

Twenty-five years of History of Education Doctoral Dissertations in Spain (1990-2015). Academic and Institutional Issues

Vingt-cinq ans de thèses de doctorat en histoire de l'Éducation en Espagne (1990-2015). Questions académiques et institutionnelles

Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, Andrés Payà Rico and Tatiane de Freitas Ermel



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/histoire-education/5525>

DOI: 10.4000/histoire-education.5525

ISSN: 2102-5452

Publisher

ENS Éditions

Printed version

Date of publication: 31 December 2020

Number of pages: 49-74

ISBN: 979-10-362-0416-6

ISSN: 0221-6280

Electronic reference

Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, Andrés Payà Rico and Tatiane de Freitas Ermel, "Twenty-five years of History of Education Doctoral Dissertations in Spain (1990-2015). Academic and Institutional Issues", *Histoire de l'éducation* [Online], 154 | 2020, Online since 01 January 2024, connection on 30 June 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/histoire-education/5525> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/histoire-education.5525>



Creative Commons - Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International - CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Twenty-five years of History of Education Doctoral Dissertations in Spain (1990-2015). Academic and Institutional Issues.

Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, Andrés Payà Rico
et Tatiane de Freitas Ermel

During the last few decades, scientific research has changed the ways and means by which it communicates its results remarkably. This means that there is an urgent need to change the limits of each and every scientific field, as they seem to have become increasingly blurred. History of Education (HE) could not and does not remain oblivious to the transformations in the dissemination of research, thus we should focus on becoming aware of these processes and understanding them within the current scientific context¹.

It is also common practice to take advantage of the anniversaries of a journal or an institution to look back and see how a scientific field has changed over a period of time. That is why, on its 25th anniversary, the journal *History of Education* dedicated its monograph to the analysis of some of the “New Trends in the History of Education”² and, on its 50th anniversary, *Historical Pedagogy*

1 Katy Börner, *Atlas of Science: Visualizing What We Know*, Cambridge MA, The MIT Press, 2010; Rolland G. Paulston (ed.), *Social Cartography: Mapping Ways of Seeing Social and Educational Change*, New York, Garland Publishing, 1990.

2 Agustín Escolano (ed.), “Nuevas tendencias en Historia de la Educación”, *Historia de la educación. Revista Interuniversitaria*, no. 25, 2006, p. 31-358: <<http://revistas.usal.es/index.php/0212-0267/issue/view/709>>.

published an extra issue dedicated to the “Shaping the history of education? The first 50 years of *Paedagogica Historica*”³. A similar approach, led Pierre Caspard to assess the situation of *Histoire de l'éducation* in 2000⁴, *History of Education & Children's Literature* to dedicate a monograph to “The role of scientific journals in the development and internationalization of historical and educational research”⁵ and for *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* to publish the monograph “The History of Education looking at itself”⁶.

Our research is part of the Standing Working Group (SWG) “Mapping the History of Education Discipline” of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE). Launched in London in 2014, this SWG has been conceived as a large-scale research project to collectively carry out a retrospective analysis of the evolution of the history of education. In this area, for instance, new works are emerging relating to the changes in scientific publications, especially in journals⁷, which evidently include open, digital, peer-reviewed publications, etc.⁸, and to changes related to the inclusion of

-
- 3 Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Frank Simon, “Shaping the history of education? The first 50 years of *Paedagogica Historica* – introduction”, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 50, no. 6, 2014, p. 707-716: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2014.962062>>; Eckhardt Fuchs, “The International Standing Conference for the History of Education and *Paedagogica Historica*: a historical view on institutional strategies and practices”, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 50, no. 6, 2014, p. 737-755: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2014.95274>>.
 - 4 Pierre Caspard, “Vingt années d'*Histoire de l'éducation*”, *Histoire de l'éducation*, no. 85, 2000, p. 73-87: <<https://journals.openedition.org/histoire-education/1235>>.
 - 5 Roberto Sani, “History of Education & Children's Literature and the internationalization of historical-educational research in Italy (2006-2014)”, *History of Education & Children's Literature*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2015, p. 89-95.
 - 6 Simonetta Polenghi, Gianfranco Bandini, “The history of education in its own light: signs of crisis, potential for growth”, *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2016, p. 3-20: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/ete.2016.003.001.2>>.
 - 7 Marta Ruiz-Corbella, Arturo Galán, Alfonso Diestro, “Las revistas científicas de educación en España: evolución y perspectivas de futuro”, *RELIEVE*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2014, p. 1-27: <<https://doi.org/10.7203/relieve.20.2.4361>>; Marta Ruiz Corbella, Arturo Galán, Alfonso Diestro, “Las revistas científicas en educación ante la exigencia de la sociedad en red”, *History of Education & Children's Literature*, vol. X, no. 1, 2015, p. 65-71; José Luis Hernández Huerta, Antonella Cagnolati, Alfonso Diestro Fernández (eds.), *Connecting History of Education. Scientific Journals as International Tools for a Global World*, Salamanca, FahrenHouse, 2015: <<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5916027>>; Lorenzo García Aretio, “Publicar (casi exclusivamente) en revistas de impacto”, *Revista Iberoamericana de la Educación Digital*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2015, p. 7-22: <<http://ried.utpl.edu.ec/sites/default/files/files/pdf/v%2018-2/Editorial.pdf>>; Antonio Viñao, “Revistas científicas e historia de la educación: una reflexión personal”. *History of Education & Children's Literature*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2015, p. 65-71; José Luis Hernández Huerta, Andrés Payà Rico, Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, “Global territory and the international map of History of Education journals. Profiles and Behaviour”, *International Journal for the Historiography of Education*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2019, p. 206-226.
 - 8 See, Carlos Eduardo Vieira, José Gonçalves Gondra, “*Revista Brasileira de História da Educação*: trajetória e os desafios da internacionalização (2001-2014)”, *History of Education & Children's*

the History of Education in the academic curriculum⁹. The study of doctoral theses plays a major role in this ambitious project as, together with journals, scientific associations, conferences, professorships, museums, archives, curriculum subjects, etc., it helps us learn about the specific configuration of HE and its dynamics, always bearing in mind both its changes and continuities.

Doctoral theses have already been the subject of study, specifically in the work of Fuentes and Arguimbau which is a reference point for any research in this field¹⁰. Important works have been analysing theses on education since 1840¹¹ and there are also bibliometric studies on doctoral theses in Science of Education that were defended at the University of Barcelona over ten years¹² or in Spain between 1976 and 2006¹³. We can also find works on fields such as the Teaching of Social Sciences¹⁴, service-learning¹⁵ or Theory of

Literature, vol. 10, no. 1, 2015, p. 13-21; Ángel Bueno Sánchez, *Evaluación de revistas científicas españolas del campo de la educación: El caso de la Revista de Investigación Educativa (1983-2000)*, Granada, Universidad de Granada, 2002; Arturo Galán, "La hora del impacto", *Bordón. Revista de Pedagogía*, vol. 68, no. 1, 2016, p. 9-14: <<https://doi.org/10.13042/Bordon.2016.68101>>.

