

## CLIENTELISM IN PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN MINAS GERAIS DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Clientelismo na instrução pública de Minas Gerais na segunda metade do século XIX

Clientelismo en la instrucción pública en Minas Gerais en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX

VERA LÚCIA NOGUEIRA

Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais, Minas Gerais, BH, Brasil. *E-mail:* vera.nogueira@uemg.br.

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**Abstract:** Within the scope of the History of Education, this article discusses how public instruction was present within the context of clientelistic networks or political patronage of the vice-president of the province, Manuel Teixeira de Sousa, in Ouro Preto. In dialogue with Political History and anchored in the contributions of the Social History of Elites, the letters sent to the politician in the years 1860 and 1861, available in Casa do Pilar's archive, in Ouro Preto, are analyzed. The data demonstrates that decisions in the field of public instruction and education also morally supported clientelistic practices that connected political groups, friends, and fellow party members seeking to obtain privileges, considerations, and personal benefits for themselves or others.

**Keywords:** Manuel Teixeira de Sousa; history of education; political elite; Ouro Preto.

**Resumo:** Inscrito no âmbito da História da Educação, neste artigo, discute-se o modo como a instrução pública se fez presente no contexto das redes clientelares ou de patronagem política do vice-presidente da província, Manuel Teixeira de Sousa, em Ouro Preto. Em diálogo com a História Política, e ancorado nos aportes da História Social das Elites, analisam-se as cartas enviadas ao político, no ano de 1860 e 1861, disponíveis no acervo da Casa do Pilar, em Ouro Preto. Os dados evidenciam que decisões do campo da instrução pública e da educação também sustentaram moralmente práticas clientelares que ligavam grupos políticos, amigos e correligionários que buscavam obter privilégios, considerações, benefícios pessoais para si ou para outrem.

**Palavras-chave:** Manuel Teixeira de Sousa; História da Educação; elite política; Ouro Preto.

**Resumen:** Inscrito en el ámbito de la Historia de la Educación, este artículo discute la forma en que la instrucción pública estuvo presente en el contexto de las redes clientelares o de patronazgo político del vicepresidente de Ouro Preto, Manuel Teixeira de Sousa. En diálogo con la Historia Política y basándose en los aportes de la Historia Social de las Élités, se analizan las cartas enviadas al político en los años 1860 y 1861, disponibles en el acervo de la Casa do Pilar en Ouro Preto. Los datos evidencian que las decisiones en el ámbito de la instrucción pública y la educación también respaldaron moralmente prácticas clientelares que conectaban a grupos políticos, amigos y correligionarios que buscaban obtener privilegios, consideraciones y beneficios personales para sí mismos o para otros.

**Palabras clave:** Manuel Teixeira de Sousa; Historia de la Educación; élite política; Ouro Preto.

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## INTRODUCTION

This article addresses the actions of a local political elite that has attracted little attention from researchers in the field of History of Education, but which has been gaining ground among historians of the Brazilian Empire<sup>1</sup> for several decades now: the provincial vice-presidents. Furthermore, the theme of clientelism in education, in the 19th century, has been present in some studies in the field, such as Santos (2003); Rizzin (2005); Perez (2006); Araújo (2010); Lima (1995); Nery and Nery (2023).

The political protagonism of this elite within the provinces took on new contours from 1834 onwards, with the creation of a new public space: the Provincial Legislative Assemblies (Law No. 16..., 1834). From then on, the provincial governments began to be constituted by two instances of Power: the Executive, the Provincial Presidency, created in 1823, and the Legislative with the Assemblies. Considered as fundamental instances in the process of consolidation of the province as a political-administrative unit of the Brazilian State, they allowed the decentralization of the Legislative Power, which was concentrated in the Court, and, at the same time, the strengthening of the provincial groups that, since the Colonial period, had been constituting themselves as a political elite, organized “[...] around the regional fiscal-administrative apparatus [...]” (Dolhnikoff, 2003, p. 435). From 1834 onwards, with the Central Government becoming responsible for Higher Education and the provinces, among other responsibilities, such as the entire organization of the legal and material apparatus and for the dissemination of primary and secondary public education, the spheres of political participation in the 19th century were therefore redefined.

In this process, the spaces of action of the Powers were also redefined, highlighting certain political groups, since, until that moment, the legal proposals aimed at education, debated within the General Councils of the Provinces<sup>2</sup>, were transformed into laws by the General Legislative Assembly. From 1834 onwards, the local political elite gained notoriety and autonomy and, in this group, “[...] the vice-president would naturally end up assuming great importance in the provincial political game, since it was up to him to govern the province for most of the time” (Dolhnikoff, 2003, p. 103), due to the high turnover of presidents<sup>3</sup> and, consequently,

<sup>1</sup> See, among others: Dias (2008); Freitas (2015); Vellasco (2009); Sena (2012); Oliveira (2014); Both (2020); Costa (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Institution that comprised the political-administrative structure of the Provinces, created by the Law of October 20, 1823, together with the position of president, and whose Regulations were established by the Law of August 27, 1828. The Councils were extinguished in 1834. The General Council of the Province of Minas Gerais, created on June 9, 1825, was the first to be installed in the Brazilian Empire and operated for two legislatures (1828-1830 and 1830-1834).

<sup>3</sup> Since the creation of the Presidency in 1823, the position was filled by appointment of the Emperor. The vice-presidents were initially chosen from among the citizens who received the most votes in the province, and, after Decree No. 207 (1841), they were also freely appointed by the Emperor.

the short time spent in the Executive chair when meeting the demands of the Emperor (Nogueira, 2022).

The actions of regional groups were fundamental to the construction of the Imperial State, especially after the political-administrative centralization promoted by the liberal reforms of the 1830s (Dolhnikoff, 2003, 2005). Unlike the theses of Carvalho (2008) and Mattos (1987), who attribute the responsibility for the unity of the Empire to the role of a national elite with a common ideological background and a perspective that differentiated it from the regional elites, or as a result of the coordinated actions of a noble class around the Crown, respectively, Dolhnikoff attributes the success of the unity and construction of the Imperial State to “[...] an institutional arrangement that was the result of the clashes and negotiations among the various regional elites that were to integrate the new nation” (Dolhnikoff, 2003, p. 432). In this sense, the author understands that these “[...] regional elites also constituted a political elite, whose desire for autonomy [...] was coupled with a political project that accommodated regional demands in a national arrangement” (Dolhnikoff, 2003, p. 342), thus enabling the preservation of provincial autonomy, under the direction of the Central Government, and the conduction of the State construction process by these elites.

