



The use of the prosopographic method in the history of education from the magazine 'A Maçonaria in the State of São Paulo' (1912-1932)

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ABSTRACT. The text aims to show how we can use the prosopographic method in the field of the history of education. We organized as follows: the first item addresses the use of the prosopographic method in relation to the studies of elites. In this topic, we also emphasize the possibility of prosopography for the analysis of subordinate classes. The second, presents a brief historiographical balance about the use of the prosopographic method in the field of the history of education and, finally, we present an example of the use of the method applied to the history of education in which we analyzed, from the magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo', the biographical profile of 20 Freemasons who carried out educational activities in the public and private spheres. We also highlighted some educational institutions organized and run by these educators.

Keyword: prosopography; freemasons; elites; subordinate classes; educators.

O uso do método prosopográfico em história da educação a partir da revista 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' (1912-1932)

RESUMO. O texto tem como objetivo mostrar como podemos utilizar o método prosopográfico no campo da história da educação. Organizamos da seguinte forma: o primeiro item aborda o uso do método prosopográfico em relação aos estudos das elites. Neste tópico, também acentuamos a possibilidade de prosopografia para a análise das classes subalternas. O segundo, apresenta um breve balanço historiográfico sobre o uso do método prosopográfico no campo da história da educação e, finalmente, apresentamos um exemplo do uso do método aplicado à história da educação em que analisamos, a partir da revista 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo', o perfil biográfico de 20 maçons que exerceram atividades educacionais na esfera pública e privada. Demos também destaque a algumas instituições educacionais organizadas e dirigidas por esses educadores.

Palavras-chave: prosopografia; maçons; elites; classes subalternas; educadores.

El uso del método prosopográfico en la historia de la educación de la revista 'A Maçonaria en el Estado de São Paulo' (1912-1932)

RESUMEN. El texto tiene como objetivo mostrar cómo podemos utilizar el método prosopográfico en el campo de la historia de la educación. Nos organizamos de la siguiente manera: el primer ítem aborda el uso del método prosopográfico en relación con los estudios de las élites. En este tema, también enfatizamos la posibilidad de la prosopografía para el análisis de clases subordinadas. El segundo, presenta un breve balance historiográfico sobre el uso del método prosopográfico en el campo de la historia de la educación y, finalmente, presentamos un ejemplo del uso del método aplicado a la historia de la educación en el que analizamos, de la revista 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo', el perfil biográfico de 20 masones que realizaron actividades educativas en las esferas pública y privada. También destacamos algunas instituciones educativas organizadas y dirigidas por estos educadores.

Palabra-clave: prosopografia; masones; elites; clases subordinadas; educadores.

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Prosopography and the studies of the elites

Prosopography or collective biographies is the methodological approach that put back the elites at the center of historians' analysis. Heinz (2006) accentuates that the method uses a sociological approach in historical research aiming at highlighting common features (permanent or transitory) from a particular group in certain historical period. The collective biographies help to "[...] elaborate social profiles, professional categories or historical communities, emphasizing the collective mechanisms – of recruitment, selection and social reproduction – that characterize the social trajectories (individuals' career strategies)" (Heinz, 2006, p. 9). According to the author, the method allows to know the social properties of many groups, valuation or devaluation, analyze the composition of capitals, culture attributes, economic or social, the implemented strategies by several members of an elite to substantiate a winning career and socially upward or, avoid – through mechanisms of social reconversion – a decline or an abrupt social reclassification.

Charle (2001) reinforces that the method does not have a purpose in itself. It is a tool that allows not only to make the data more accurate but renovates the perspectives. It is not merely a description of external aspects, but the interpretation of internal relations of a collective subject. The method involves:

[...] defining a population as of one or various criteria and establish from it a biographic questionnaire in which various criteria will function the description of its social dynamic, private, public, or even cultural, ideological or political, according to the population and the questionnaire under review. (Charle, 2006, p. 41).

According to Stone (2011), prosopography is the investigation of common features of a group of agents through a collective study of their lives.

The applied method consists of establishing an universe to be studied and then investigate a set of uniform questions – in respect of birth and death, marriage and family, social origins and inherited economic position, place of residence, education, size and origin of personal wealth, occupation, religion, position experiences and so on. The various types of information about individuals in the universe are juxtaposed, combined in searches of significant variables. They are tested in order to find internal correlations with another ways of behavior or action (Stone, 2011, p. 115).

Concerning the limits and risks of the method used, Stone (2011), points out the data deficiencies, mistakes in data classification, mistakes in data interpretation and limitation of historical understanding. The method works better when applied in groups easily defined and reasonably small.

The study above shows that the prosopographic method has always been linked to the studies of elites. Regarding the term elites, it is valid to emphasize that the concept was born in the field of political sociology and was proposed in order to construct an analysis that opposed the Marxist worldview of history, as Leferme-Falguières and Van Renterghem (2001) emphasize. According to Busino (1992) the term elite in the singular carries an accumulation of multiple and contradictory connotations at the same time. The term was long used with the meaning of identifying one who was 'elected', 'chosen', 'eminent', 'distinguished', subjects who were above average in a certain group of people or society. The concept was used to designate a minority belonging to a certain society that possesses prestige, privileges, socially valued natural resources, or acquired qualities. In the plural, the word qualifies all those who are part of a minority group that occupies a superior position in a given society and claims for themselves the right to solve common causes due to its birth, rites, culture or wealth. Both in the singular and plural, the word means the opposite of mass, understood by the author as a multiplicity of people belonging to a lower class in terms of social hierarchy.

According to the author, the pioneering works of Mosca and Bouthoul (1975) and Pareto (1996) in the field of political sociology are those that most influenced studies on elites. For Mosca and Bouthoul (1975) in every society there are two classes: a class that leads and a class that is led. The first is composed of a minority that exercises political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power provides, while the second is numerous, directed and controlled by the first one. This one provides the largest class with the material means of subsistence. Both Mosca and Bouthoul (1975) and Pareto (1996) in their studies think of the elite as a segment of society that fights for the maintenance of social structures that can guarantee prestige, monopoly of political power, motivate transformations in the economic, social and political relations, aiming at the legitimization of the position of command. Both understand elites as a group of people who directly exercise political power, or who are in a position to influence its exercise.