- 9 Francisco Canales Serrano, Yasmina Álvarez González, María José Tacoronte Domínguez, "La Historia de la Educación tras Bolonia: ¿hacia la extinción?", *Revista Española de Educación Comparada*, no. 29, 2017, p. 240-261: <<https://doi.org/10.5944/reec.29.2017.18632>>.
- 10 Eulàlia Fuentes Pujol, Llorenç Arguimbau Vivo, "Las tesis doctorales en España (1997-2008): análisis, estadísticas y repositorios cooperativos", *Revista española de Documentación Científica*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2010, p. 63-89: <<https://doi.org/10.3989/redc.2010.1.711>>.
- 11 Andrés Fernández Bautista, Manuel Torralba, Antonio Fernández-Cano, "Análisis longitudinal de tesis doctorales españolas en educación (1841-2012)", *RELIEVE*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2014, p. 1-15: <<https://doi.org/10.7203/relieve.20.2.4479>>; Andrés Fernández Bautista, *Análisis diacrónico de las tesis doctorales españolas en educación (1840-1976)*, Doctoral thesis, Granada, DIGIBUB, 2012: <<http://hdl.handle.net/10481/21863>>; Andrés Fernández-Bautista, Antonio Fernández-Cano, "La ley de la ventaja acumulada en la distribución de tesis doctorales españolas de educación y sus directores", in AIDIPE (ed.), *Investigar con y para la sociedad*, vol. 2, 2016, p. 1179-1187, <<http://aidipe2015.aidipe.org>>.
- 12 Virgínia Ferrer, Júlia Parrilla, M. José Rubio, Juana M. Sancho, "Estudi sobre l'investigació doctoral: 10 anys de tesis doctorales a Ciències de l'Educació a la Universitat de Barcelona (1979-1989)", *Temps d'Educació*, no. 8, 1992, p. 289-310: <<https://www.raco.cat/index.php/TempsEducacio/article/view/140349>>.
- 13 Antonio Fernández-Cano, Manuel Torralba, Mónica Vallejo, "Revisión prospectiva de la producción española en tesis doctorales de Pedagogía (1976-2006)", *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2008, p. 191-207: (< <https://revistas.um.es/rie/article/view/94221>>).
- 14 Elvira Curiel-Marín, Antonio Fernández-Cano, "Problemática de la investigación con tesis doctorales en didáctica de las ciencias sociales: una clarificación conceptual y de contenidos", in AIDIPE (ed.), *Investigar con y para la sociedad*, op. cit., p. 1159-1169 : <<http://aidipe2015.aidipe.org>>.
- 15 Elena Fernández Rey, Rebeca García Murias, "La producción científica en tesis doctorales sobre aprendizaje servicio en España (2000-2016)", *Revista Iberoamericana de Aprendizaje Servicio*, no. 3, 2017, p. 90-104: <<https://doi.org/10.1344/RIDAS2017.3.7>>.

Education¹⁶. However, doctoral theses have hardly ever been analysed from an HE point of view¹⁷. A first approach can be found in “Relación de tesis doctorales” [“Report of Doctoral Theses”] (1982), according to which, the first thesis was the one presented in 1940 by Víctor García Hoz on *El concepto de lucha en la ascética española y la educación de la juventud* [The concept of struggle in Spanish asceticism and the education of youth], defended at the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities of Complutense University of Madrid and supervised by Juan Zaragüeta¹⁸.

All scientific disciplines have their own history, nonetheless there are factors that have had a strong influence on all fields. It is important to recognise the profound changes that have taken place in the last few decades in the teaching praxis of history of science, with the arrival of information and communication technology¹⁹ on the one hand, and in the policies of university teaching staff accreditation and the appointment of teaching staff, on the other. For the purpose of our research, all these changes affect, for instance, the method of consulting sources, and of generating and disseminating research results, but also the ways in which doctoral theses are carried out. The legislation, on the other hand, has been responding to the new demands and while in the past the discussions were about doctoral courses and doctoral theses, now we speak of Doctoral Schools, activities, research stays, international doctorates, theses by compendium and publications realised during the doctoral thesis, among other matters that previously did not form part of the daily life of the pre-doctoral researchers. The new regulations have brought new rhythms and activities into the thesis writing process. It was not uncommon in our field for people to say that they had been working on their doctoral thesis for ten or fifteen years; or rather, not working on it, as it has been demonstrated that doctoral research is an intense and extensive activity that cannot be successfully

16 Francisco Javier Ramos Pardo, Pablo Sánchez Antolín, “Production of educational theory doctoral theses in Spain (2001–2015)”, *Scientometrics*, vol. 112, no.3, 2017, p. 1615-1630 : <<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11192-017-2435-6>>.

17 Carmen Sanchidrián, Fátima Ortega, “Revisión historiográfica de las tesis realizadas sobre historia de la educación en el franquismo”, in Carme Molinero, Javier Tébar (eds.), *VIII Encuentro Internacional de Investigadores del Franquismo*, 2013: <<http://hdl.handle.net/10630/6569>>.

18 Dissertations and theses Universidad Complutense de Madrid: <<https://ucm.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1057548374>>.

19 Andrés Payà, Xavier Motilla, “Web 2.0, social networks and the history of education in Spain: creating a scientific collaborative space”, *History of education & children’s literature*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2016, p. 249-263.

carried out without due dedication and without keeping up-to-date with new publications on that specific subject. In this respect, the doctoral theses that are carried out in a particular country during a specific period of time are an excellent indicator of the state of research in a certain field, not only because of the topics or periods of time studied, but also because they allow us to take stock of the aforementioned changes in university policy.

In this article we will focus on institutional aspects: where HE theses were written over the last twenty-five years, in which fields and who supervised them²⁰.

I. Methodology

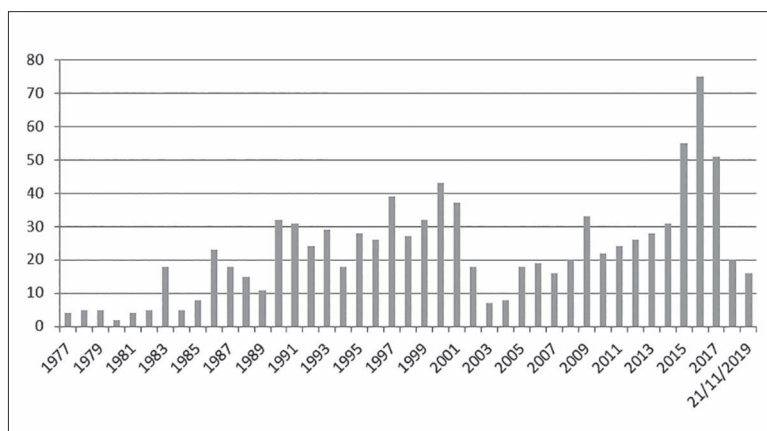
We worked with the theses that in the TESEO database (part of the Spanish Ministry of Education)²¹, include the descriptor “History of Education” (subdiscipline 550607 History of Education, according to UNESCO nomenclature) from the years 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015. Due to the high number of doctoral theses defended in Spain in the period studied, we opted to take these years as a sample that offers the possibility of knowing the state of the question regarding the production of history of education theses. This work differs from other studies of this nature in the thesis selection criteria which, in this case, were determined by the authors themselves as they considered that their own theses belonged to this specific scientific field. Although the in-depth yearly analysis of the last quarter of a century on the reading and defence of HE doctoral theses is still pending, we have chosen the theses which were defended in these six timeframes of our contemporary history in order to make the study operational, and to detect, key moments or points of inflection if there are any, which a future qualitative study can focus on. Thus, this article is a longitudinal analysis, whose intention is to illustrate the afore-mentioned institutional aspects in order to approach a specific reality in Spanish historical-educational research.