This article problematizes the way in which public education was present amid the sociopolitical relations of nineteenth-century society in Minas Gerais, specifically in the context of clientelistic networks or political patronage, present in the forms of dialogue and interaction between the vice-president of the province of Minas Gerais, Manuel Teixeira de Sousa, and the population of the capital of Minas Gerais, Ouro Preto.

The choice of this politician is justified by the way he has stood out in the research we have been conducting on the profile of the governors of Minas Gerais during the Imperial period. When we carried out a prosopography of this political elite, we found that Manoel Teixeira temporarily occupied the vice-presidency of the Province five times<sup>4</sup>, at different periods, in the second half of the 19th century.

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<sup>4</sup> Namely: 2nd vice of Carlos Carneiro de Campos (04/22/1860); 2nd vice, already as Senator, of Vicente Pires da Motta (10/02/1861); 2nd vice of Francisco Diogo Pereira de Vasconcellos (02/27/1863); 1st vice of José da Costa Machado de Souza (Appointment 07/25/1868 and inauguration 08/01/1868); 1st vice of José Maria Correia de Sá e Benevides (Appointment 07/25/1868 and inauguration 05/16/1870) (Galvão, 1894).

## THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND SOURCES

This study discusses elements of the History of Elites (Heins, 2011; Perissinotto, 2009), Political History, especially in the discussions of Carvalho (1997); Dolhnikoff (2003), among others. In addition, it is acknowledged that the role of education in the Empire is beyond its function in the construction of national identity and in the dissemination of civilizing values to the poor population based on the monopolization of elementary education by the State, as highlighted by Veiga (2002).

The term “elite” is linked to studies in the field of social and political theory known as “elite theory”, whose formulations date back to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (Perissinotto, 2009). A term on which there is no consensus, “elites” was originally linked to military language, and later came to be used “[...] to designate people or groups that occupied prominent positions in the main institutions of the political system” (Farias Filho, 2011, p. 176). The appropriation of this term by historians, according to Heinz (2006), made it possible to microanalyze social groups, their trajectories and their relationships based on a sociological methodological approach, called prosopographic study or collective biography, used mainly as a privileged object of study of elites. However, the widespread use of technological tools and IT resources has made it possible to include new collective or “more massive” subjects, thus expanding the actors investigated. We therefore understand that it contributes to the analysis of the political actions undertaken by vice presidents and their networks and spaces of sociability.

Thus, we are specifically considering Manuel Teixeira de Souza as a member of a political elite, or part of

a group of individuals with economic, political and ideological power who, directly or indirectly influence the exercise of power and, united by common interests, despite possible contradictions among them, form a cohesive group, working basically for the same interest, which is: the control of local power (Barnabé, 2007, p. 14).

The expanded understanding of education and public instruction in Minas Gerais in the construction and consolidation of the Imperial State, in our understanding, allows us to inscribe it in the context of the sociopolitical relations established by the subjects who occupied public or trusted positions, that is, in the context of clientelistic relations, after all, “[...] the theme of political patronage, or, even, the reading of the conformation of political spaces based on private relations of a clientelistic nature, has been presented by historiography as a distinctive element not of one, but of various periods of Brazilian political history [...]”, as an “[...]”

essential trait of the political culture itself of more than one historical context” (Cunha, 2006, p. 226).

In this sense, clientelistic relations are understood here as relations of unequal power that imply certain practices and their appropriations for social and political purposes, and as an element that supports the web of imperial politics. We therefore consider clientelism as a category that allows us to analyze the web of sociopolitical relations established around the actions of the vice-president of the Province of Minas Gerais, Manuel Teixeira de Sousa, based on his family and interpersonal relationships.

According to Carvalho (1997, p. 3), this category, “[...] generally speaking, indicates a type of relationship between political actors that involves granting public benefits, in the form of jobs, tax breaks, exemptions, in exchange for political support, especially in the form of votes”. In this case, “[...] friendship would constitute the support of strong political ties and a source of lasting duties” (Cunha, 2006, p. 241). In this regard, Carvalho (2000, p. 8), analyzing the requests for jobs and favors addressed to Rui Barbosa, when he was head of the Ministry of Finance, at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, highlights friendship as one of the main values used in the justifications. For the author, “[...] they are what reveal to us the clientelist reason, that is, the social values and the vision of government that morally supported the requests”.

In turn, Vellasco (2009), when making a critical analysis of the three explanatory models adopted in the productions of Social Sciences and Brazilian historiography, warns that the concept of clientelism, especially in the work of Richard Graham (1997), refers to its use in a “facilitating and ahistorical” way, which would lead to the understanding that the “institutional order in the Empire would have been entirely based on clientelist logic”, with no “opposition between the private order and the institutional order, both being complementary in the perpetuation of the power of the elites”. This corroborates the criticism made by Ângela Alonso (1997) and would not allow changes or “any process of modernization”, since it takes the concept as a long-term phenomenon and, thus, “[...] acts as a great explanatory engine not only of the Empire, but of all Brazilian history” (Vellasco, 2009, p. 85).

The advance in the understanding of this phenomenon, for the author, has occurred in studies related to families that highlight the “[...] social networks based on kinship relations and alliances, conceived as arrangements of commitment, solidarity and reciprocity established between unequals” (Vellasco, 2009, p. 86). In this way, clientele relations can be understood “[...] as a logic, modeled in private domains and that produces reciprocities, expectations of mutual protection, and guides the actions of those who belong, or believe they belong, to a kind of 'collectivity' built by kinship and alliance ties” (Vellasco, 2009, p. 89, author's emphasis).

In the context of the History of Education, Santos (2003, p. 6) highlights how clientele relations, from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, were present in different practices in schools in Recife, focusing on the need to expand

these studies, since “[...] the social webs of cronyism control the educational practices, to this day, despite having undergone some imaginary and symbolic resignifications”. The author's conclusions show the understanding of this phenomenon as a long-lasting element in Brazilian history but permeated by changes.

When analyzing the practices of patronage and politicking in public education in the interior of Pará and Amazonas between 1870 and 1889, Irma Rizzin (2005, p. 27) comments that:

In education, clientelistic practices were particularly harmful, since the school network, spread across isolated territories due to great distances, favored abuse in the exercise of the function, as demonstrated by the letters sent to the newspapers. However, this analysis lacks studies that would allow us to compare the intertwining between clientelism and public education in other provinces.