According to Leferme-Falguières and Van Renterghem (2001), the first works elaborated in the field of elite theory had as a starting point a critique of Marxist analyses of state and power. While for Marx,

political domination was a consequence of the economic domination of the class that owns the means of production, for proponents of the elite theory it is the exercise of power, or submission to political authority, that defines the different social groups. This position challenged the Marxist postulate of the primacy of economics over politics, refusing the analysis of social phenomena resulting from economic power relations and consequently placed the relations of political domination at the center of its approach. Although the theory has been used as a tool to criticize the current order, it has also been used more often to attack progressive ideologies, reiterating the inequalities between men. According to the authors, 'classical' elite theory is thus a normative ideology that, in the name of an aporetic realism, defends, order and the notion of excellence. The underlying idea is that ruling elites are composed of individuals capable of ruling because of their skills and psychological qualities. The proof of their excellence, according to the authors, lies precisely in the dominant position of these groups. This active minority that forms the historical movement.

Furthermore, these elites undergo changes in their composition within a given period, generally through individual recruitment of new members from the lower strata of society (Bottomore, 1974). For this author, the term 'elites' refers mainly to occupational groups, which have high status in a given society. In his considerations, he states that the concept was employed in the 17th century to designate products of exceptional quality. Its use was later extended to cover higher social groups, such as military units of the first order or the highest ranks of the nobility. According to the author, the study of elites must take into consideration: the size of the elites, their number, their relationship among themselves and with the groups possessing political power, the open or closed nature of the elites, the way in which their members are recruited, and the degree of social mobility.

Codato (2015), in analyzing Mills' (1956) studies on the power elite, suggests the following procedures: analyze what are the most important institutions in a given society, describe their fundamental features, know whether or not the summits of these institutions, their occupants, are linked to each other and how is this link effectively, know what kind of social resource confers power to the most important group or groups, analyze the type of 'elite' person that a social organization produces, it is necessary to delimit what is the size of the elite that really rules and, finally, to circumscribe and describe 'the power elite' it is required to delimit the type of unity of the analyzed group.

In his analyses, Heinz (2006) states that the appropriation of the notion of elite by historians possibilitates a micro-analysis of social groups, diversity, relations and trajectories of the social world. In this sense, it is an analysis of the authors situated at the top of the power hierarchy, of the complexity of their relationships and of the objective ties with the whole or with sectors of society. For the author, the concept of elite is much broader and more flexible, since it can be applied to any group that fights for the detention of power

According to Leferme-Falguières and Van Renterghem (2001) despite the dynamism of quantitative studies, the study of elites has gone through a period of mistrust from historians. The main problem in applying the notion of elite to historical research is, in fact, the difficulty of clearly and definitively defining elites as a historical object. As Giovanni Busino (1992, p. 87-88) says:

Historical analysis clearly shows that this concept does not apply to any specific historical reality and that, moreover, it can simultaneously refer to extremely different and often contradictory social forces. Neither income, nor wealth, nor profession, nor place in an institutional hierarchy, nor lifestyle allow, in fact, to individualize or locate an elite.

The concept of elite can prove to be an effective tool for historical research, both for ancient societies and for more recent periods. However, it is necessary beforehand to define its outline and accept the necessary heterogeneity: the notion, derived from political sociology, is operational in history only if it does not presuppose the existence of a unitary and homogeneous group. Today, we are more likely to talk about elites than about the elite (Leferme-Falguières and Van Renterghem, 2001).

Such authors emphasize that as exponents of the history and sociology of elites are the founding works of Pierre Bourdieu (2007) and Nöbert Elias (1994). Their analyses went beyond the scope of economic specificities or political action of elites, focusing on the symbolic dimension. In Bourdieu's perspective, the focus is on practices and behaviors, habitus, clothing, food, forms of sociability, sports and consumption practices. It is in the field that the dominant social agents exercise power through the most varied capitals: symbolic, cultural, social, economic, with the objective of reaching privileged positions (Bourdieu, 2007).

The historical and sociological studies of elite theory, which consist in understanding how cultural and symbolic capital are strategically used as a form of distinction and reproduction, that is, the way in which elites renew or maintain a dominant position in society, made it possible to analyze other types of

elites, not only those that were part of the dominant groups. This has also made possible the internal renewal of the historical approach of elites, that is, a return to methods of textual analysis, with the symbolic dimension, more implicit than other aspects - which has sometimes been accompanied by mistrust of quantitative and prosopographical approaches. Therefore, defining the concept of elites to make it an operative historical concept is not self-evident; however, it requires some methodological precautions. This includes establishing reliable criteria and considering the issue from a dynamic perspective. Among the criteria we have recognition and exclusion, mastery of know-how, fortune and culture, heterogeneity, social network mobilities, openness and closure of elites (Leferme-Falguières and Van Renterghem, 2001).

When discussing the contribution of the new methods in relation to elite studies, Charle (2006, p. 32, emphasis added) states that:

Social biographies make it possible to bring to light the family strategies of ascension, stagnation, or reconversion that the various milieus of the elite or bourgeoisie use. The dominant dynamics internal to the elites, from the intellectual pole to the economic pole (by ascension), or inversely, from the economic pole to the cultural pole (by ennoblement), account for many processes previously judged in moral terms: betrayal of their class of origin, bourgeois on the one hand, betrayal of progress, flight to a life 'of rents' on the other. The blind history of the dominant that was classical political history can now be reinvented thanks to this contribution of fine mediations between social position, ideological position, and social dynamics.

The author also accentuates that current research allows transferring the old scheme of opposition aristocracy/bourgeoisie, in which the history of elites was invented, to the interior of the various fractions of the bourgeoisie or types of elites.

