as education (even if in ancient Greece), which highlighted the value of significance. Even so, most of the responses tended to be generic interpretations, and only a few responses exhibited grounded synthesis. Thus, [Afonso \(2014\)](#) suggested that textbooks should offer more source-oriented tasks.
2. 2017 – Angelina Ngungui studied the ideas of the students of Years 10 and 11, and their teachers' ideas, about the 'epistemology of Africa's history' and the 'scramble for and partition of Africa', when comparing the Berlin Conference documents with African sources, during an *aula-oficina* in Angola. Teachers were open to this methodology, and out of the data emerged a model of progression of students' interpretation of sources: (1) common sense; (2) common sense and partially substantiated; and (3) historical sense. Thus, [Ngungui \(2021\)](#) proposed the creation of a master's in history education to meet the needs of Angolan education. Since 2018, [Ngungui \(2021\)](#) has been developing the project 'Historical Education: An Innovative Approach to Teaching and Learning History' in the Higher Institute of Educational Sciences of Benguela.
3. 2017 – Lagarto studied school teachers' history conceptions and practices of teaching, and how historical thinking competencies were being developed and assessed in Years 7 to 9. From the data emerged seven profiles of teaching and learning moments, and a model of development of competencies in history: (1) reproduction (regurgitation and common sense); (2) interpretation (of sources); and (3) understanding (inference and contextualisation). Direct observation revealed that the same teacher used different practices in class and, although most of the moments were related to dialogue practices and source treatment (at a simple level), a few were close to the transmission paradigm; just one teacher used *aula-oficina* ([Lagarto, 2019](#)). Because most parts of students' answers/narratives during the exploratory and pilot study were in Levels 1 or 2, in the final study, it was suggested to teachers to include tasks with higher cognitive challenge oriented to second-order reasoning (specifically about change/continuity). These teachers acted as social researchers, and oriented their students towards more sophisticated ideas, helping them to grasp a sense of temporal orientation; this made clear the relationship between teaching practices and students' learning, mainly the importance of challenging/scaffolded questions and learning monitorisation ([Lagarto, 2019](#)).

Portuguese history curricula

History education has influenced Portuguese history curricula since 2001, when a competency-based curriculum (centred on formative assessment) was approved for elementary education. The concept of competency implied an integrative approach of knowledge, abilities and attitudes, and each subject was organised around a core of 'Essential Competencies' ([DEB, 2001](#)). In history, these were: (1) treatment of information/use of historical sources; (2) historical understanding – time, space and contextualisation; and (3) communication in history ([DEB, 2001](#): 87). Teachers were expected to develop students' historical thinking through epistemological concepts (such as evidence and inference), to analyse historical sources (their messages, intentions and context of production), and to explain (and reflect upon) the multiplicity of

factors, perspectives, causes/consequences and evolutions/ruptures in order to (re)construct meaningful narratives of the past (Barca, 2003).

A 'Profile of the student competent in history at the end of the third cycle' was also defined, and it was expected that the student should know how to: (1) interlink Portuguese history with European and world history (from prehistory to the present day); (2) use specific methodology and substantive concepts; (3) enhance Portuguese historical heritage as part of world heritage; and (4) acknowledge and respect other peoples and cultures (DEB, 2001: 90).

The history curriculum of secondary education of 2002, although not directly inspired by history education, had some competencies and purposes that allowed teachers' practices closer to history education (Pinto and Lagarto, 2022). Nevertheless, elementary and secondary curricula offered a chronological sequence of contents (as in the previous curricula of 1989–91), and textbooks and national examinations maintained the focus on content, which supported the resistance to change of the teachers focused on summative scores.

Another setback in the development of historical thinking was the reduction of the history teaching timetable in elementary education due to the options of curricular autonomy and flexibility taken in some schools. To overcome these setbacks, in 2011, the Ministry of Education published the History Learning Goals, based on history education research findings (Pinto and Lagarto, 2022).

The right-wing shift in Portugal in 2011–2015 cancelled these Learning Goals, and promoted a 'New education policy' (2012) close to neoliberalism and centred on substantive knowledge and summative assessment. In 2013, the Ministry of Education published the History Curricular Goals, which were a prescriptive, detailed (and enlarged) list of contents, which reinforced expository practices and an assessment focused mainly on the reproduction of information. These legislative intentions supported the most traditional teachers, and exacerbated the tensions of those who tried to reconcile contents and historical thinking development. Nevertheless, due to the action of the History Teachers' Association (APH), those teachers engaged with history education practices were able to pursue them, because the Ministry of Education published an order that recognised their freedom to choose teaching practices (Pinto and Lagarto, 2022). This was somewhat similar to what happened with the proposals for the curriculum in England in 2013 (Harris and Burn, 2015).