Local interests and clientelistic practices were also present in the competitions for normal schools in Parahyba do Norte, in the final years of the 19th century, as Araújo (2010) points out. Studies by Nery and Nery (2023, p. 18) point to the political strategy of the Chief Executive in defining the occupants of school inspection positions in public education in the province of Pará, and in the District of Macapá, stating that

The provincial presidents played a coordinating role in this situation with the aim of generating electoral dividends in the interior counties. Patronage was the main instrument for co-opting loyal supporters to the office, leading the presidents to intervene in numerous matters, small as that of the teacher in the Macapá district.

In the context of public education, clientelistic relations were also present, and in many forms, as highlighted below:

The teacher was an important agent in the dynamics of clientelism in Public Education, as he was presented as a trigger for patronage, often as a victim of partisanship; that is, he was a player sensitive to the political conditions of the moment and was able to move or be moved according to the political game in action (Nery & Nery, 2023, p. 18).

This study, therefore, adds to the interest in understanding the role of education in the context of clientelistic relations in the nineteenth-century Brazilian Empire, focusing on the province of Minas Gerais, based on the actions of the Executive, in

particular, of a provincial vice-president, with the understanding, based on Malerba (1998, p. 146), that “[...] clientelism was not seen as an anomaly [...] It was a value spread from top to bottom with sufficient effectiveness to be accepted naturally [...]”, despite the social hierarchy, that the nineteenth century was “a good society”.

## LETTERS AS SOURCES

For the analysis proposed in this article, we used as main sources the letters sent by family members, friends, co-religionists, as well as employees and unknown people, to Manuel Teixeira de Souza, throughout the year 1860, when he successfully ran for a seat in the Senate for life, and the following year, 1861.

Letters are a type of source that places individuals in history as witnesses of a time, allowing us to learn about a society and the relationships between its individuals (Bloch, 2002). Since they are “nominative sources,” that is, documents that include people’s names (Pinsk & Luca, 2009), they can also be used to reconstruct social networks, loyalty groups, friendships, as well as disagreements, splits, and political debates involving different individuals (Sirinelli, 1986), such as the politician Manuel Teixeira de Souza. They also allow us to identify different aspects related to the lives of the people and groups with whom the politician related to; the ties between those who exchanged letters, and the systems of cronyism that were strongly characteristic of the period.

The analyzed letters, belonging to the “Barão de Camargos Fund”, are part of the collection of the Historical Archive located in the Casa 18th-Century Pilar, Annex III of the Museu da Inconfidência, in Ouro Preto, composed of 70 boxes, of which only boxes 1241 (1860) and 1242 (1861) were consulted. Its archival organization allows us to follow decades of Manuel Teixeira's life, his family relationships and influence, since the correspondence is found in boxes separated by year and arranged by month, in packets. On the opening page, all senders are listed, the location from which they wrote and the date of the letter, which also allows, among other investigative activities, the mapping of networks established around Manuel Teixeira, as well as the scope of his power, both within the province and in adjacent provinces. However, due to the limits of this article, we only focus on the aspects that involved themes related to the public education in the province of Minas Gerais.

In general, the letters had a very similar structure<sup>5</sup>, beginning with a greeting to Manuel Teixeira, such as: “Dear or most esteemed friend/compadre”; “Ilmo. Exmº.

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<sup>5</sup> The challenge when dealing with this type of document is being able to read the manuscript, because, in addition to the spelling of the words and the different abbreviations used, there were those whose sender did not master the standard norm, and even more so, as they were letters from different subjects, as well as there were different ways of spelling the words, which makes the process much slower.

Snr.”; “My esteemed companion and friend”; “Respectable Snr.”; “My respectable friend and Snr.”; followed by wishes for the health of the family. In the following two or three paragraphs, the sender explained the situation, made the request or demanded some previous promise; at the end, thanks and farewell: “Furthermore, I am Your Excellency’s subject”; “May you have the most grateful service”; “May you have the service of your *compadre*<sup>6</sup> and godson and friend”; “Subject and *compadre* and friend, very subordinate”, are some of the expressions used. Throughout the article, this structure can be seen from the documents analyzed here.

In the set of correspondences mobilized here, in addition to letters with political content, which dealt especially with elections and personal favors related to public office, there were those sent by family members, especially his wife and son; letters from a domestic servant containing a shopping list to be made at Court; letters from personal friends, such as the Baron of Sabará, Manuel Antônio Pacheco, with whom he shared intimate matters such as his wife's miscarriage; people asking him to lend them money or goods, such as a litter to take a pregnant wife to the provincial capital; among others.

Before we begin our analysis, however, it is important to briefly introduce the recipient of the letters in order to enable an understanding of who the mobilized politician was and his political relevance in that context.

## MANOEL TEIXEIRA DE SOUZA: THE RECIPIENT OF THE LETTERS

It was in the city of Vila Rica, in the state of Minas Gerais, that one of the most influential politicians of Minas Gerais was born on October 20, 1811. Elevated to the status of provincial capital on March 20, 1823, with the name Ouro Preto, the seat of government, located in the central region of the province of Minas Gerais, became the most important political center of the region, with a strong role in the central government. This role lasted until the end of the 19th century, specifically until 1897, when the capital of Minas Gerais was transferred to the newly created city of Belo Horizonte (Julião, 2011).

At the age of 22, Manoel Teixeira de Souza (Images 1 and 3) married Maria Leonor Felícia da Rosa, born in 1815 and whose age at the time of marriage was 18 years old. With the marriage, her name became Maria Leonor de Magalhães Teixeira (Image 2).

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<sup>6</sup> Translator’s note: “compadre” means a close relationship, being of godfather, close friend, close family member etc.

**Image 1** - Manuel Teixeira de Sousa (1839)



Source: Collection of the Museu da Inconfidência. Baron of Camargos Fund

**Image 2** - Maria Leonor de Magalhães Teixeira (n.d.)



Source: National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN). Ouro Preto.

She was the daughter of Comendador Fernando Luís Machado de Magalhães, a wealthy farmer, Deputy and General Treasurer of the Provincial Treasury Board, and Maria Fortunata Teixeira Baeta Costa. Manuel Teixeira and Maria Leonor had fifteen children, “[...] whose descendants resulted in thirty-two grandchildren and forty great-grandchildren” (Hot, 2010, p. 70). He was the son of Sergeant-Major of Militias and Accountant of the Royal Treasury, of which he was the namesake, Manuel Teixeira de Sousa, and Inácia Francelina Cândida da Silva, who belonged to an important and influential family from Minas Gerais and whose wealth was anchored in commerce and the ownership of real estate, such as numerous properties in Ouro Preto.