According to Heinz and Codato (2015, p. 253),

Thus, prosopography is not just the production of frequency tables with socio-professional and career information about past political agents, from pre-constructed data, but the production of a database that, to a good extent, brings together a set of evidence fabricated by the researcher, that is, information that recognizes the gaping aspect of the profile produced as socially structured. And that seeks to overcome this aspect with meticulous documentary research.

For the authors, prosopography is much more than a data collection technique. It is a methodological resource whose goal is to organize, based on a sociological problem, the biographical data of a group. The prosopographical method is a tool with which to attack some basic problems in history.

The first concerns the origins of political action: the unveiling of the deeper interests thought to reside beneath the rhetoric of politics; the analysis of the social and economic affiliations of political groupings; the revelation of the workings of a political machine and the identification of those who manipulate the controls. The second concerns social structure and mobility: one set of problems involves the analysis of the role in society, especially the changes in that role over time, of specific status groups (usually the elite), holders of titles, members of professional associations, occupants of positions, occupational groups, or economic classes; Another set of problems concerns the determination of the degree of social mobility at certain levels through a study of family origins (social and geographical), of recruits to a certain political status or occupational position, the significance of that position in a career, and the effect of holding that position on family fortunes; a third set of problems deals with the correlation of intellectual or religious movements with social, geographical, occupational, or other factors. Thus, in the eyes of its exponents, the purpose of prosopography is to make sense of political action, to help explain ideological or cultural change, to identify social reality, and to describe and analyze accurately the structure of society and the degree and nature of movements within it. Invented as a tool of political history, it is now increasingly being used by social historians (Stone, 2011, p. 115-116).

Prosopography and the subaltern classes

With the theoretical and methodological renewal provided by the Annales School (1929), historians suggested the use of the method to analyze the subaltern classes. Among them, we have Ginzburg who proposes a prosopography seen from below:

Some years ago, Laurence Stone, in his review of prosopographical research, distinguished two currents: one, qualitative, centered on the study of 'elites' (political, cultural, etc.); the other, quantitative, oriented towards the inquiry of broader social aggregates. Our proposal is to combine the non-elitist perspective of the second current with the particularized analysis of the first - a prosopography from below (analogous to the 'case studies' proposal), although without excluding, as already mentioned, serial type investigations (Ginzburg, 1989, 176, emphasis added).

Ginzburg's proposal is to combine the qualitative analysis of the prosopography of the elites with the quantitative analysis of the prosopography of the subaltern classes. According to the author:

That a prosopography from below should aim at a series of 'case studies' is obvious; an investigation that is both qualitative and exhaustive can only take for examination numerically circumscribed entities - 'elite', precisely. The problem will then be to select, from the mass of available data, relevant and significant cases. Significant in the sense of statically frequent? Not always. There is also what Edoardo Grendi has suggestively called the 'exceptional normal'. To this expression we can attribute at least two meanings. First of all, it designates documentation that is only apparently exceptional. Stone emphasized the singular fact that the only subordinate groups in which it is possible to collect a good deal of information in certain cases are 'minority groups', by definition exceptional, since they are individuals who rebel against the behaviors and beliefs of the majority. But an examination of criminal cases from before the 19th century (i.e., before the figure of the professional criminal in the modern sense of the term was established) leads the researcher to less pessimistic conclusions. The overwhelming majority of these cases concern very ordinary crimes, sometimes of small amounts, such as brawls, petty theft, and the like, committed by absolutely non-exceptional individuals (Ginzburg, 1989, 177, emphasis added).

One of the problems pointed out by historiography is related to the lack of records and sources related to the subaltern classes. In this regard, the aforementioned authors state that if sources are silent or systematically distort the reality of the subaltern classes, an exceptional document can be much more revealing than a thousand stereotyped documents.

According to Schmidt (2000, p. 8):

In Brazil, several biographies of workers' militants have also appeared recently, especially in the 1990s, especially in the form of theses and dissertations. Following different theoretical and methodological orientations, these works have highlighted the importance of unique individuals in the formation of the local labor movement, especially in its initial period, that is, the First Republic. Its authors have tried to show that, beyond ideologies and formalized organizations, there was a whole daily work, sometimes more effective than political, crystallized in the constitution of friendship networks, of mutual help, but also of rivalry and conflict. Through the experiences of these characters, the role of feelings, of the private, of the tiny everyday actions, in the process of organization (or disorganization) of the class is recovered.

The author accentuates that the studies emphasized the most prominent militants, that is, the approach focused on what he called the 'elites' of the labor movement. Is it possible to apply the term elite to the leaders of the working class? If we think about the position that militants occupy in the workers' movement, certainly yes! For the positional method thought of by Mills (1956) considers elite agents who occupy a dominant position in any social field. Jean Maitrón (1964) in his biographical dictionary about the working class suggests the following division: the leaders and the base. According to Batalha (1997) it is complex to categorize the structure of the working class, but he suggests three types of militants in Brazil in the First Republic: leaders, intermediate cadres and bases. For him, only a minority of militants writes in the workers' newspapers and has an activity that transcends the limits of the professional category.

Labor movement dictionaries have been used in approaches that take prosopography into account.

Dictionaries of the labor movement enable prosopographical approaches and readings of the biographies gathered in them, in other words, it makes it possible to visualize what is common to individuals of a certain generation, a particular occupational group, a certain political current, and so on (Batalha, 2009, p. 176).

From what we have seen, the prosopographical method can be applied to a wide variety of social groups. What is important in applying the method is unquestionably the source selected, the research objective, and the group selected. The sources used will be extremely important in the analysis of the biographed group. For the application of the method to the subaltern classes, it is essential that the historian, besides the knowledge of the sources, understands their lack of standardization.