We have analysed 198 theses. Given the selection criterion it is possible there are HE theses where the author has not used the HE descriptor and so accordingly they are not included or trackable via this criterion in the database

20 This research was supported by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, through the project Connecting History of Education. International networks, academic production and global dissemination, Reference PID2019-105328GB-I00.

21 Online: <<https://www.educacion.gob.es/teseo/irGestionarConsulta.do>>.

consulted . At the time of writing, a doctoral thesis is being produced with the aim of creating a list of theses that have been completed at Spanish universities in the History of Education, regardless of the descriptor with which they appear. The TESEO database is an excellent starting point for this work, but it also has limitations²². Graph 1 shows the theses included in TESEO that have the HE descriptor, ranging from 1977, when the first one appears in this database, until 21 November 2019. Data from theses prior to 1977 are therefore located in other databases that can be considered complementary to the TESEO database from that year onwards. It should be noted that some theses can hardly be classified as HE just because they are so described in TESEO, due to the fact that they deal with current issues on education that have been catalogued as “short duration”; however, as their authors have tagged them as HE, we have not excluded them. Such theses should be further investigated (at least the index, introduction, conclusions and sources) to be able to decide if we can really use them for our purpose.



Graph 1: theses with HE descriptor in TESEO (1977-2019)

If we look at these data, which are grouped by periods of time, in graph 2, we can see the growth experienced by HE in the last three decades, parallel to that experienced by theses in education. It is true that in the sixties and seventies, and before that, there were HE theses, but clearly the growth of the university system in Spain also meant a strong increase in doctoral theses. In

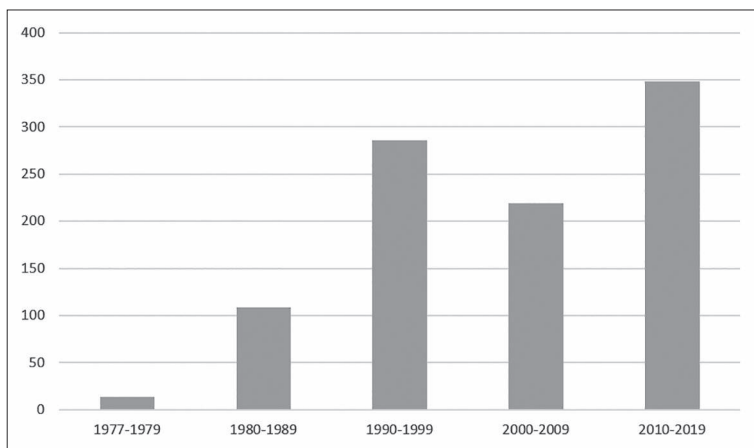
22 Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, “Tesis de Historia de la Educación en la base de datos TESEO (España, 2000-2010)”, *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2016, p. 273-292: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/ete.2016.003.001.14>>.

addition, the creation of faculties of Educational Sciences during the eighties (as a result of the General Education Law of 1970) followed by the change from “University Schools of Teacher Training of Basic General Education” into “Faculties of Education” (in almost all cases, the studies of Educational Sciences or Pedagogy, and the training of teachers were united in the same institution) meant that for many teachers the first step towards a university career was a doctoral thesis. A different case is that of some teachers who had been in teacher training colleges for some time and then, for some reason, decided to write their theses in the field of HE with the aim of improving their administrative status, even if their research career ended on the day of its defence²³. The Organic Law on Universities (*Ley Orgánica de Universidades*, LOU, 2001) – that modified the University Reform Law (*Ley de Reforma Universitaria*, LRU, 1983) – declared it obligatory to have a Ph.D degree to teach at university; nevertheless, it was not applied in regard to temporary teachers and it was not reflected in the number of theses in the years after it was passed.

The figures from 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 have an administrative explanation. In the eighties and nineties, it was not unusual for students to consider writing a thesis after completing their “doctoral courses” and who, upon agreement with their supervisor, went ahead with it. However, many of these theses never came to light either because deadlines were too flexible or simply because they were abandoned. This situation ended with the change in the regulations on doctoral studies, established by Royal Decree of 28 January 2011, which regulates official doctoral studies (hereinafter, R.D. 99/2011). At this point, an extension was granted for the submission of any ongoing theses (depending on the date of registration). This explains the high numbers of theses defended in 2014 (47), 2015 (55), 2016 (50). The ones that were not defended during those years had to switch to the new doctoral curriculum and fulfil a series of requirements – for example, the requirement of being published– that is why there are theses defended in 2017 and 2018 that came from previous programs. This means that during the last decade shown on graph 2, there are “old” theses that, because of their focus, topic, etc., should have been defended in previous years. Perhaps this is one of the factors that does not allow us to appreciate the trends in the following tables and graphs, as previous theses alter the

23 Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, “Institutional affiliations and socialization: Doctoral Thesis in History of education in Spain /1990-2010”, in ISCHE 40, *Education and Nature*, Berlin, Humboldt Universität, ISCHE, 2018, p. 71.

significance of 2015 data. To be able to appreciate any changes in the trends, we will have to wait for the figures for the coming decades.



Graph 2: theses grouped by decades

Each University published the regulation of the Doctorate studies in accordance with the R.D. 99/2011. Generally speaking, this reform was put forward with the intention of establishing minimum criteria that would lead to a progressive increase in the quality and impact of the theses defended, as well as of the mechanisms to achieve this goal in a flexible and progressive manner. 11 February 2016 was set as the deadline for the submission of theses that had been started before the R.D. 99/2011 entered into force (Transitional Provision 1 and 2). Even though students who were taking their doctoral degree already knew in 2011 that they had to submit their research within five years, the last three months saw a “flood” or an “avalanche” of theses that even made it into the press with meaningful headlines. For instance, at the University of Granada, almost 600 theses were defended before 11th February, while the average during a normal academic year was between 450 and 500; at the University of Zaragoza 592 theses were submitted in one semester, as opposed to the 350 in the whole of the previous year and at the University of Malaga 530 theses were submitted between November and 11th February, the equivalent to those normally processed in two years²⁴. During those months (especially between

24 Lola Quero, “El final de los antiguos doctorados causa una gran avalancha en la UGR”, *Granada Hoy*, January 26th, 2016: <https://www.granadahoy.com/granada/antiguos-doctorados-avalancha-tesis-UGR_0_993501076.html>; Cristina Delgado, “Avalancha de tesis en la Universidad de Zaragoza por

November 2015 and February 2016) the problems with finding dates, examining boards, etc. meant a decrease in control over the theses, as was evidenced in recent news stating that the Dean of Complutense University admitted that “controls over doctoral theses were relaxed as a result of a change in university regulations” so that some were able “to slip low-quality or plagiarized doctoral theses thorough the system”. “In many cases it was a botched job”²⁵. An analysis of the theses submitted in those months should be carried out because this kind of news is detrimental for many doctoral students who submitted their theses at that time and who met all the quality and control requirements of authors, supervisors and examining boards.