**Image 3** - Manuel Teixeira de Sousa - Baron of Camargos (1877) (1877)<sup>7</sup>



Source: Collection of the Museu da Inconfidência.

A graduate in Law, at the age of 18, he began his professional career as Secretary of the Treasury of Minas Gerais and was appointed to the position of Inspector in the same body in 1841. However, as it was inherent to the political relations of the time, he was dismissed in 1845, when the Liberals came to power, as he was a member of the Conservative Party, even reaching its leadership in the 1860s. Throughout his career, he also served as Secretary of the Presidency of the Province of Minas Gerais (1848-49); General Deputy (1849 to 1856); Councilman (1853-56); Vice-President of the Province of Minas Gerais and Lifetime Senator of the Empire (1860). He received the title of Baron of Camargos from the hands of Dom Pedro II in 1871 (Decree granting the title of Baron ..., 1945). She died seven years after the title, at the age of

<sup>7</sup> Crayon drawing, produced in Florence, Italy. Collection of the Museu da Inconfidência.

67, and Maria Leonor, titled Baroness and, later, Viscountess de Camargos<sup>8</sup>, died in 1902, in Florence, Italy.

As head of the local unit of the Conservative Party in the province, Manuel Teixeira was responsible for “[...] organizing the party’s electoral activity at a regional level. The formation of candidate lists, the creation of electoral committees and the recruitment of voters [which] were key tasks” (Gomes, 2022, p. 136). This role led him to mobilize his networks of friends and political support while serving as vice president during periods when the Executive branch was vacant.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A BRANCH OF PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

With the constitutional reform of 1834, the power and autonomy of the province were consolidated, especially by defining the powers of the presidents and the newly created Legislative Assembly. Responsible for organizing primary and secondary public education, the head of the Executive was in charge of: executing and enforcing laws issued by the Assembly; demanding information from public servants necessary for this task; inspecting all Departments; using force for the sake of the security and tranquility of the Province; filling public positions, granting possession, granting leaves of no more than three months, and suspending officials for abuse, omission, or error; deciding conflicts of jurisdiction; mediating requests or representations sent to the Central Government (Nogueira & Paula, 2018).

In this context, the provincial presidency accumulated powers whose exercise was part of the political inconstancy of the position and made it commonplace, for example, to have massive dismissals of employees, especially if they were from different parties, a situation that was heavily criticized by politicians, such as Tavares Bastos, who said: “[...] every year we see here, traveling to the provinces, a swarm of presidents, police chiefs and other employees, who, without delay, undertake new trips in search of new climates” (Bastos, 1870, p. 131). This is because, with each fall of the Ministerial Cabinet or change of provincial governor, all the occupants of the public positions linked to it changed, which favored the political use of their powers.

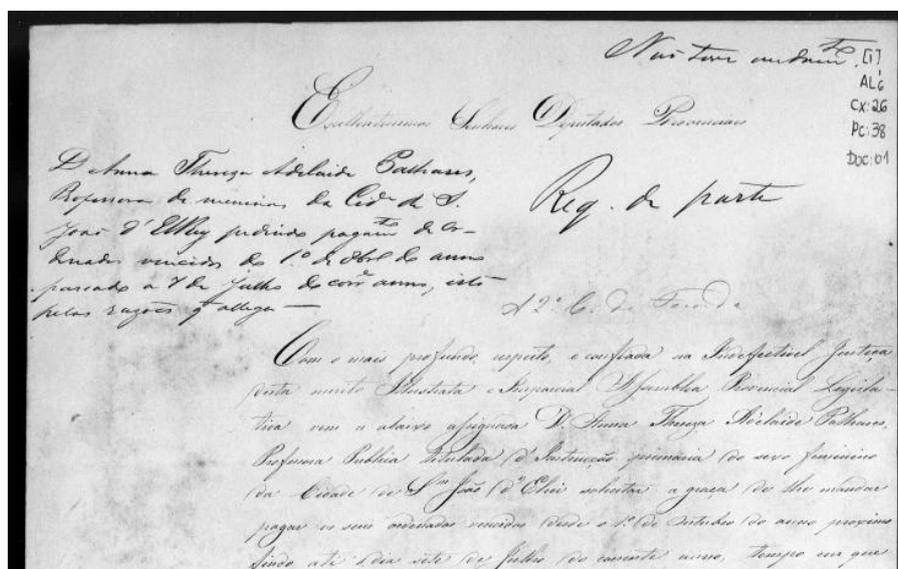
Regarding the administration of public education in Minas Gerais, the Education Regulation of 1859 (Minas Gerais, 1859), which applies to the time frame of the topic discussed here, determined the criteria for creating elementary and secondary education chairs, as well as establishing the rules for holding public examinations, like: ages, exams and proof of impeccable civil, moral and Catholic conduct, and, for the purposes of appointment, the mediation by the bodies

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<sup>8</sup> The title of Baroness of Camargos was used socially as a “loan” from her husband’s title, obtained in 1871. After the Baron’s death in 1878, she received the title of Viscountess of Camargos by the Imperial Decree of 15/06/1881.

responsible for the administration and supervision of education. In this sense, in the regular course of the processes, it was up to the Secretariat of the Presidency of the Province to forward the requests for dispatch by the competent authority, as exemplified in the following document:

**Image 4** - Excerpt from a petition by a public school teacher demanding payment of overdue wages – 1859



Source: Provincial Assembly and Minas Gerais Congress (1859, p. 1).

In this petition (Image 4), the female primary school teacher from the city of São João Del Rei, D. Anna Thereza Adelaide Palhares, demands payment of her overdue salary and presents her allegations, based on Art. 37 of the current Regulation. Thus, as part of the official procedure, the document was analyzed by the Secretary of the Presidency, summarized in the upper left corner and forwarded for due dispatch by the presidency. It is, therefore, a formal procedure for receiving demands related to Public Education in the province of Minas Gerais, however, in many cases, the means adopted by the teachers went beyond the public dimension and mixed with the private and domestic life of the provincial authority, as we will discuss below.