A brief historiographical review of the use of the method in the history of education

In relation to the field of the history of Brazilian education, the use of the prosopographical method is still incipient. We can highlight some aspects of the method in the history of education. The first strand is the one that builds the collective profile of the dominant elites and their relationship with education. We highlight with this, the work of Silva (2016), entitled: 'Para os grandes males, os grandes remédios' propostas educacionais no Congresso Agrícola, Industrial e Comercial de Minas Gerais (1903). The innovative work used the prosopographical method to analyze representatives of the 'producing classes' most active in the

organization and realization of the event. Through the prosopographic method, the author gathered information about their families, schooling, occupations and political activities. We also have, the work of Silva and Bontempi Junior (2018), entitled: 'Masonic Elite and the schools of the Sete de Setembro Lodge' in the magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' (1912-1932). The authors used the prosopographical method with the aim of building the collective profile of the São Paulo Masonic elite. They selected a group of prominent freemasons between 1912 and 1932, pointing out the nature and the volume of the capitals that made up a common profile among them and the involvement of the group with the organization of schools linked to the freemasonry of São Paulo. They concluded that the Masonic elite held "[...] significant economic, social, and political capitals, indicating homology and reconversions between the fields; that the commitment to the instruction of subordinate classes responded to philanthropic demands of the group, reverting into prestige and distinction for individual promoters and for Masonry itself" (Silva & Bontempi Junior, 2018, p. 1).

The second strand builds the collective biography of teachers, principals, literati, that is, of intellectuals involved with education. In this sense, we have the work of Odaléia Alves da Costa, entitled: 'O Livro do Povo na expansão do Ensino Primário no Maranhão (1861-1881)'. The author builds a collective biography of a generation of intellectuals in Maranhão whose common characteristics were: "[...] identity marked by territorial origins, social class, taste for literature, frequented spaces (newspaper editorial offices, typographies, bookstores, theaters, schools, universities)" (Costa, 2013, p. 34). We also have the work of Andréa Silva de Fraga (2017), entitled: 'Trajectory from student-masters to intellectual teachers of education in Rio Grande do Sul (1920 to 1960)'. In addition to other historiographical procedures, from the methodological point of view the author used the prosopographical method to analyze the trajectory of the student-masters and teachers and their engagement in pedagogical renewal. The construction of the biographical narrative was organized from the prosopographical method of the initial formation of the student-masters. It analyzed the intellectual production of these women teachers in the *Revista o Estudo*, *Revista do Ensino/RS*, *Boletins do CpoE/RS*, printed materials and books. The prosopography also helped the author to study the spaces of sociability provided by the mechanisms of capillarity offered by both the editorials of the magazines and the places of conviviality of the intellectuals analyzed. Another more recent work was prepared by Juliana Fernandes Lança, oriented by Professor Bruno Bontempi Júnior, entitled: 'Capitals and academic-professional training of egresses from the Polytechnic School of São Paulo (1899 to 1905)'. The research had as a general objective "[...] to unveil which socioeconomic and schooling profile characterizes the graduates of the first division courses (training of engineers) of the Polytechnic School of São Paulo" (Lança, 2018, p. 5). Through the prosopographical method, the author showed the socially favorable predispositions of students who came to be academically successful (Lança, 2018). The sources used were student and staff folders, yearbooks, congregation minutes, commemorative editions, biographies, and institutional books.

The third strand in the field of history of education we found analyzes social agents belonging to disadvantaged social strata. In this sense, we highlight the work of Santos (2018), entitled: 'The History of Africa African and Afro-Brazilian culture in textbooks for Youth and Adult Education'. Although the author's concern is broader, that is, to analyze the History of Africa aimed at EJA students, we can notice the use of the prosopographical method with the aim of building the biographical profile of these students. There is a range of possibility of the use of the prosopographical method with the diverse social agents and from the most varied classes. The work of Santos (2018) is an example of the possibility of using the method with social agents belonging to subaltern social classes.

Based on consultations on the websites of funding agencies, we found that the use of the prosopographical method is incipient in the field of history of education. From the works we pointed out in the aforementioned sections, we emphasize that there are other aspects of the educational field in which the prosopographical method can be useful. We did not find any studies that analyze the profile of students, principals, or administrative technicians in schools. We can use the method with the objective of building a collective biography of directors of universities, colleges or university centers in a certain period. In this sense, it is also possible to analyze the student body itself, that is, the profile of a certain generation of students from public and private schools.

How to apply the prosopographical method in history of education

Regarding the possibilities of prosopography in history of education, the researcher should keep in mind the following steps. 'The first step is the choice of sources'. According to Heinz and Codato (2015, p. 271):

“[...] the first (and main) reflection that one should make is about the sources of the data: their nature, potentialities, limits”. With the theoretical and methodological renewal promoted by the historians of the Annales School, the use of the most varied sources expanded. In relation to prosopography, there are several possibilities of sources and their use in the field of history of education: newspapers, educational periodicals, magazines, yearbooks, and student registration books. It is worth pointing out that the method is not restricted to the use of only one type of source. Other sources are necessary to consolidate the data of the biographed, be it the student, teacher, or director of the most varied school institutions. The student registration book is an excellent source. School or university memory books can also provide information about principals, teachers and students. Educational or pedagogical journals are also important sources for research in the field of history of education to analyze a generation of intellectuals. It is possible to build the prosopography of its main writers and collaborators, aiming not only to characterize the common profile among them, but also the trajectory of these intellectuals, the generation they belong to, the circulation of ideas and the sociability network, their education, professions, associations they belonged to, political and professional trajectory, published works, age, gender, and other aspects the researcher deems important. It is up to the researcher to select his sources well and make the appropriate data collection.