To better understand the significance of the data of these twenty-five years, we should compare them with the data from previous time periods. The first issue of the journal *Historia de la Educación* published the list of doctoral theses on the History of Education submitted to Spanish universities between 1940 and 1976 (“Relación de tesis de doctorado de historia de la educación presentadas en las universidades españolas entre 1940 y 1976”)²⁶ which contains seventy-two theses submitted, namely, at the University of Barcelona (fifteen), Madrid (forty-six), Pontificia of Salamanca (six) and Valencia (five). To these a further thirty must be added that were reviewed in the same volume (ten defended at Complutense University of Madrid, eight in Valencia, six in Barcelona, six in Salamanca – four in Pontificia University and two in the public one –, and one in Navarra) and that were defended between 1977 and 1981. From this source only, we therefore have 102 HE theses defended between 1940 and 1981²⁷. Up to 1976 the average number of theses is fewer than three per year, while over the following five years the average is six per year. It was already a remarkable

el final de los doctorados del plan antiguo”, *Heraldo*, January 26th, 2016: <<https://www.heraldo.es/noticias/aragon/2016/02/14/avalancha-tesis-universidad-zaragoza-por-final-los-doctorados-del-plan-antiguo-762662-300.html>>; UMA, “La UMA recibe una avalancha de tesis doctorales por el cambio de normativa”, *Sala de prensa UMA*, November 22nd, 2015: <<https://www.uma.es/sala-de-prensa/noticias/la-uma-recibe-una-avalancha-de-tesis-doctorales-por-el-cambio-de-normativa/>>.

- 25 Olga San Martín, “El rector de la UCM admite fallos en el sistema que han permitido que se “cuelen” tesis sin calidad: “Se hizo una chapuza en muchos casos”», *El Mundo*, 11 October 2019: <<https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2019/10/11/5da04769fc6c83f3738b458d.html>>.
- 26 “Relación de tesis de doctorado de historia de la educación presentadas en las universidades españolas entre 1940 y 1976”, *Historia de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria*, vol. 1, 1982, p. 294-301: <<http://revistas.usal.es/index.php/0212-0267/article/view/6458/6461>>.
- 27 “Extractos de tesis doctorales sobre Historia de la educación presentadas en las universidades españolas”, *Historia de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria*, vol. 1, 1982, p. 302-324: <<http://revistas.usal.es/index.php/0212-0267/article/view/6458/6461>>.

change, although the figures of the twenty-five years that we have studied in this article obviously belong to a different period.

The increase was partially predictable considering that, between 1977 and 1981 (the same period in which thirty theses were submitted as previously mentioned), 101 HE *tesinas* (master degree dissertations) had been lodged in the HE Departments of Spanish universities: fifty-six in Complutense University, twenty in Barcelona, ten in Valencia, six in Salamanca, five in Navarra, three in Pontificia of Salamanca and one in Palma²⁸.

There was a clear interest in HE, although some of those who did their HE degree dissertations eventually did their doctoral thesis in another field. If we add the fact that in the seventies, following the General Law on Education, some universities started teaching Science of Education, the number of doctoral theses in the field of education (and in others for similar reasons) was likely to increase.

We have divided the variables of each thesis that we analysed into three groups:

1. *Thesis descriptors*. Ordinal position in which the descriptor “History of education” appears and position of the descriptor “History” (when it appears);
2. *Subject area the thesis stems from*. We have created four groups: History of education (Faculties of Educational Sciences or Pedagogy), other fields of educational sciences (Didactics and school organization, Specific Didactics, Methods of education and educational diagnosis), History (any time period) and others (for instance, theses in Medicine, Law, Architecture, Literature, Art, etc.);
3. *Institutional aspects*. University where it has been defended, distribution by autonomous regions and thesis supervisors. As any historical study must take the gender variable into consideration, we have paid attention to the gender of the authors, supervisors, and members of the examining boards before whom the theses were defended.

Producing these tables is not always an easy task given that we had limited information (whatever is included in the TESEO database) which, although it has kept the same structure throughout the years, is not always complete nor has the database been executed systematically by taking other factors into account such as, for instance, the inclusion or exclusion of a specific descrip-

28 “Memorias de licenciatura leídas en los departamentos de historia de la educación de las universidades españolas en el periodo 1977-1981”. *Historia de la Educación. Revista Interuniversitaria*, vol. 1, 1982, p. 296-301: <<http://revistas.usal.es/index.php/0212-0267/article/view/6458/6461>>.

tor. Some of the files allow access to the full thesis or indicate where to find it, while others do not even mention the name of the supervisor. As the years progress, the data reflected and the reliability of the file increase.

II. Results

1. Thesis descriptors

As mentioned at the beginning, the TESEO database allows the inclusion of several descriptors from the UNESCO scientific fields. As the criterion for being on the list we handled was specifically the inclusion of “History of Education” we should focus on the other descriptors that the authors of the theses included, as well as on the position occupied by each one. HE, like all subjects included by UNESCO in History by specialties (thirty-one in total, from History of Architecture to History of the Church, including Biology, Journalism, Medicine, Science, Sociology, etc.)²⁹ is a “hybrid” discipline that belongs to the field of History, although its teaching does not take place at the faculties of History (in some cases it is mentioned in the history of culture) but in the faculties of Education, which means that it is generally pedagogists, who dedicate themselves to it, as we shall see. This might mean that in the majority of HE theses there are descriptors that may seem logical at first sight, both in the field of history and in the field of education. However, the analysis of the descriptors and their evolution yields partly surprising results. We focused on two descriptors, “History of Education” and “History”, and examined where they appear. In both cases, we specified the first three positions (1st, 2nd and 3rd) and the category “Other” (positions ranging from 4th to 9th).

The position of the descriptor “History of Education” changed significantly over these years: up to 2005, none of the theses included it in the first position while in the following years it ranked first most of the time. In 1990 and 1995 all the theses had “History” as their first descriptor. In 2000 and 2005 “History” ranked first in the vast majority of cases (twelve out of twenty-two in 2010 and thirty-four out of fifty-five in 2015). In only two theses in each of these years

29 However, History of Psychology does not appear. A curious case is that of the History of the Church that appears with two codes 550691 and 550693 in the Spanish version of the UNESCO Nomenclature and they do not appear in the English one. There is also, in both versions, History of religions (550621). See, España, *Nomenclatura internacional de la Unesco para los campos de ciencia y tecnología*. Subprograma de proyectos de investigación fundamental no orientada, 2011: <<http://goo.gl/7WKBt2>> and <<http://skos.um.es/unesco6/5506/html>>.

is “History” not among the first three. The number of theses that include it as the only descriptor is also significant. In 2005, for instance, it is the first and only descriptor in three theses. We do not believe that the position held by the descriptor “History of education” within the series of descriptors can be interpreted as an absolute indicator of the relevance that the author gives it. However, it is possible to make a separate analysis of the theses where “History of education” appears first, followed, or not, by other descriptors, and those theses in which it appears in secondary positions such as 6th or 7th.

Position	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	Total
1 st	0	0	0	3	12	34	49
2 nd	10	7	11	2	7	9	46
3 rd	9	7	17	5	1	10	49
Other	13	14	15	8	2	2	54
Total	32	28	43	18	22	55	198

Table 1. Position of the descriptor “History of education”

Position	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	Total
1 st	32	28	38	11	0	0	109
2 nd	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
3 rd	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Other	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total	32	28	41	13	0	1	115

Table 2. Position of the descriptor “History”

Changes in the position of the descriptor “History” go in the opposite direction to that of “History of Education”. In 1990 and 1995, all theses included it as the first descriptor and between 2000 and 2005 the majority did, i.e. 38 out of 41 in 2000 and 11 out of 13 in 2005 (the other two included it in 2nd and 3rd position). However, in the following period, i.e. 2010, the descriptor “History” did not appear in any of them and in 2015 only once, in third place. This can be interpreted as a shift towards the educational field. Hybrid disciplines often oscillate between their two elements and in this case the allocation of descriptors seems to indicate a movement from *History* to *Education*. As we shall see, the analysis of the subject areas from which these theses stem, demonstrates this tendency, although not in such a radical way as the descriptors show. In any case, those of us who are involved in HE – from any field – see it as positive that its existence is recognized as a discipline of its own and not diluted in History.