## PROTECTION AND LOYALTY: THE REQUESTS MADE TO THE SENATOR

Through letters addressed directly to Senator Manuel Teixeira or his wife, Maria Leonor, many requests were made to them: jobs, appointments, leaves of absence, dismissals, transfers, money, retirement, political support, etc. With each modification of government, requests for protection and favors increased, as it was also part of the political dynamic to garner support by changing the holders of public

offices. In this regard, from the Court, in 1860, Senator Manoel Teixeira confided in his wife:

I have found myself in trouble with requests from there and from all parts of the province, especially as far as one can imagine, even if I had the entire state government in my hands: this forces me to write 10, 12 letters in response every day, and even then I have not been able to catch up on my correspondence, which is still overdue by more than 150 letters, and I have responded to more than 500 since I got here! (Hot, 2010, p. 94).

The Senator's outburst leads us to affirm that the requests that reached him would go beyond his family network and, certainly, would not have his family ties as their central focus, which is confirmed in the studies of Bonsembiante (2006, p. 94-95), who, when analyzing Maria Leonor's letters, highlights that "[...] 66.7% of the correspondence received from people who were not family members were motivated by requests for favors". This situation is also highlighted by Hot (2010) when he states that, in 1872, the Baroness also commented to her husband: "I have been overwhelmed with letters and requests; what gets me into trouble, they assume that I am also the leader of a party" (Hot, 2010, p. 95).

Furthermore, during his stay at Court, Manuel Teixeira's wife kept him updated on household chores and the situation of his children, as well as local events, "through subtle and discreet writing", keeping him up to date on plays, sickness and deceased family members and the "[...] financial situation of some farmers, merchants, collected debts and to be collected, public aspirations of some men, political contentment and discontentment in society" (Bonsembiante, 2006, p. 84).

The link between the requests and the husband's political power allows us to understand aspects of clientelism in the dynamics of social organization and the affirmation of personal power and authority among elite subjects in nineteenth-century society. At various times, correspondence allows us to identify the political game in which public education was inscribed; yet another instrument for exchanging favors, requests, and political loyalty.

This loyalty was frequently recalled by Manuel Teixeira's political supporters and can be seen at different times: during the election and after the choice from the list of three candidates. On some occasions, it was highlighted before requests for favors or as a way of reinforcing the request made. And, in this context, public education, as one of the branches of the provincial administration, would not be exempt. On one of these occasions, in April 1861, a friend asked the Senator to dismiss a teacher and replace him, as he considered himself more suitable for the position. Bonsembiante (2006, p. 107, emphasis added) comments on the case as follows:

Manoel Alves was “interested” in the position of high school teacher in Vila de Formiga and therefore wrote to the Baron asking for the dismissal of the previous teacher, Antonio Moreira, because he was not suitable for the position and justified “[...] Antonio Moreira is black and a maniac and that is why his children and other children are having private lessons [...]”.

On April 14, 1860, Martinho Antonio de Miranda Ribeiro wrote to the politician in the following terms:

Dear Sir and Madam,

After writing the letter that I had the pleasure of addressing to Your Excellency on this date, there is another “request” that seems that I believe to be easy for Your Excellency to arrange.

The primary school teacher from Arraial de Gurutuba, Antonio José de Mello was temporarily transferred to Villa Januaria: This man is of advanced age and is always ill, and for that reason he will have to die there and as he has known me for many years and even “fought” with me for some time, that is why I consider him a good person and capable of carrying out his duties.

He reminds me that the chair at Arraial de Salinas, where he wishes to serve, is vacant, and I “promised” to find him such a place, counting on the “protection” of Your Excellency (our emphasis).

From Your Excellency.  
Very affectionate friend.<sup>9</sup>

This letter gives us an idea of how much the “beggars” (Carvalho, 2000) were aware of the procedures involved in the matter in question: they are aware of the physical health conditions, motivations, interests and desires of those involved. Furthermore, like Antônio Miranda, he asserts his morality and relies on the Baron’s protection to fulfill the promise made to the “activist” teacher, that is, he gives his word, assuming that his request will be met. Furthermore, this is not a first request, and he justifies it by saying that he has “years of activism” and by the friendship between the two. Friendship is thus seen as a value that sustains the relationship between the beggars and the beneficiaries. With this type of favor, what Carvalho (2002, p. 2) called “[...] the patronage, [which] was the commitment, that is, the influence, the request, the recommendation, the intermediation, the protection, the sponsorship, the presentation [...]” is put into play, as can also be seen in the following excerpt: “The position of first officer of Ouro Preto is vacant. I ask for your ‘protection’

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<sup>9</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund (1860). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

for Candido Teodoro de Oliveira. I still depend on your 'nomination' because I have four 'opponents' with good 'sponsors'" (our emphasis) <sup>10</sup>.

In this case, the search for Manuel Teixeira's sponsorship to confront his adversaries certainly expressed the social position he occupied at that time and the prestige that came with being the head of the Executive and the Conservative Party. We could also highlight the naturalness with which such requests were made based on the information that justifies the request, which, in this case, would be the "competition" among the sponsors as a motivation in the search for those who would have greater political capital to ensure the success of the cause. In addition, the requests were many and in several letters. There were "beggars" that came more than one time, that is, they had already been favored on other occasions, as shown by Joaquim Pinto, who wrote to the Senator on April 1, 1860, saying:

In the midst of this, I would like to thank Your Excellency for the "favor" you did me by not having "my godson" go to Montes Claros de Furniga with Lieutenant Estevo, and I remain at your disposal for any service that Your Excellency may provide me with so that I can give proof of the gratitude that I owe to Your Excellency (<sup>11</sup>our emphasis).

The recurrence is also noted in the letter sent to him by Antonio Bispo, on February 17, 1861, referring to the demand for reciprocity, that is, an action of exchange of favors between him and Senator Manuel Teixeira:

Hon. Mr. Senator. Manuel Teixeira de Sousa  
Your Excellency "captivated" me to the extreme in the past days, when I "asked" for your "protection" in favor of the "Mendes Brothers", businessmen of Ponte do Gambá, and now, ashamed, I write this to you in "response" to one of yours of February 1st, which I received yesterday, in which you "take an interest" in favor of Young Diocleciano, son of the late Luiz Jose de Azevedo da Januaria, who asks to be admitted again to the Episcopal <sup>12</sup>Seminary (our emphasis).