In the case of the aforementioned authors, one can observe the use of magazines as a research source. From the magazine it is possible not only to build the biographical profile of social agents belonging to a certain social group, but also to study the networks of sociability, the constructed discourses, the thought disseminated in the magazines. The same procedure can be done with other social groups, not only the economic, cultural and social elites, but also with social agents linked, for example, to the labor movement, to socialism, to anarchism. The source of research can be workers' newspapers and specialized magazines. In the field of history of education, pedagogical journals can be used, as Fraga (2017) used. Newspapers can also be an important source of research in obtaining information about editors and main writers, as well as providing analysis of their practices and discourses. They can help us understand the sociability networks of the biographed agents, the circulation of ideas, the spaces of social occupation. In our studies on the Masonic elite (Silva, 2010), the registration and treasury books of the lodges were essential to understand the social profile of the analyzed group. Such sources can help us in the elaboration of works that use the prosopographic method, because they register information about the Freemasons: nationality, affiliation, profession, education, age, financial income. The treasury book not only shows the financial movement of the Masonic lodges, but also the amounts charged in initiations, elevations, exaltations in Masonic degrees and amounts invested in education.

We also have:

The official bulletins of Freemasonry are another important source to analyze the practices of Masons and Brazilian lodges. The official bulletins of the Grand Orient of Brazil or of other powers show, among other things, the bureaucracy, the power dynamics, the network of Masonic sociability, the internationalization of Masonry, the books of the Masonic libraries, the Masonic social agents and their degrees, the hierarchy of power in Masonry, the Masonic acts, decrees and laws, the philanthropic and educational institutions, the political debate, the Masons' position on various social, economic, cultural and educational issues, the participation of Masons in philosophical currents such as socialism, anarchism, positivism and others (Silva, 2019, p. 7).

‘The second step’ for the use of the prosopographical method in the field of history of education is to choose well the group to be researched. From this, it is up to the researcher to make a general list of the individuals who compose the group studied. The criteria for choice can be very varied. We can choose individuals who have achieved greater projection in the educational, cultural or social fields. Or we can choose the group to be biographed by common and observable criteria. Choosing a group to be biographed is not always an easy task. Usually, elites are easier to define. However, if the choice falls on individuals who belong to the subaltern classes or other social groups, vaguer becomes the information about these subjects (Verboven, Carlier, & Dumolyn, 2007). From the perspective of the history of education, we can focus our choices on teachers, students, principals, officials, intellectuals, politicians.

Once the group to be biographed is selected, ‘the third step’ is the formulation of the questionnaire. Depending on the historical cut, the proposed problem and the size of the prosopographic population, the questionnaire may contain open or multiple-choice questions (Verboven et al., 2007). In our study on Masonic elites:

The questions took into consideration the year of initiation into Masonry, the degree attained, the occupation, the Masonic position and the political activity of each agent. The biographical data, organized according to nominal

quantitative variables, concerning schooling, occupation, Masonic posts and political positions composed prosopographical charts in which the properties of the subjects are described in order to understand the dynamics of the 'Masonic field' (Silva & Bontempi Junior, 2018, p. 4, emphasis added).

For the present study, the questionnaire below helped us to build the biographical profile of 20 Freemasons who exercised educational activities.

a) Who are the Freemasons involved with education that have reached the highest positions in the Masonic field according to the magazine *A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo*?

b) What is the percentage of Freemasons involved with education and what types of higher education courses did they take?

c) What were the main occupations they exercised in their professional lives? How many and which were the subjects that held command posts in the army, politics, schools? Who and how many have accumulated titles and social prestige from their professional activities?

d) What is the percentage of Freemasons that reached prestigious positions within Masonry?

e) According to the publications, how many and which were the Masons that worked as teachers and directors? How many were at the head of schools linked to the freemasonry? How many were at the head of private schools?

f) How many and which are the chosen Masons that have held political positions?

After elaborating the questionnaire and tabulating it in a spreadsheet, 'the fourth step' is the analysis of the data obtained. This procedure aims to highlight the peculiarities (permanent or transitory) of the biographed group in order to establish common traits among them.

The analytical importance given to the study of the properties and collective trajectories of a set of agents presupposes an interpretative scheme of the social world. This schema derives, in turn, from two underlying principles: first, the focus on concrete, historically situated aggregates of individuals is central to understanding the functioning of the social world (in place of grand theoretical abstractions such as 'social classes', for example); second, their attributes as a group are relevant to explaining both their actual behaviors (options, concrete decisions, subjective dispositions) and the configuration assumed by institutions ('state', 'political regime', etc.) (Heinz & Codato, 2015, p. 269, emphasis added).

It is important to make it clear that the use of prosopography in group analysis cannot be considered a single method. It all depends on the formulation of the problem and the source of the research. A sociogram can be used to highlight the interactions between social agents and the fields to which they belong. Through it, the historian of education can map the networks of sociability, since social agents may be connected to several social fields. The use of prosopography in educational history is indeed an open and fertile field. The efficiency of the method in the field depends on the objectives proposed in the research, the group selected, the research source, and the literature available on the subject to be worked on.

An example of the use of the prosopographical method applied to the history of education

From the magazine *'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo'*, we have chosen 20 Freemasons who exercised educational activities both in the public and private spheres. Among those selected were teachers, principals, school inspectors and school owners. From the 20 Freemasons chosen who had exercised educational activities, 55% had reached degree 33, the highest degree in the Masonic career (Table 1). What represents that within the Masonic field they exercised a position of power that, undoubtedly, reflected in social prestige in other social fields of the São Paulo society, as for example the educational field.

Regarding cultural capital, the selected Freemasons present the following profile, according to Table 2.

Of the 20 Freemasons, 65% had a college degree, indicating that in the Masonic elite were men of high cultural capital and that complete education was both a criterion and an element of homogeneity (Silva & Bontempi Júnior, 2018). In this case, the capital within the 'Masonic field' corresponded to the profile of the first echelons of the Brazilian political field, coming from the Empire. According to Carvalho (2003), higher education was powerful ideological link of the elite in the imperial period and, from what we observe, also of the Masonic elite in the republican period (Silva & Bontempi Junior, 2018). Certainly, the number could be much higher, since most of the selected Masons were active in professions and careers that required higher education.