In addition to “History”, the descriptor “Histories by specialties” is another of those that frequently accompany “History of Education” (that is, we understand that those who tag it as such are aware that it belongs to that field). For example, the three together, in a different order (“History” is usually in the first place) appear in forty-one out of forty-three theses in 2005 and in thirteen out of eighteen in 2005, but in none in 2010, when only in one case does “History of education” appear next to “Histories by specialties” (without History). In 2015 this descriptor no longer appears in any of the doctoral theses.

The very structure of UNESCO’s Nomenclature explains this grouping as the “History of education” sub-discipline (550607) is located in the “History” subject area (55) and in the “Stories by specialties” discipline (5506). The use of UNESCO’s descriptors poses problems when defining the scientific profiles of research projects and of the researchers³⁰ who need to include a History profile when they are actually dealing with Pedagogy. If we wished to use Pedagogy descriptors because we consider that this is the field where a thesis should be located (58), we would have to place the thesis according to the subject of study (for example, 580302 is Teacher Training or 580204 is Education Levels and Topics) or in the “Other” section. For our purpose this is clearly insufficient as we approach educational issues from a historical perspective.

Some of the titles that we struggled to tag as HE are: *La lucha leonesa o aluches* [Leonese Wrestling or Aluche], carried out in the department of Physiology that includes “History of Education” in fourth place, *Ética fundamental y religión electiva* [Fundamental Ethics and Elective Religion], carried out in the Department of Legal and International and Historical Sciences and Philosophy of Law that includes it in third place; or *Campaña de Austerlitz: Antecedentes económicos, desarrollo de las operaciones y consecuencias para Europa* [Austerlitz Campaign: Economic Background, Development of Operations and Consequences for Europe], carried out in the Department of Statistics, Economic Structure and Official Language School with “History of War” and “War and Peace” as first and third descriptors and “History of Education” as second. There are numerous examples: *Essays on marital sorting and fertility*, has “History of Education” as its third descriptor and this research was carried out in the PhD Program

30 M^a Juan Ruiz-Martínez, M^a José Baños-Moreno y Rodrigo Baños-Moreno, “Nomenclatura Unesco: evolución, alcance y reutilización en clave ontológica para la descripción de perfiles científicos”, *El profesional de la información*, vol.23, no.4, 2014, p.383-392: <<https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/EPI/article/viewFile/31965/16967>>.

of Economics, Finance and Management; *Relaciones entre presencia social y satisfacción del estudiante en entornos virtuales de aprendizaje colaborativo (EVAC)*, [Relationships between Social Presence and Student Satisfaction in Virtual Collaborative Learning Environments] has “History of Education” as its only descriptor and it was carried out in the department of Didactics and Theory of Education; *El rol de las buenas prácticas educativas en los centros docentes: organización, funcionamiento y docencia* [The Role of Good Educational Practices in Schools: Organization, Functioning and Teaching], has “History of Education” as its second descriptor and was carried out in the PhD program of Construction Engineering and Production.

In some cases, it is the department where the thesis is realised that requires “History of Education” to be included as a descriptor. This was, for instance, the case of the thesis *Segalaritzaren bilakaera 1955etik 2005era Gipuzcoan: orduko eta gaurko segalariak* [The development of the work of the *segalari* from 1955 to 2005 in Guipúzcoa], which has as its sole descriptor “History of Education” and which was carried out in the Department of Theory and History of Education of the University of the Basque Country. At present the name of some departments is being changed and “History of Education” is disappearing from their titles, which diminishes the visibility of our field, even though the professors and researchers in this field are still working there. We will have to wait and see if the disappearance of the name of the department will cause a decrease in the theses with this descriptor.

We may conclude that there is a certain laxity when it comes to choosing the descriptors. Many theses have an introductory chapter with background information on the topic to be studied or on its contextualization, which leads some authors to include “History of Education” among the descriptors without knowing what it means, that is to say they are ignorant of the scientific and academic value of HE.

2. Subject area the thesis come from

Apart from the descriptors, another aspect to be taken into account is the field from where these theses arise, which is linked to the Departments where they were defended and to their supervisors. HE is situated between History (within the area of Humanities) and Educational Sciences (in Social and Legal Sciences). When we speak of hybrid subjects, it is because they oscillate between two areas, in this case between history and pedagogy. However, according to the

descriptors, until the year 2000 the tendency was much more towards history than pedagogy, although recently this has changed dramatically.

When we look at the subject areas the theses come from, we can observe that in Spain HE has been studied mainly at the Faculties of Education, mostly by pedagogues, followed by historians, although not only by the latter, as we can see in table 3 which shows the subject areas the theses come from. This is the aspect that can vary the most from one country to another, and this also depends on the different roles of the pedagogues in each country and the presence of HE in the curricula of the Pedagogy and Teaching degrees. In the case of Spain, considering the significant contributions made by many historians to the history of education, the bulk of the research comes from projects developed in the Faculties of Educational Sciences, Education, Pedagogy or Teaching (institutions where teacher training is still carried out in a faculty different from Educational Sciences, like in Barcelona or Valencia) where HE is also taught.

The theses that are based on the Theory and History of Education (the area of knowledge to which HE belongs) do stand out, but with a clear downward trend. Overall, those written in education departments account for 7% of the total. There are some situations that are difficult to explain, such as the fact that in 2015 there were almost as many theses from HE as from other areas of education. There are theses carried out in Departments of Didactics and School Organization or didactics of specific subjects, that allegedly belong to HE, as they are tagged with the HE descriptor in the first and often only place, despite the fact that neither the supervisor/s nor anyone in the committee that evaluated them are involved in HE. This relevant factor, i.e. the thesis supervisor's lack of specialization in HE, usually has an impact on the final result of the thesis, as the methodological shortcomings and the superficiality with which they approach the topics without going deeper or reaching relevant conclusions, directly affect the quality and scientific rigor of the doctoral theses in question³¹.

Coming back to the descriptors and the fields, we see that when fewer theses are tagged as "History of Education" in the first place, and when the majority put "History" in first place, – 1990, 1995 and 2000 – that is, when more of them actually come from the Theory and History of Education area. That is to

31 The Rector of Complutense University stated: "There were doctoral theses supervised by people who had nothing to do with the area of speciality. We are changing that in Complutense University" (Olga San Martín, "El rector de la UCM...", *op. cit.*)

say, even when according to the descriptors the theses on history of education were leaning towards history, the majority were carried out within the field of education. In 1990, more than three quarters of the “History of Education” theses came from education departments (78.1% in 1990), while the remaining 21.9% came from history departments (6.3%) and other areas (15.6%). Perhaps a detailed analysis of the supervisors could explain the dissonance between the fields and the descriptors, as some supervisors are professors of Theory and History of Education and yet they supervise HE theses that are written within other departments.