In the situation in question, Diocletian had been experiencing some disturbances that led to his forced departure from the Seminary in Mariana, as his companions were afraid, similarly described in the letter by Antônio:

<sup>10</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund (1860). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

<sup>11</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund (1860). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

<sup>12</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund (1861). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

[...] this young man suffers from periodic mental illness, which forced the Rector to ask him to change his residence. At the time, while he was with his companions, his nervous breakdown was such that he suddenly gave a jump that seemed supernatural. He got better. In that attack he lost all sleep, and he became furious, pulling a knife on his companions. He won't tell me this because **he** doesn't know them. Perhaps in these repeated attacks (our emphasis).

According to the report, after the crises, Diocletian would not remember what had happened, but, even so, there was a concern of keeping him in the Seminary and ordaining him: “Your Excellency can see that it would be rash of the Rector to admit this poor young man into a community of a hundred or so children.” In this letter, we can see the circle of clientelistic reciprocity: the Senator would have complied with a previous request from Antônio Bispo, on behalf of third parties, which would have “captivated” him, that is, made him captive, tied to a favor, which would require repayment with another favor, which, in this case, would be the reinstatement of the student. But such a request would not have been accepted by the Rector:

This news was given to me yesterday by the Rector, to whom I immediately went to speak with Your Excellency's letter. It would be more appropriate for poor Diocletian to seek a freer and more entertaining job, rather than the cloistered life and discipline of a house of strict education, where some misfortune might befall him or his colleagues.

Even though he was not successful, the way Antônio Bispo bids farewell leaves no doubt about the relationship established between them: “I am - Your Excellency's ' Servant'”. In this regard, Carvalho (2000, p. 10) highlights that “[...] the farewell, in turn, self-classifies the author of the letter, complementing the relationship he wishes to establish [...]. The treatment and farewell can be seen as indicators of social and political values and perceptions, of patterns of social relations.” In this case, the beggar places himself in a position of inferiority or of relations between unequals.

The recurrence is also evident in the letter sent by the Justice of the Peace responsible for the elections in the city of Campanha, Domingos Ferreira Lopes, on March 13, 1860. In this letter, the request begins, precisely, by pointing out the existence of other correspondence and evidencing his role as an intermediary between the interested party and the person who would be able to meet the request, through personal means:

I have already written to you about the [?] past, and now I am only writing this at the request of our good Public Teacher of Latin and French, who, according to the information provided by the Attorney General, has doubts about the Government ordering you to pay your maximum wages.<sup>15</sup>

As an argument to eliminate the doubt about the payment of a higher salary, the Justice of the Peace informs that the aforementioned teacher “[...] has perhaps 80 students, both internal and external, all of whom are satisfied with him [...] the man is tireless, he has made progress not only in instruction, but also in religious education”. But what draws the most attention is the warning that Domingos Lopes gives to Manuel Teixeira, at the end of the letter: “[...] in the certainty of the knowledge he has of me, that 'in the post of public instruction one should not compromise with the employers', which for the future is an irremediable evil” (our emphasis). He claims his attributes, as if to remind the politician about his way of acting, after all, he is a Justice of the Peace. He also highlights the Public Instruction – if we reflect on the legal sense of the term – as a transaction in which there could be no concessions or “commitment”, “protection”, as it could have “irremediable” consequences.

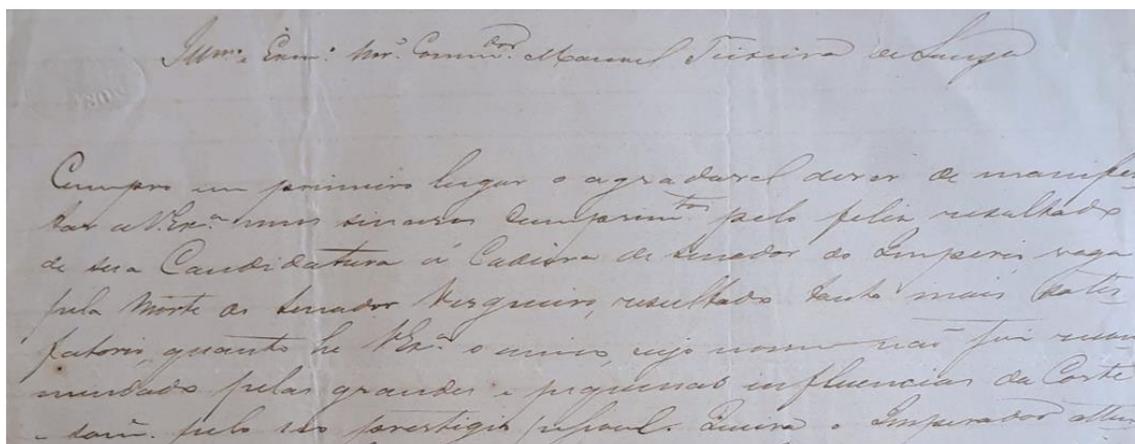
But what we see is precisely the use of personal means to obtain a right, that is, the legal and formal procedures are not used to do so. And, to end the letter, he mentions the latest elections and reaffirms his friendship: “Give us the latest electoral news to see if I should be satisfied, [intelligible] I am in part, not in whole. Let your friend be at your disposal.”

On other occasions, the evocation of the elections opened the conversation. On this occasion, José Vieira de Resende Silva, councilor for Manuel Teixeira's Party, begins the letter with congratulations on the electoral victory and, subsequently, the real reason for the correspondence was presented.

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<sup>15</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund. (1860). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

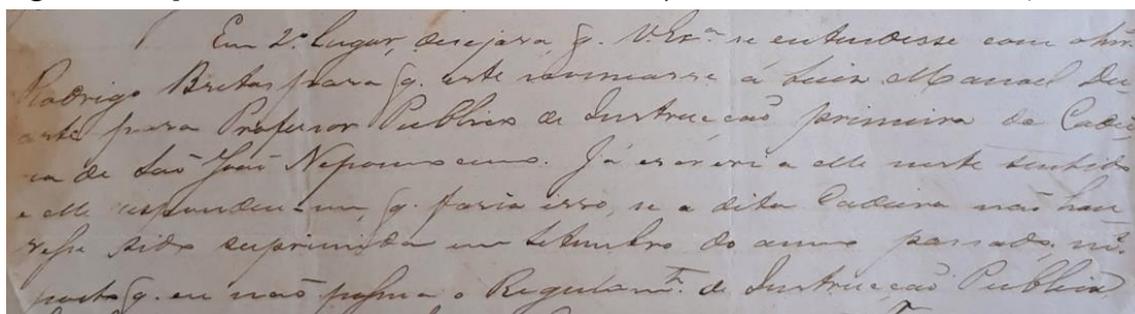
**Image 5** - Initial excerpt from a letter sent to Manuel Teixeira by José Vieira de Resende Silva (25/03/1860)



Source: Barão de Camargos Fund, Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

In this letter (Image 5), the wealthy landowner from the Cataguases region (MG) addresses the vice president on March 25, 1860, to request intervention with the Director General of Education, Rodrigo José Ferreira Bretas, to appoint Luís Manoel Duarte as a public primary school teacher in the São João Nepomuceno district. However, the position he had requested had been abolished by the 1859 Education Regulations, which led him to request the appointment of his protégé to a position created by the same Regulation in the Parish of São João Del Rey. A similar situation was observed by Santos (2003, p. 3) in the schools of Recife, and in this case, he observes: “When a public selection process took place, the teacher was already part of the teaching staff through sponsorship and formalized his/her functional status”.