In 2017, a socialist government reoriented education policy to reduce substantive contents and to enhance cognitive processes (and transferable knowledge) through the development of competencies. The central element of this curriculum is the 'Students' profile by the end of compulsory education': its principles, values and competency areas shape the development of the curriculum for each subject: the Essential Learnings. The Ministry of Education involved the teachers' associations in the making of these curricula, and APH invited history educationalists and history researchers to do so. With scarce time and lots of constraints, they managed to ensure the use of epistemological concepts organised around three cores (inspired by the 2001 competencies): (1) interpretation of historical sources/use of evidence; (2) contextualised understanding; and (3) communication/historical narrative. Therefore, teachers could go beyond a chronological curriculum, and could promote meaningful learnings to help students 'to understand the major national and international issues related to globalisation' and 'to problematise past–present relationships' through tasks oriented to higher cognitive challenges, and 'to clarify values in a humanistic perspective' (DGE, 2018: 2–4), tacitly revealing the legacy of Rüsen's historical consciousness (Pinto and Lagarto, 2022).

Although the contents were reduced, the history teaching timetable in Years 5 to 9 was further reduced (in favour of other knowledge areas or citizenship education) due to curricular flexibility. This has created huge tensions, and it has forced history teachers to make great efforts to develop historical thinking. However, for secondary education (if teachers so wish), there is time to promote tasks to deepen cognitive processes (Pinto and Lagarto, 2022) and to contribute to students' temporal orientation, namely, to build scenarios for the future in a more humanistic sense and on a planetary scale (Barca, 2019a).

There is a unique subject closer to history education in Portugal, 'History, cultures and democracy', developed along four structural axes: (1) historical and epistemological knowledge; (2) understanding of the present world from local, regional and global perspectives (and heritages); (3) problematisation of recent history and painful pasts; and (4) relationships between past and present. It was the result of a partnership between the Directorate-General for Education (DGE), APH and the Centro de Investigação Transdisciplinar Cultura, Espaço e Memória/Research Centre for Culture, Space and Memory (CITCEM),

and it has been offered, since 2019, as an option in Year 12 to students of courses without history as a subject (Sciences and Technologies, Socioeconomic Sciences and Visual Arts).

In Portugal, textbooks are close to curricula, and they are chosen by teachers in each school. Recently, history education (and historical consciousness) is increasingly present in activities using second-order concepts or contradictory sources (Nascimento and Schmidt, 2020), due to some history educationalists being textbook co-authors (Afonso, Castro, Gago, Lagarto, Pinto and Veríssimo), or scientific and pedagogical reviewers (Magalhães and Barca).

Linking the academy and teachers

Pursuing the aim to interlink academy and school teachers, Barca wrote in the APH review *O Ensino da História* (History Teaching) about conceptions of history (linear progression and single narrative, versus multiperspective), historical cognition and the national history curriculum revision discussed from 1999 to 2001 (Gago and Lagarto, 2021).

In 2002, Barca published a dossier, with the researchers of HiCon I, to reinforce school teachers' scientific knowledge about how to use contextualised cognition to produce significant learnings and more sophisticated ideas: Castro wrote about historical significance; Gago about historical narrative; and Simão about the use of multiperspectivity to avoid sceptical relativism. Further articles related to HiCon projects and to experiences with *aula-oficina* were published in APH reviews and pedagogical notebooks. Barca also promoted the debate about history education in three annual congresses of APH (in 2000, 2007 and 2009), to which she invited Lee and Cercadillo, among others (Gago and Lagarto, 2021).

Teachers' professional development

Barca supervised an inquiry about school teachers' needs (close to Magalhães's research) for APH, where she was a member of the Advisory Committee. The results influenced the continuing professional development plan of APH in 2000–2009, oriented to rethink practices. It introduced *aula-oficina*, and it was developed mainly by Barca, Magalhães, Gago, Pinto and Veríssimo. The sum of these efforts brought teachers from different schools to history education, and some of them were engaged in research (including the present author).

The relationship between APH and history educationalists was more intense during the presidency of Barca (2001–2003) and Veríssimo (2003–2009). Nevertheless, Barca, Gago, Lagarto and Pinto still provide courses in APH, and in school teacher-training centres in Lisbon, Braga, Guimarães, Coimbra, Porto and Azores, because, as Barca (2019a) says, teachers can only consciously change what they know and understand. Gago and Lagarto also cooperated with the DGE in actions for teachers' training (with national scope).

Initial teacher training

From 1988 until 2008, initial teacher training consisted of a year of postgraduate studies in Pedagogical Sciences and a year of internship at school, with attendance of a pedagogical seminar (Alves, 2021; Henriques, 2021).

In 2008, the Bologna Process introduced changes, which ensured mutual recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad. The Bologna Process required a bachelor's degree (three years) and a master's degree (two years), divided into theory and supervised teaching practice (in cooperating host schools), with a written report to be assessed in a viva defence. The initial teacher training in History was merged with Geography by the Ministry of Education in a single master's degree, but this decision was reversed in 2014, giving more time to think about different approaches in history teaching. Although there are some differences between universities engaged in this training, it is common to expect that the teacher candidate should be a social researcher, and history education has been increasingly influencing some teaching practices and reports (Alves, 2021; Henriques, 2021; Solé, 2021).