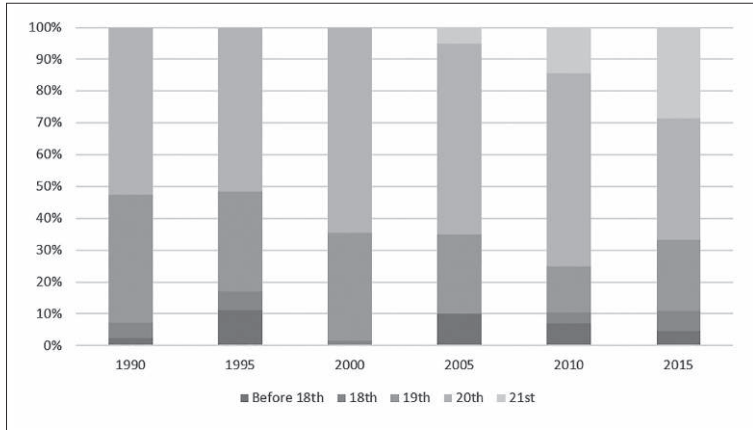
Subject areas	1990 %	1995 %	2000 %	2005 %	2010 %	2015 %	Total	Total %
History of Education	21	18	19	6	8	24	96	48.48
	65.6	64.3	44.2	33.33	36.36	43.64		
Other Education	4	3	7	4	7	19	44	22.22
	12.5	10.7	16.7	22.22	31.82	34.55		
History	2	4	10	4	2	5	27	13.64
	6.3	14.3	23.26	22.22	9.09	9.09		
Other subjects	5	3	7	4	5	7	31	15.66
	15.6	10.7	16.27	22.22	22.73	12.73		
Total	32	28	43	18	22	55	198	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00		

Table 3: subject area the theses come from

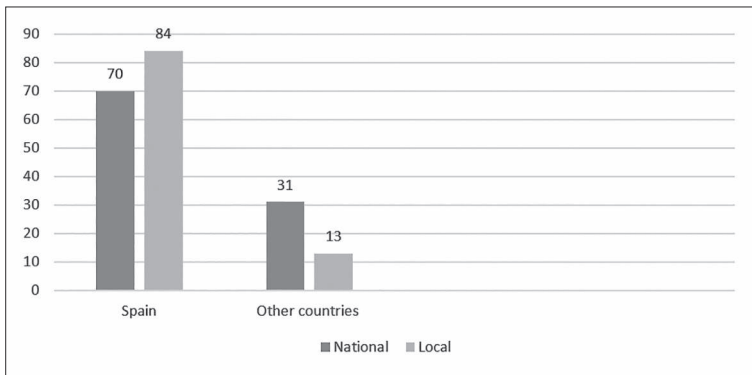
This can be partly explained by the development of research in subject specific didactics because teacher training, from initial teacher preparation upwards was moved from colleges to faculties of education or teaching within universities. This development also explains the centuries covered and the topics studied by the 198 doctoral dissertations analysed.

The periods of time favoured by the doctoral students are shown in graph 3. The 20th century is the most studied (137 theses, 52.9%), followed by the nineteenth century (73 theses, 27.8%), except for the year 2015, when it is the twenty-first century that occupies the second position, closely followed by the 19th century. Among the theses dealing with topics prior to the 19th century, there are two that cover parts of the 18th and 19th centuries and there is another one that begins in the 16th century and covers a long period afterwards. There are only three theses that address topics before the 16th century and they are classic issues related to the history of pedagogy, for example, the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas (13th century) or Christine de Pisan (14th and 15th centu-

ries). Broadly speaking, the history of contemporary education is far above all other topics, since active research groups based in Faculties of Education focused on earlier times are exceptional. Within the 20th century, it should be noted that the majority of the theses concern the Second Republic and Francoism. The total number of 262 is higher than the number of theses (198) because some of them studied a topic throughout the course of more than one century.



Graph 3: centuries covered by the Theses (%)



Graph 4: national and local subjects (Spain and other countries)

In order to offer an overview of the main research topics addressed in the doctoral dissertations, we have differentiated the scope of the studies: Spain or another country, and local or national perspective. As graph 4 shows, the studies have mainly focused on Spanish local topics (42.4%), which were surpassed by those dealing with a Spanish non-local issue only in 2000 and 2010.

This may be explained by the impetus that so-called “local histories” had in the eighties and nineties in the 20th century that goes beyond a mere interest in a historiographic orientation towards social history, history from below, micro-history, or local histories, among others. The real reasons for this choice lie in the changes that Pedagogical studies underwent in those years: the so-called regional histories were included following the development of the Autonomous Communities: History of education in Andalusia, Valencia, Galicia, Catalonia, Valencia the Basque Country, etc. This fact undoubtedly encouraged local History of Education theses carried out from the place studied. They had the advantage that most of the primary sources were easily accessible to researchers. There are quite a few theses that study local education, focusing either on an educational level (for example, *La enseñanza primaria en Málaga, 1902-1931* [The History of Primary Education in Malaga, 1902-1931], or *La Formación Profesional en Navarra, 1946-1990* [Vocational Education in Navarra, 1946-1990], or *Cien años de enseñanza secundaria en Cervera, 1845-1941* [One hundred years of secondary education in Cervera, 1845-1941], or else adopting a rather general perspective (for example, *Escuela, educación e infancia durante la Guerra Civil en Euskadi* [School, education and childhood in the Basque Country during the Spanish Civil War] or *La enseñanza en Cuenca durante la II República y la Guerra Civil española* [The Education in Cuenca during the 2nd republic and the Civil War]. Another significant group focuses on an educational institution, especially in the Provincial High Schools or Normal Schools (for instance, *Historia del Instituto “Santísima Trinidad” de Baeza, 1869-1953* [The History of “Santísima Trinidad” High School of Baeza, 1869-1953] or *La escuela Normal de Maestros de Las Palmas, 1853-1900* [The Teacher Training College of Las Palmas, 1853-1900]. The thoughts and works of individual authors are also among the favorite topics (Andrés Bello, Ángel Ganivet, Champagnat, Manjón, Sáez de Melgar, etc.) Among those theses in which Spain is not the focus of study, the national perspective clearly prevails over the local one (15.66 vs. 6.5%). These results are consistent with the opinions offered by Viñao about HE research in Spain during the last decades³².

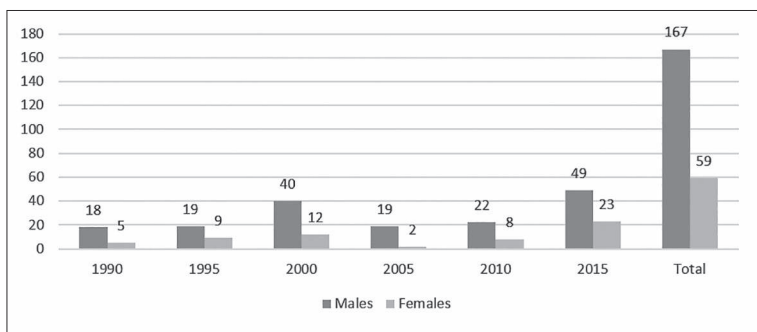
32 Antonio Viñao Frago, “From dictatorship to democracy history of education in Spain”, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 50, no. 6, 2014, p. 830-843: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2014.948006>>, and Antonio Viñao Frago, “La Historia de la Educación como disciplina y campo de investigación: viejas y nuevas cuestiones”, *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2014, p.21-42: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.14516/ete.2016.003.001.3>>.