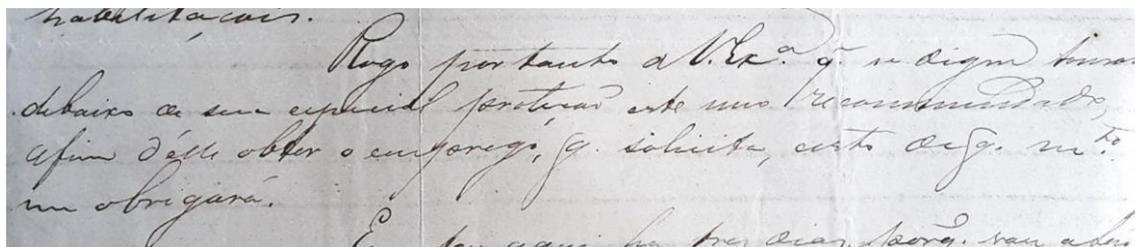
**Image 6** - Excerpt from a letter sent to Manuel Teixeira by José Vieira de Resende Silva (25/03/1860)



Source: Barão de Camargos Fund, Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

Finally, José Vieira highlights that the aforementioned teacher was in charge of a large family and that he would very much like him to be appointed to the detriment of others who perhaps did not have the same qualifications as his protégé, as can be seen in Image 6.

**Image 7** - Final excerpt from a letter sent to Manuel Teixeira by José Vieira de Resende Silva (25/03/1860)



Source: Barão de Camargos Fund, Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

Asking the vice-president to deign to place “this person I recommended under his special protection so that he may obtain the job”, he thanks him and highlights the reciprocal obligation to which he would place himself from so on (Image 7).

In this context of political relations, clientelism based on family and interpersonal relationships could mean “[...] both filling government positions and protecting humble people” (Graham, 1997, p. 16), as we can see in the wording of the previous letter and the one that follows, sent in May 1861, by José Ignácio:

Dear and Excellent Sir, Mr. Manoel Teixeira de Sza.

I wish Your Excellency health and happiness.

I do not have the honor and pleasure of knowing Your Excellency personally but knowing that Your Excellency “always honored” my late uncle, Commander Francisco de Paula Pereira e Souza, with your friendship, I am therefore encouraged to ask Your Excellency for your “valuable protection” in what I am about to explain to Your Excellency. The means of living that I have had has been teaching Latin and French at the College of this city directed by Monsignor Don Luis Pereira de Araújo, this “interim”, with the aforementioned chairs being public. It now happens that Councilor Pires da Motta [President of the province of Minas Gerais] has put them up for “competition”, and this will take place on July 1st. I am a “poor young man” and “without recommendation”, knowing the immense predicates that characterize Your Excellency as a person among which “compassion” and “protection for the underprivileged come into sight”, I am encouraged to beg Your Excellency for some letters of recommendation for the people you are friends with in Ouro Preto, especially<sup>14</sup> (our emphasis).

Temporarily occupying a position that was put up for competition, as the rules determined, the teacher relies on the Senator's letter of recommendation to – maybe – even overcome the legal provision. It is worth remembering that the Regulation

<sup>14</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund (1861). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

required proof of impeccable civil, moral and Catholic conduct, attested by other provincial authorities. Thus, when we analyze the networks of relationships expressed in this letter, we observe how the grace granted or requested – a letter of recommendation – evokes an architecture of powers in which the dramatic appeal to friendship predominates as a value to sustain the protection requested, this justified by the economic capital of the applicant – the teacher – who places himself in the inferior position – of a poor, unlucky young man – in order to be entitled to the Senator's protection. Furthermore, the teacher anchors his expectation of service in loyalty among friends, an important element in clientelistic networks and which is important in the return of favors.

The recommendation was also a means by which patronage was exercised, as evidenced by José Ignacio de Barros, in a letter dated March 4, 1861, sent from the city of Pouso Alegre:

Dear Sir,

The “proofs” that Your Excellency has given me of your kindness are so many that they give me the courage to “ask” you for even “new” ones. demonstrations” of “benevolence”. A “friend” whom I greatly wish to serve, certain of the “friendship” with which Your Excellency “honors” me, asks me to “recommend” to Your Excellency his brother [?] João Pedro da Veiga Sobrinho so that Your Excellency may assist him in the arrangement that he will discuss there; I will do so with great pleasure, for I am convinced that Your Excellency will “provide” all the means for “my recommendation” to achieve what he intends, and I am grateful to Your Excellency for these services and I have the honor of holding them in the highest regard <sup>15</sup>(our emphasis).

The recommendation strategy is seen as part of the networks established between friends and the certainty of meeting the demands presented by the protégé. Reflecting with Graham, the sponsorship brought with it mutual obligations, not only religious but also material, implying the use of influence and authority:

All these family ties implied mutual obligations to help in elections or guarantee government positions, so much so that someone would often refer figuratively to a protégé as a godson, and to his protector as a godfather (Graham, 1997, p. 89).

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<sup>15</sup> Baron of Camargos Fund (1861). Historical Archive of the Museu da Inconfidência (Ouro Preto).

It was in this direction that Senator Manuel Teixeira also acted, as can be inferred from the letters addressed to him. For Grahan (1997, p. 113), in relation to public office, the strategy of clientelism began, precisely, with the Emperor, when appointing the Cabinet, who, in turn, supervised the elections and “[...] could, through the use of clientelism, obtain the Chamber of Deputies he wanted”. This was because “[...] he held the power to make all other appointments” (p. 115), indicating or controlling the people who legally had some public function in the electoral process. Among them, the president of the province who, in the exercise of his right,

[...] could remove a justice of the peace who would normally preside over a meeting of the Electoral College on the grounds that he did not reside in the parish. Or he could remove the chairman of a local electoral board because he held another public office that had been declared incompatible with such authority, or even on the grounds that a person guilty of a crime, although eligible to vote, could not preside over the board (Grahan, 1997, p. 117).