Among the 20 Freemasons, 7 (35%) graduated in law, 2 engineers, 2 doctors, 1 military, and 1 pharmacist (Table 3). It is observed in this period the predominance of law bachelors. This reinforces the studies by

Amaral (2006) about the Masonic elite of Paraná, the studies by Beaurepaire (1998; 1999; 2002) about the French Masonic elite and the studies by Silva and Bontempi Júnior (2018) about the Masonic elite of São Paulo. Among the Masons who reached the top of the hierarchy, a large part of them worked in the city of São Paulo, site of the Law School. The importance of this institution for the freemasonry of São Paulo is verified, even in the composition of the cover image of the magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo', which shows, on the upper right side, the Arcadas building amidst a rich set of Masonic allegories and symbols. For the editors and the illustrator, Freemasonry and the Law School represented places of power and knowledge, occupied by literate, select and illustrated people; therefore, the granary of the 'Masonic elite' (Silva & Bontempi Junior, 2018).

Table 1. Masonic Degree.

Masonic Degree	Number	Percentage
33	11	55
30	1	5
18	1	5
3	3	15
1	1	5
Unidentified	3	15
Total	20	100,0

Source: 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' Magazine. Elaborated by the authors.

Table 2. Education.

Education	Number	Percentage
Graduate Course	13	65
Unidentified	7	35
Total	20	100,0

Source: 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' magazine. Elaborated by authors.

Table 3: Higher education course modalities.

Graduate Course	Number	Percentage
Law	7	35
Military	1	5
Engineering	2	10
Medicine	2	10
Pharmacy	1	5
Unidentified	7	35
Total	20	100,0

Source: 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' magazine. Elaborated by authors.

Regarding occupation, we can see the predominance of the academic field (Table 4): out of the 20 Masons, 10 (50%) worked as teachers in private and public schools. The second largest occupation is the position of principal, that is, 35% worked as principals in public and private schools. The other positions of school owner, vice-principal and inspector were also occupations of high social prestige. All occupations indicate the predominance of professions of a technical or intellectual nature that required superior preparation and training. We highlight the intellectual trajectory of Roldão Lopes de Barros and his rise in the Brazilian educational field, acting as a teacher and director of the Braz Normal School, participated in the Manifesto of the Pioneers of Education and was a professor of History of Education and Philosophy at the University of São Paulo (Bontempi Junior, 2007).

We also have the figure of Ramon Roca Dordal. He worked as an inspector of public instruction in São Paulo and was part of the elite of teachers at the Escola Normal Caetano de Campos, gaining political and administrative projection in the early years of the first republic. He was one of those invited by Julio de Mesquita to participate in the Inquiry of Instruction in 1914, alongside members of the Beneficent Association of Public Teachers of São Paulo, who participated intensively in its board and in the writing of the 'Revista de Ensino' (Bontempi Junior, 2006).

In the aspect of school direction, the source also mentions Horace Lane, director of the American School of São Paulo and president of Mackenzie College (Silva, 2015). It also mentions the figure of Antônio Maria Guerreiro, owner of the Ginásio Anglo Latino, focused on the intellectual development of the São Paulo elite. The anarchist João Penteado, director of the Escola Moderna is mentioned as a freemason by the editors of the magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' and his educational practices are constantly praised.

Table 4. Occupation

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Director	7	35
Teacher	10	50
School owner	1	5
Inspector	1	5
Deputy Director	1	5
Total	20	100,0

Source: 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' magazine. Elaborated by authors.

Regarding João Penteado, the work of Peres (2004) also focuses attention on anarchist education, highlighting the approximations between anarchists, freemasons and spiritists. In 2010, Peres proposes to review the trajectory of João Penteado and his contribution to the history of Brazilian education but fails to point out the affiliation of the director of the Escola Moderna with the freemasonry of São Paulo. In the analyzed magazine, João Penteado is mentioned as a brother, a term used by the freemasons as a way to establish the bond of belonging to the freemasonry. This not only reinforces the studies of Peres (2004) who analyzes the approximations among anarchists, freemasons, spiritists and protestants, but also advances in showing that João Penteado himself is a freemason. This opens new reading possibilities about João Penteado's trajectory. The magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' doesn't make any mention of João Penteado's participation in the anarchist or socialist movement, it only gives visibility to the Escola Moderna.

Table 5 was elaborated in descending order of the highest posts in Masonry. It can be seen that among the Masons chosen and involved with education, none reached the highest level of Masonic power, the Grand Orient of Brazil. At the state level, two (10%) have been Grand Master of the State of São Paulo and one (5%) has been Deputy Grand Master of Brazil. The others (15%) held prominent positions within the Masonic lodges, as Venerable and Orators. Along with the dominant positions achieved in the Masonic field, these men also achieved projection in the political field.

Out of the 20 biographed, 12 held political positions, reinforcing the thesis of the strong ascendancy of Masonry over Brazilian politics (Morel & Souza, 2008). None of them reached the Presidency of the Republic, 20 became senators, 30 deputies, 20 city councilmen, 10 ministers, 5 school inspectors, and 10% in other public positions.

Table 6 shows the tendency of professionalization of the Masons as senators (20%) reached this position and 30% were deputies, in a movement similar to what Perissinotto and Costa (2015) reveal about the Brazilian senators between the years 1918 and 1937, both following the old relationship between professionalization of politics and liberal baccalaureate (Adorno, 1988). As can be seen by the crossing of dates indicated in Table 2 and 3, half of the Masons involved in politics reached the instances of high internal power after entering the political field; another half was initiated before entering politics, indicating that belonging was a relevant asset in the reconversion to the political field. The Masonic elite circulated through both fields, possibly initiating members of the political class and creating opportunities for fellow Masons, in a two-way strategy that resulted in the occupation of privileged positions, which strengthened its hegemony in the decision-making spheres. Although it claimed to be apolitical, Freemasonry organized itself in a strategic way, in order for its network of sociability to leverage its agents, hence, its ideology and interests to the political field.