3. Institutional aspects

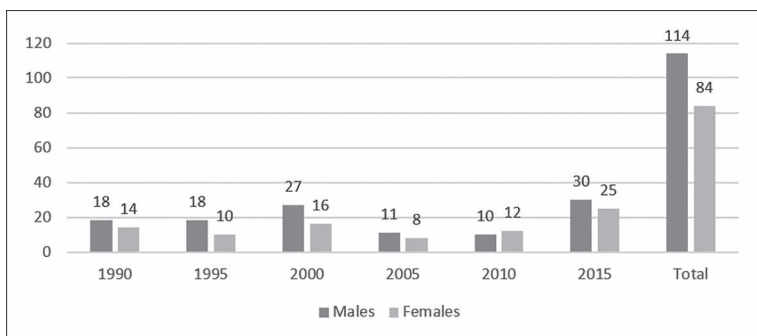
The universities where the theses were defended, their distribution by autonomous regions and the supervisors are part of the institutional aspects analysed in this study together with some references to the gender of both authors and supervisors.

Until recently, the so-called Matthew effect worked among the supervisors of the theses and in other areas of academic life: "Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have, will be taken from them" (Matthew, 13:12). The theses supervisors were traditionally the most expert professors who could provide the most assistance to the doctoral students. In some cases, the possibility of someone from another job category supervising a thesis was not even considered. In the last twenty-five years the situation has changed dramatically for the aforementioned reasons related to the requirements for the recruitment and promotion of teachers; the tendency now is to have two supervisors, a veteran and a novice. The first thing that stands out is the enormous disparity, since only twenty-six of them have supervised more than one thesis and they belong mostly to the departments of Theory and History of Education; only two are not connected with Faculties of Education and the others belong to various departments of Faculties of Education or Teaching (or Psychology and Educational Sciences). This implies a major lack of unity in the criteria and, in some way, a lack of professionalism, although this statement will have to be confirmed when we have the data for the whole period. We can often find supervisors of Didactics and School Organization, of specific Didactics and of other subject areas that appear only once in the list, although it is also true that many HE supervisors appear only once. As soon as we have the complete census of the HE theses, we will be able to qualify these results and evaluate the work of the different supervisors with greater precision.

In this regard, another possible hypothesis for theses that are currently being or will be supervised in the coming years is that, due to the lack of job promotion and the need to change universities and, on many occasions, even areas of knowledge, some supervisors who were trained in HE end up belonging to other departments of educational sciences and, therefore, tutoring HE theses in other areas.



Graph 5: these supervisors by gender and year



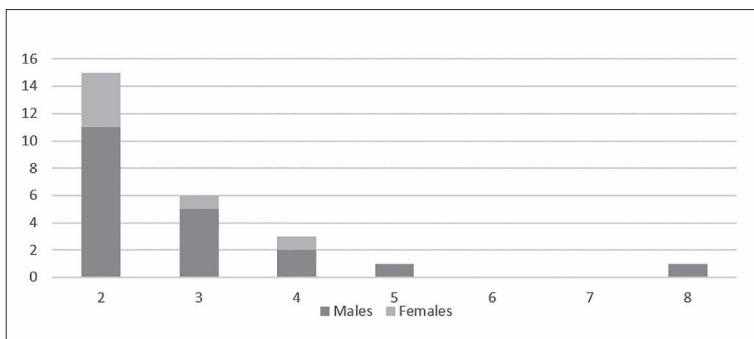
Graph 6: these authors by gender and year

Over the long term, the percentage of males among thesis supervisors (table 4 and graph 6) has varied. In 1995, the percentage of male supervisors was 67.9%; it rose to 76.9% in 2000 and peaked in 2005 (90.5%) before decreasing. However, the percentages for 1990 and 2015 are very similar, so a trend cannot be seen despite the intermediate variations.

There is also a division in the gender of doctoral students, which is especially significant if we take into account that in education studies women are a clear majority. Year after year, the columns of authors are more balanced than those of supervisors. Among these, women were 21.7% in 1990 and reached 31.9% in 2015. However, the results of the authors' column are disappointing, even if they are more balanced, as in 1990 43.7% of the authors were women and 25 years later that percentage is 45.4%. Theoretically, in our field, women should produce more doctoral theses than men given that they are the overall majority and that policies have been developed over the years to promote the presence of women

in the fields where they were under-represented. However, we are dealing with a situation in which the presence of women in our classrooms is increasing (for reasons that we are not covering in this study) yet nevertheless, the percentage of women who write doctoral theses remains globally stable. The total percentages indicate a persistence of gender inequality among supervisors and authors, even if in some years, such as 2010, female authors represented 54.5% of the total. These figures do not correspond to the percentage of doctoral theses presented by women in HE, it is therefore necessary to try to encourage women to go from master to doctorate as gender is still a conditioning factor both when choosing degree studies and when undertaking the doctoral thesis (graph 6).

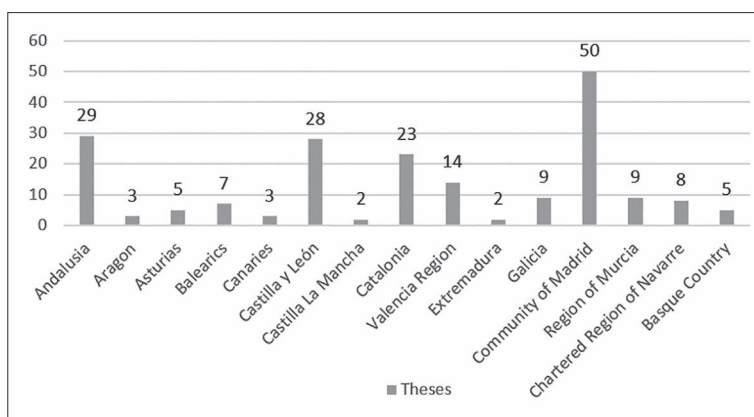
The fact that only 144 supervisors participated in the tutoring of a thesis means that there is little specialisation in this field as most of them have just supervised one thesis. Once again, this is clearly the outcome of the new teachers' evaluation processes. Considering that supervising a thesis is seen as a credit to be able to achieve certain teaching positions, there has been an increase of theses that are supervised by more than one person, the same as happens with journal articles that are hardly ever signed by just one author. In 1990 in only one case were there two supervisors (both Spanish) while in 2015 there was one supervisor in 39 theses and more than one in 16. However, theses with a co-supervisor from another country are exceptional as we only have one case in the year 2000 and another in 2010. The increase in research projects, almost non-existent in our field in the eighties, has also favoured the development of research groups and the production of theses within a research team.



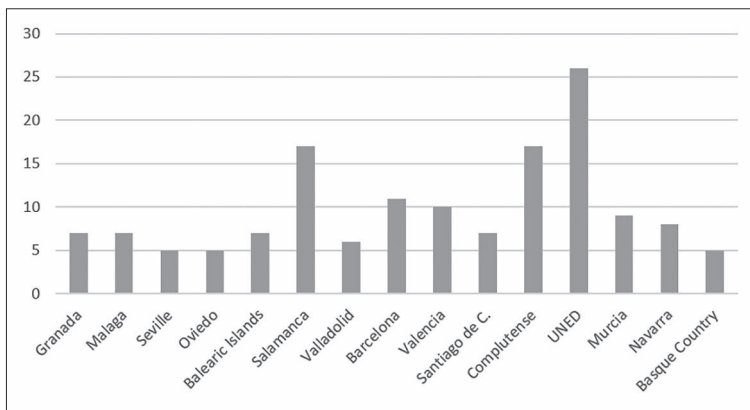
Graph 7: supervisors (males and females) of more than one thesis

The same disparity that we find among supervisors, is repeated among universities, considering that the 198 theses were defended in forty-three universities.