In the University of Minho, from 2011 until 2017, Barca, Solé and Melo supervised several reports (in association with Magalhães and Castro, among others): 16 out of 55 were directly related to history education (and heritage education), namely, to the meta-historical concepts of narrative, significance,

multiperspectivity and empathy (the last of which was the most commonly chosen), according to Solé (2021). The Bologna Process, and the lack of candidates, led to the end of the academic master's degree in 2012, but several Brazilian history education researchers did postgraduate qualifications in this university in history education (Solé, 2021). Gago recently became an auxiliary assistant professor at the University of Minho, with responsibilities in the history education units, and in supervising teachers' practice and reports.

In the University of Porto, the Perspectives in History Education unit was created to disseminate this area of knowledge, focusing on Portuguese research: the goal is to help students to do a more conscious choice of the methodologies for their supervised practice. Some of the 40 master's reports were related to experiences about the use of sources with diverse perspectives, painful pasts, local history and heritage (Alves, 2021).

In the NOVA University of Lisbon, the influence of Barca's ideas in the master's degree reports has been increasing over the years, and since 2017, more than half of 48 students) also reflected upon the theoretical works of Castro, Gago, Lagarto, Lee, Magalhães, Pinto, Rösen and Schmidt, and applied history education practices (such as the *aula-oficina*) and used historical sources to study multiperspectivity, change/continuity, past–present relationships and local history and heritage (Henriques, 2021). Henriques supervises the students' reports, some in association with Gago, Lagarto and Pinto, who also cooperate regularly in single classes about narrative, history education assessment or heritage education. However, Henriques (2021) wonders whether these teacher candidates will use these practices when they become school teachers, or whether they will be submerged by school directives and professional tensions.

Since 2023, Pinto (also a school teacher for more than three decades) has been an invited assistant professor at the University of Coimbra, with responsibilities in initial teacher training, especially in history education and heritage education.

Barca, Gago, Lagarto and Pinto have also been jury members of master's and PhD viva defences in the Universities of Minho, Porto, Coimbra and Lisbon (NOVA and OPEN), and in Brazil and Spain.

Research after HiCon

Pinto (since 2014), Barca, Gago and Lagarto (since 2018) and Simão (since 2019) are integrated researchers of the Education and Societal Challenges group of CITCEM at the University of Porto. They are engaged in publishing articles (and books) about history education and in strengthening cooperation between universities, either by organising (or being part of scientific committees), or by participating in national and international scientific events, like the Jornadas, the Ibero-American Association and HEIRNET. Thus, they contribute to the development of history education and to the objectives of CITCEM, which is a reference of R&D units in human and social sciences, according to Alves (2021).

Barca continues to work on identity, (historical) memories and controversial issues (Barca, 2019a), and to update knowledge about the limits of history education and citizenship, as she did in her interview with Lee and Ashby in London in 2019 (Barca, 2022). And she is a member of the jury on assessment contests for higher education teachers.

Gago is involved in research projects about textbooks, curricula and epistemology, and she has been discussing narrative as the major competency in historical thinking, that is, a dialogical and critical approach to generate an interspectival look, and to foster respect for human dignity and temporal orientation (Gago, 2021). She is also a mentor and cofounder of EDHILAB – Educação Histórica: Laboratório (Historical Education: Laboratory) – which promotes a collaborative dialogue between theory, research and practice through online scientific meetings with national and international researchers, such as Schmidt, Chapman and Lukas Perikleous.

Pinto is involved in research on history education, heritage education, identity, citizenship and invisible history, namely, in LETHE EU, and in other international projects coordinated by Spanish universities. She has been discussing a conscious and critical approach to heritage, addressing identity issues in schools and in society to avoid single narratives and populisms (Pinto, 2022).

Lagarto (a school teacher for more than four decades) is researching students' historical thinking about: (1) socially acute questions (migrations, security and environment); (2) controversial issues, such as slavery, inspired by Borries's (2011) burdening history and Rösen's (2013) humanism; and (3) the importance of history to understand the present (Lagarto, 2023).

Conclusion: expectations and uncertainties

Although further studies are needed, evidence suggests that since the HiCon projects, history education research in Portugal has been interweaving the Anglo-Saxon paradigm with Rösen's perspective of historical consciousness using epistemological concepts and narrative competency to foster more sophisticated ideas about the complexity of history, and to rethink disciplinary history dimensions. Research results have influenced curricular changes (by introducing more critical and humanistic dimensions in school history), and are reflected in teacher training, and in the development of international relationships, namely, with the Anglo-Saxon and Ibero-American academies. Evidence also suggests that the path has not been linear, nor progressive, but one can say that history education is alive in Portugal: some positive signs are the increasing interest in this area among teacher candidates, and more well-informed decisions among school teachers about their practices and textbook choices. Nevertheless, traditional teachers continue to resist change and feel comfortable with conservative policies (those that are more critical of historical thinking approaches). Present uncertainties about history curricula are due to the right-wing shift of 2024. Let us hope that the academy, the APH and the teachers closer to historical thinking approaches will be resilient once more in the defence of history education.

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Data and materials availability statement

All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article.

Declarations and conflicts of interest

Research ethics statement

The author conducted the research reported in this article in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Academic Conduct of the University of Porto.

Consent for publication statement

Not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest with this work. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the author during peer review of this article have been made. The author declares no further conflicts with this article.

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