We can verify, in the case of the analyzed freemasons, the proclaimed relation between education and graduation in Law and ascendancy to politics, pointed out by Canêdo (2002) as a strategy of the São Paulo and Minas Gerais families for the control of their reproduction, as a space of capital mobilization and deepening of solidarity ties. The academic qualification of politicians from São Paulo and Minas Gerais would have contributed, therefore, to their professional and cultural homogeneity, by developing skills such as oratory talent, the habit of speaking in public and mastery of legal knowledge, since every political act is translated by a legislative text.

Education and schools in the journal 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo'

In relation to education, the Masons were not only involved in the organization of schools, but they also understood that through education it would be possible to achieve progress, economic and social development in Brazil. For them, education was the only way to fight ignorance, poverty, misery, in short, to

modernize Brazil. To this end, it was necessary to educate the poor, the people and the women. It was necessary to educate the poor, in order to make them more docile, orderly, productive and submissive to the moral values of the class to which the Freemasons belonged. "The cause of a country far from progress was the education of the Jesuits, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance" (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, August 1913, p. 107).

Table 5. Masonic position.

Position	Number	Percentage
Grand Master of Brazil	0	0
Deputy Grandmaster of Brazil	1	5
State Grand Master	2	10
Members in Masonic Assemblies	3	15
Worshippers of Lodges	3	15
Orator in the Lodges	3	15
Not identified	8	40
Total	20	100,0

Source: 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' magazine. Elaborated by authors.

Table 6. Political positions.

Name	Mayor	Senator	Deputy	Councilman	Minister	Inspector	Other Positions
José Luiz Flaquer		X	X				
Ernesto Goulart Penteado				X			
Antonio Francisco Paula Souza			X		X		
Pedro Augusto Gomes Cardim			X	X			
Carlos Reis				X			
José Eduardo Macedo Soares							
Antonio Maria Guerreiro							
Horace Manley Lane							X
Angelo de Sílvia		X	X		X		
Cândido N. Nogueira da Mota		X	X	X			
Rangel Pestana	X	X					
Ramon Roca Dordal						X	
Roldão Lopes de Barros							
João Penteado							
Nelson Teixeira							
Porphirio Antonio Couto Guerreiro							
Spencer Vampré			X				
Frederico Carlos Spicacci							X
Francisco Conceição							
João Ventura Fornos							

Source: 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' magazine. Elaborated by authors. Blank spaces indicate lack of information.

Education in the studied period was an important flag raised by the freemasonry and the freemasons as a strategy for the modernization of the society. The magazine, as the official organ of the freemasonry of São Paulo, brings in its pages several information about the educational perspective of the freemasons. These social agents, as members of the elites, not only put into practice the educational action, but also carried out educational projects of a personal nature, aiming at the progress of society. Through the magazine, it is possible to perceive the representations that these agents built about education, even criticizing Jesuitical education.

The Masonic School is the only weapon capable of cutting the huge arms of obscurantism that it carries in the webs it has been weaving for many years, entangling the consciences of those we love the most... That is why, from the pulpit, the Jesuit insults and smites without fear, without dread: the crowd listening to them admires their audacity and lets themselves be dominated like a great wild bull that the lasso holds by its horns. And as if the pulpit were not enough, he also has the school, where he creates, shapes and bends the conscience of children to suit his dark designs. That is what we must fight hard, opposing the pulpit to the tribune, the Masonic school to the parochial school. But - it is necessary that the school be a real school, where the children are taught, without great rhetorical figures, the precepts of our Subl. Ord.'. [sic] precepts that, so clean and pure, can form a great and true catechism of Morals and Civism (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, August 1913, p. 107).

In 1914, the magazine features an article entitled: 'Destroy to instruct'. The writer extols the importance of education against the obscurantism of illiteracy. Inspired by Victor Hugo's phrase: 'A school that opens is a chain that closes,' he tries to show the importance of education to his readers. He also evokes France as a model of nation, of Republic, and of commitment to instruction, in order to show the results that a nation

achieves when it invests in education. According to the writer, the secret of the stability of the French people was the result of instruction, and an oppressed people was one that lived in the folds of illiteracy. In his conception, the only way to reach freedom was through education: "To be independent men it is necessary that we have knowledge, who has knowledge has the right and who has the right has the sacred duty to care for it" (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, January 1914, p. 8). In this sense, the writer proposes to spread instruction as an element of first necessity, as a guideline to obtain the 'peace of conscience, the peace of the family, the Universal Peace'.

To achieve the so dreamed democracy it was necessary to invest in education, including the education of women. In the October 1922 edition, the editorial of the magazine published the article: 'Let's educate the woman', because she represented the true foundation of the family. While emphasizing the importance of education for women, the editors nevertheless reinforce the representations of the woman as caretaker of the home and mother. For them, the progress of the country was only possible through the education of the people. In the August 1923 edition, they publish a three-page article entitled: 'The Action of Freemasonry - let us educate the people'. To support their arguments about the importance of education for the regeneration of society, they quote the thought of Herbert Spencer, emphasizing the main points around education: "[...] the education which has in view the direct conservation of the individual, that which teaches him to provide for his sustenance, the illustration which teaches him to educate his family, which forms the citizen and which finally allows him to enjoy the different pleasures of life" (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, August 1923, p. 98). By appropriating Spencer's thought, the Freemasons reproduce the importance of education for the development of society. Each point quoted from Spencer's thought is discussed by the writer with the aim of convincing his reader to accept his arguments in favor of an education that aimed to regenerate society from its evils, to strengthen the family, society and the Homeland.

It is observed in this period that the magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo' again published several articles against Catholicism, saying, among other things, that the cause of all the backwardness in Brazilian education was the presence of the Jesuits. In this period, there was an intention to implement religious teaching in schools. According to Colussi (1998), the Brazilian freemasonry was since the Brazilian imperial period in favor of lay teaching and until the mid-1920s viscerally against the presence of the Jesuit education in Brazil. In fact, from the magazine we observe that the freemasons positioned themselves again in favor of lay teaching and against the presence of the Jesuit education. The officialization of religious teaching in schools for the Masons was unconstitutional (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, July 1929).