As for the distribution of the theses by autonomous regions (graph 8), the first place is occupied, as expected, by Madrid as the UNED (National Distance Education University) and the Complutense University (plus four more universities) are based there and they occupy the first and second place respectively in the number of theses, in this case tied with Salamanca, with seventeen theses each. Next come Castilla y León with twenty-nine theses (Salamanca with seventeen and Valladolid with six). In general, the universities with the greatest number of theses are those that offered degrees in Pedagogy or Educational Sciences (or later the degree of Pedagogy). This is the case, for example, of the universities of Granada, Malaga and Seville in Andalusia, while in other universities of this latter autonomous region other degrees are on offer (Teaching and sometimes Social Education). Since we are not working with all the data, it is difficult to make a definite statement, but, in principle, Madrid, Castilla y León and Andalusia are the regions with the highest number of such theses. Madrid and Castilla and León together exceed 5% of the theses. In fact (graph 9) of the forty-three Spanish universities where some HE theses were defended in the years under consideration, only fifteen universities produced five or more theses.



Graph 8: number of theses by autonomous region



Graph 9: universities where five or more theses were defended during the years in question

Conclusions

As a result of this study, we can establish a series of conclusions that can help us qualify or orient further research on the past and the future related to what (subjects), when (period studied), who (authors and directors) and where (production spaces) doctoral theses in HE are produced in Spain. The interpretation of the data obtained must take into account the changes experienced in the last twenty-five years, both in education, especially in university education (systems of accreditation and promotion of teachers and regulations on doctoral studies), and in History (new models, concepts and sources). The important changes that have taken place in the way research results are published should also be considered as they now affect the theses from their very beginning since the pre-requisite for their defence is the publication of part of the results or the possibility of defending it along with a compendium of articles. Although we have performed the analysis using different indicators, the conclusions, as we shall see, should not be drawn from the individual analysis of these but from the whole body of indicators.

The analysis of the *descriptors* must be interpreted in relation to the subject field from which the theses arise. We have seen how the descriptor “History of Education” has been gaining ground, from appearing in secondary positions to being the first in recent years. The evolution followed by HE in recent decades can explain these changes, especially because of its approach to the theories,

methods and concepts of history, which allows educational historians to state openly that they deal with HE and not only with History³³. The inclusion of History of Education or History in the first places indicates the field of origin of the researcher, and generally it does not imply different conceptual approaches because we all understand historical science. However, for a long time HE was a repertoire of decontextualized theories or studies of institutions, often also out of context, aimed at teacher training rather than at a scientific discipline, although always with notable exceptions. The decline suffered by both Pedagogy and History until the sixties means that we have to wait until the seventies to find “theses and research that were more receptive to the new historiographic trends, a situation that climaxed at the end of the seventies or the beginning of the eighties”³⁴. These works, close to the historiographic trends that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s, together with the institutional consolidation of the discipline, its expansion and the greater attention paid to educational issues by historians in general³⁵ (very interested in the history of childhood or the history of literacy, for example) make it possible to situate the scientific and historiographic renewal of HE at the end of the 1970s. This may explain why we have had to wait a few years for educational historians to be recognized as such, rather than as historians interested in educational issues.

The Departments of Theory and History of Education are still the ones producing the majority of HE theses, however with a downward trend. It is worth mentioning the continuous increase of HE theses carried out from areas of education different from the Theory and History of Education, which began when the training of teachers went from Teacher Training Schools to Faculties of Education or Magisterium and when, consequently, research in these areas increased.

Without taking into account the descriptors, in many cases it is not easy to decide whether a thesis, or an article or a book belong to HE. According to Mapping³⁶ and other projects, it is a pre-requisite for theses to have a clear

33 Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, *La historia cultural de la educación: Entre cambios y continuidades*, Málaga, SPICUM, 2013: <https://riuma.uma.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10630/6165/HISTORIA_CULTURAL_%20Sanchidrian.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

34 Antonio Viñao Frago, “La historia de la educación en el siglo XX. Una mirada desde España”, *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*, vol. 7, no. 15, p. 238.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Rita Hofstetter, Alexandre Fontaine, Solenn Huitric, Emmanuelle Picard, “Mapping the discipline history of education”, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 50, no. 6, 2014, p. 876.

historical element and that the research focus on an educational subject. For the HE mapping, the fact that certain theses have been qualified as “History of Education” and also the fact that HE theses do not include this descriptor, is the biggest limitation when using the TESEO database. Although we have not accessed the content of the theses, there are several that would hardly be qualified as History of Education by an education historian. Some of them do not look like theses about history and with others it is difficult to gauge the chosen topic. This can be “explained” by administrative reasons, for example, when in a department there are several subject areas, the theses defended in that Department might take its name, even if they are not about the subject.

We must insist on the awareness and importance of completing the TESEO form in the correct manner since it has repercussions on subsequent searches and it affects the visibility of the theses. Neither the name of the Department nor the area of knowledge the supervisor is linked with are sufficient reasons to include or exclude a descriptor. The inclusion of a chapter on the subject is also not a reason to include the descriptor “History of education” and we have seen examples of all this. HE is an academic discipline and we must be aware of its scientific and academic value.

As was to be expected, in the institutional aspects, the universities where pedagogical studies have a greater tradition in general, provide, a greater number of theses; having said that, the importance of the UNED among the universities created after the General Education Law should be highlighted.

In the conclusions referring to the *supervisors and authors of doctoral theses*, it is worth highlighting some questions that we consider very relevant. In the last two decades, professors have not been the only supervisors of doctoral theses; as the requirements for the recruitment and promotion of teachers have changed, the choice tends to fall on the co-supervision by a veteran supervisor and a novice.

Disparity is the common denominator for both thesis supervisors and the universities where the theses were submitted: only twenty-six of the 226 supervisors supervised more than one thesis during those years and only fifteen of the forty-three universities that appear in the study produced five or more HE theses. The contribution of the Autonomous Community of Madrid stands out as it includes the Complutense University and the UNED among others.

As for the gender of supervisors and doctoral students, we found that the gender gap has narrowed considerably among supervisors while there has been

little variation among authors. Considering that women represent approximately three quarters of the students of the faculties of education, it is not clear why they still do not account for 5% of new doctors. The gender factor conditions both the choice of undergraduate studies and subsequent decisions, there are relatively few women who opt for research as opposed to those who end up teaching in nursery, primary or secondary education.

Finally, we can say that in the same way that “education as a doctoral subject has grown significantly over time, following patterns similar to those of other disciplines”³⁷ and that its development has been subject to the ups and downs and influences of Spanish research in general, HE has also followed similar patterns and to a large extent, has been affected, by the same factors that have affected research in general. Broadly speaking, the same stages that are set in other studies of theses in education can be applied to HE. Therefore, research in HE is not an exceptional case, although the interpretation of the results obviously needs to take into account the peculiarities of its field³⁸.

Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco
Universidad de Málaga, Spain
sanchidrian@uma.es

Andrés Payà Rico
Universidad de Valencia, Spain
Andres.Paya@uv.es

Tatiane de Freitas Ermel
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain
tdefreit@ucm.es

37 Antonio Fernández-Cano, Manuel Torralbo, Mónica Vallejo, “Revisión prospectiva de la producción española”, *op. cit.*, p.6-7.

38 Andrés Fernández Bautista, Manuel Torralba, Antonio Fernández-Cano, “Análisis longitudinal...”, *op. cit.*, p. 1-15.