In some cases, the governor's prudence in the moments leading up to the elections was highlighted in his reports and allows us to measure the care with which dismissals were handled, so as not to cause problems in the elections, as reported by the Minas Gerais native, 1st vice-president, Joaquim Delfino Ribeiro da Luz, during the handover of office, on June 13, 1860, to the São Paulo native, Councilor Vicente Pires da Mota, who assumed the presidency of Minas Gerais and was referred to in the letter. When commenting on the dismissal of Manoel José Gomes Rabello Horta, from the position of Chief of Police of the province of Minas Gerais, the vice-president made a point of emphasizing that he had accepted his resignation, as established in the Decree of March 21 of that year:

[...] the resignation I requested from the important position of Chief of Police of this province was granted [...]: his absence would have been much more sensitive if the choice of his successor had not fallen on the equally intelligent and zealous Dr. Dario Rafael Callado, who took the oath and took office on the following April 26, starting on the 27th (Luz, 1860, p. 3).

Immediately following his Exposition, he draws attention to the “[...] electoral struggles that are approaching, and for which the various candidates are already preparing [...]”, and adds: “[...] they will advise me to be more cautious in the dismissals and appointments of police authorities” (Luz, 1860, p. 3). The association between elections and public office and, mainly, the need to act with greater “reservedness” demonstrate the weight that appointments or dismissals had in

determining the political direction of the province. According to Dolhnikoff's observation (2003, p. 455): "In a country like Brazil in the mid-19th century, deciding on jobs was a strategic task, since they were bargaining chips in the clientelist game and a fundamental piece in the co-optation of local groups [...]" by the Court. In turn, within the provinces, the personal relationships established by this local elite would also reproduce the same game of political co-optation adopted by the Central Government.

Upon leaving the position he occupied for the second time as vice-president, in 1861, already elected Senator for Minas, Manoel Teixeira de Souza presents a report in which he takes stock of his short administration, adopting, it seems, a political strategy that could preserve him, when the position was passed to Councilor Vicente Pires da Mota:

[...] I am pleased to reiterate the well-deserved praise I gave to the Inspector of the Provincial Revenue Board and to the Brigadier Commander of the Police Force, and to express my gratitude to the worthy interim Chief of Police and to all public departments for their assistance. I am leaving Minas full of longing and gratitude, having the highest opinion of these excellent people (Souza, 1861, p. 7).

In addition to praising public servants, which could represent a confirmation of his commitment and loyalty to these subjects, the Senator ends his Exposition by highlighting that he did little during the short period in which he was in the administration, "of almost sixteen months", and reaffirms the probity of his behavior at the head of the provincial administration, emphasizing that: "[...] one thing, however, I made an effort to do, which was to maintain the presidency in the elevated position that it deserves, to look after public interests, and not to descend to serving as an instrument of individual convenience" (Souza, 1861, p. 7).

Although the Senator's speech seeks to corroborate a stance focused on defending and serving public interests, what the letters received and those exchanged with his wife, Maria Leonor de Magalhães, show us is that this politician shared and moved the gears of the Empire's clientele structure and, furthermore, that public education also functioned as a part of this political gear.

## FINAL REMARKS

In this article, we examine correspondences sent to the vice-president of the province of Minas Gerais, Senator Manuel Teixeira de Souza, by his wife, Maria Leonor, friends, co-religionists and strangers, seeking evidence of the participation of the

public education system, one of the branches of the provincial administration, in the political game of nineteenth-century clientelistic relations. We consider the Senator to be part of a provincial elite that assumed the leadership of local and central politics, holding public and elective positions, a position that gave him prominence and the power to bargain, be requested and request favors of all kinds. In this sense, the documents analyzed show us the use of personal relationships based on clientelistic reasoning, the values and the way of governing from one of the most influential politicians in Minas Gerais.

Based on this, we can see that, decisions in the field of public instruction and education, which could be made through formal and legal procedures, are used as objects of favors, patronage and reciprocal exchanges and, in this way, also morally supported clientelistic practices that linked political groups, friends and co-religionists who sought to obtain privileges, considerations and personal benefits for themselves or others. In this context, the teacher, whether a family man or the unfortunate, sometimes an agent and sometimes a victim of patronage, sought mediation from the authorities, friends or cronies of the vice president, who appealed to his compassion, protection, honor or reciprocity to achieve success in his demands.

Marked by the electoral context of the nineteenth century, but not created by this context, since they demonstrate synchronous structures and permanence, clientelistic relations were part of the daily routine of that society, and involved subjects who were beggars, those who were favored, and those who were in debt who alternated their positions, thus keeping the gears in full operation. For this, friendship, solidarity, reciprocity, and the expectation of mutual protection are elements that not only configured clientele relations but were also part of the repertoire mobilized by the agents of the crony system in which Public Education was inscribed, thus distancing itself from the formal and legal means that governed decisions in the field of education.

The clientelistic structure of nineteenth-century society thus constituted an important strategy for Manuel Teixeira to obtain support and sustenance in provincial politics, while those who were favored used the protection and favors to obtain political and economic dividends in that society, which was markedly governed by privileges and mediated by private interests. His correspondence, which contains varied information about the customs and attitudes of local individuals and political groups, bears witness to the social and political behavior of nineteenth-century society, which can be considered as an expanded expression of the sociopolitical relations of imperial Brazil.

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**VERA LÚCIA NOGUEIRA:** Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Education and Human Development (PPGE) and of the Pedagogy and History courses at the School of Education at UEMG. She holds a PhD and a master's degree in education and is a Pedagogy graduate from UFMG. She is a researcher in the field of History of Education and Leader of the Study and Research Group on Historiography and History of Brazilian Education (GEPHHEB). She conducts research on education, educational practices, school and non-school institutions, and educational policies throughout history.

**E-mail:** vera.nogueira@uemg.br  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4589-6010>

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**RESPONSIBLE ASSOCIATE EDITOR:**

Olivia Morais de Medeiros Neta (UFRN)

E-mail: olivia.neta@ufrn.br

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4217-2914>

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