Once again, the Masons positioned themselves against the government's intention of inserting religious teaching in the Brazilian schools. For them, such imposition, besides being unconstitutional, privileged the Roman Catholic Church, strengthening its hegemony over the other religions (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, May 1931). This strategy of the freemasons in fighting the presence of the Jesuits in the educational field suggests us to think that this religious group represented a political problem to be fought by the freemasons, because in a certain way it was a group that defended educational ideals diametrically different from the educational practices of the freemasons (Silva, 2010). To adopt Jesuitical education as a model was to go backwards from an educational point of view. To allow religious teaching in schools was to distance itself from a modern society, developed from the economic and social point of view. To this end, it was necessary to prevent the interference of Catholicism in the political life of the country. In this sense, we have a dispute for the domination of the educational field. For the Masons, Catholicism, illiteracy and poverty were the evils that needed to be combated through education.

Regarding educational institutions, the analyzed source mentions several schools: Grupo Escolar Sete de Setembro (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, September 1919), Instituto Independência (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, August 1925), Instituto Paulista Ciência e Educação (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, September 1925), Ginásio Anglo Latino (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, October 1924), now Colégio Anglo, whose owner was the principal Antonio Maria Guerreiro. We have the Luiz Gama School (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, January 1929). The source also mentions the night schools maintained by the Perseverance III Lodge, which we discussed in previous work (Silva, 2010). Besides mentioning the Escola Moderna linked to the anarchist movement, founded in 1912, whose director was the Mason João Penteado (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, October/November 1918). This school in our perspective was the one that had, in fact, a libertarian proposal for the underprivileged. The source also alludes to the American School of São Paulo and Mackenzie College (A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo, October 1912).

Final considerations

As we pointed above, the prosopographical method is well known in the field of social sciences and history, but still, little used in the field of history of education. This article introductory presented a possibility of its use in the perspective of the history of education. First, we tried to identify the works that have made use of the prosopography, and then, based on a primary source, we showed how it can be used in the field of the history of education. To this end, we selected 20 Masons who carried out educational activities in the public and private sphere. Among the collective characteristics of the biographed Freemasons is the high index of cultural capital, i.e., 65 with higher education, 60 held political positions (as senators and deputies), 50 were professors, and 35% were directors of schools and colleges. Of the 20 people biographed, 35% had a college degree in law. This denotes that they had strong cultural, economic, and social capital. By analyzing the spaces of occupation and the trajectories, we noticed that they occupied positions of power, elitist and literate spaces, and assumed positions in the political and educational fields. The study showed that, in relation to the higher education of the analyzed freemasons, the prevalence was in elite courses and those of greater social prestige at the time: Bachelor's in law, Medicine and Engineering. Of the freemasons biographed, 65% reached the top of the Masonic career, i.e., degree 33, which gave them a prominent position in the Masonic, educational and political field. In this sense, it was observed that the analyzed Freemasons circulated in several fields: educational, Masonic, political and in bureaucratic and administrative positions. In addition, they initiated in their ranks members of the political class, with the objective of creating opportunities for the members of the Masonic field to act in the political field and to occupy privileged positions in the São Paulo society. This strategy strengthened the Masonic hegemony, not only in the Masonic field, but through the networks of sociability, ideology and interests in the political field. Even the anarchist freemasons were active in various social fields, but they circulated their ideologies in the workers' press.

The method in relation to education showed that the biographed freemasons were concerned with education and organized schools with the objective of offering elementary instruction to the elitist and underprivileged social layers. In the midst of these initiatives, other educational projects, aimed at the Masons' children, were thought about, but not executed. In any case, their expectation of creating gymnasiums (high schools) for their children indicates the direction of the intellectual formation of their offspring towards the same destiny as their parents, who had attended privileged educational spaces, such as the Law School of São Paulo. The Masons saw poverty and illiteracy as elements to be combated, so that Brazil could experience social, economic and cultural progress, a position that supported their efforts in the creation of schools, especially for the needy and elite. Making use of good relations in the political field, they also got important logistical and financial support from the public power and from private individuals for their initiatives. The insistent concern with the publicity of their beneficence, revealed by the magazine, indicates that the willingness of the freemasons to educate society and its various social groups was, in addition, a means to propagate their social distinction, accumulate capital inside the 'masonic field' and form an elite.

The work also showed that some school institutions that these educators organized attracted different publics. Among the figures, we highlight the presence of the Mason João Penteado, anarchist and director of the Escola Moderna nº 1; Horace Lane who acted as director of the American School of São Paulo and Mackenzie College and the professor Antonio Maria Guerreiro - owner of Colégio Anglo. Among the Masonic professors, we highlight: Carlos Reis, Angelo Silvio, Ramon Roca Dordal (teacher and school inspector), Roldão Lopes de Barros who in the trajectory educational field acted as Director of the Braz Normal School, professor of History and Philosophy of Education at the University of São Paulo, participated in the Manifesto of the Pioneers of Education and Spencer Vampré, professor and Director of the São Paulo Law School.

For them, schools were an effective instrument to fight ignorance, poverty, misery, in short, to provide the longed-for progress of Brazilian society. For this, it was necessary to educate the poor, the people and the women. According to our source, the Masons' initiatives to accomplish their projects happened in the personal and organizational spheres. On the personal level, they organized private schools to attend the children of the elite. On the organizational level, the lodges invested resources in schools to attend to the underprivileged. These schools were seen by them as spaces for the construction of knowledge and that would help the country to progress. However, we also observe that they became social spaces where distinction was also present. For the Masons, it was necessary to educate the poor, to make them more docile, orderly and submissive to the moral values of the class to which the Masons belonged. Only the Modern School, maintained by the anarchist freemason João Penteado had a diametrically different proposal from the schools organized by the liberal freemasons.

Finally, our source, the magazine 'A Maçonaria no Estado de São Paulo', has made it possible to bring to the history of education Masonic intellectuals, anarchists, socialists, and some little known and mentioned schools. We understand that such source opened the way for future research that take each school as a research object.

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