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Counting colonial populations: a comparative exercise
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Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é propor um exercício metodológico que explore as potencialidades e os limites de fontes de diferentes origens para o estudo da população do Rio Grande de São Pedro, no extremo sul da América portuguesa. O exercício metodológico foi realizado a partir dos resultados obtidos pelo cruzamento das informações coletadas nos mapas de população (preparados a partir de demandas da Coroa) e os Róis de Confessados ou *Libri Status Animarum* (requeridos pela Igreja Católica). Com base na caracterização geral da documentação utilizada, buscou-se estabelecer alguns indicadores demográficos para avaliar o grau de congruência entre as fontes utilizadas.

Palavras-chave: América portuguesa; demografia histórica; estatísticas populacionais; metodologia; população; Rio Grande de São Pedro.

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present a methodological exercise that examines the potentialities and limitations of different sources used in a population study for the captaincy of Rio Grande de São Pedro, the southernmost region of Portuguese America. This methodological exercise was carried out by using data obtained by comparing the information from population maps commissioned by the Crown, and the Confessional Rolls or *Libri Status Animarum* (parish registers required by the Catholic Church). Based on these documents we have tried to establish demographic indicators to determine the degree of congruence between these sources.

Keywords: Portuguese America; historical demography; population statistics; methodology; population; Rio Grande de São Pedro.

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Knowledge is power

“Statistical information as a means of knowledge and a source of power.”¹

The Portuguese Crown and the Catholic Church used different means to maintain control over their subjects and parishioners living in overseas territories. Among the devices used to this end were lists with inhabitants' names, population maps, and annual Paschal communion lists compiled by the different parish priests, and known as confessional rolls or *Libri Status Animarum*.

Although these sources emerged in response to different interests and were elaborated from different perspectives, they are widely used for research in the field of Historical Demography to study the composition and characteristics of past populations.

The aim of this article is to present the results of a methodological exercise that examines the potentialities and limitations of population maps and confessional rolls for Rio Grande de São Pedro's population by comparing the information obtained from these sources. A general analysis of the documentation, and the statistics therein, enabled us to determine certain demographical indicators for that region during the period of transition between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

According to Nelson Senra, statistics give shape to organized collectivities and are instrumental to governments, both directly and indirectly. They are cloaked in distinction because of the objective character they acquire from numbers. However, being constructions, statistics do not express objectivity, but rather objectification. This author also claims that states have long sought to count, measure, and quantify their populations, as well as their wealth and resources. In other words, they have always needed statistics. Initially they were used for tax and conscription purposes; later to legislate and administer the numerous aspects of public and private life. The state

¹ Nelson SENRA, *História das estatísticas brasileiras*, Vol. 1 (“Estatísticas desejadas”), Rio de Janeiro, IBGE, 2006, p. 27.

increasingly intensified its demands for more diversified and sophisticated statistics, and although the result of those cumbersome efforts was both insufficient and unsatisfactory, statistics could not be ignored. With the advent of national states and their central governments, fiscal, military and police monopolies emerged, and with them arose an essential, permanent, and strongly paper-based bureaucracy that recorded, synthesized and quantified constantly everything and everybody. To do this, the state needed to rely on a regular and efficient administrative apparatus with a hierarchy of specialized staff that could create this vast amount of records.²

Likewise, with the religious reforms of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church sought to gain a more systematic and efficient control of the lives of its parishioners. The Council of Trent decreed that each parish should keep a record of baptisms, marriages, deaths, confessions and communions in books called confessional rolls,³ in addition to a system of vigilance carried out by the bishops and/or their deputies during diocesan visitations.⁴ It's important to highlight that it was the First Constitutions of the Archbishopric of Bahia (1707) that regulated religious life in this Portuguese territory.⁵

² N. SENRA, op. cit., pp. 27–43. As we will demonstrate further on, these general considerations can help us study the case of Portugal and its territories, particularly during the Pombaline governance.

³ It was in the Fourth Council of Lateran (1215) that the Church established the obligatory nature of confessing and taking communion at least once a year. However, this decision wasn't followed by specific regulation, although it did define the resolutions that would be set three centuries later in the Council of Trent (1545–1563). It was, in fact, through the *Rituale Romanum* (1614) that the paschal communion was instituted and the practical rules for the obligatory use of the “*Libri Status Animarum*” were established. From that point on, the Church would be informed of the state of the souls of the inhabitants of each parish. Ana Silvia Volpi SCOTT, *Famílias, formas de união e reprodução social no noroeste português (século XVIII e XIX)*, São Leopoldo, Oikos, 2012, pp. 631–2.

⁴ Ana Silvia Volpi SCOTT, op. cit., pp. 629–34. A respeito das visitas diocesanas para Portugal, ver Joaquim Ramos de CARVALHO, *As visitas pastorais e a sociedade de Antigo Regime. Notas para o estudo de um mecanismo de normalização social*, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1985; Joaquim Ramos de CARVALHO and José Pedro PAIVA, “A evolução das visitas pastorais da Diocese de Coimbra nos séculos XVII e XVIII,” *Ler História* (15), 1989, pp. 29–41. Para o caso do Brasil, ver Fábio KÜHN, *O projeto reformador da diocese do Rio de Janeiro: as visitas pastorais no Rio Grande de São Pedro (1780–1815)*, MA dissertation in History, Porto Alegre, PPG-História/UFRGS, 1986; Luciano Raposo de Almeida FIGUEIREDO, “*Peccata mundi*: a pequena inquisição mineira e as devassas episcopais” in Maria Efigênia Lage de Resende and Luis Carlos Villalta (orgs.), *História de Minas Gerais: as minas setecentistas*, Vol. 2, Belo Horizonte, Companhia do Tempo/Autêntica, 2007, pp. 109–28; Fernando TORRES LONDOÑO, *Público e escandaloso. Igreja e concubinato no antigo Bispado do Rio de Janeiro*, PhD dissertation in History, São Paulo, PPG-História/USP, 1992.

⁵ Sebastião Monteiro da VIDE, *Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia feitas e ordenadas pelo ilustríssimo, e reverendíssimo senhor d. Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, bispo do dito arcebispado, e do Conselho de Sua Majestade: propostas, e aceitas em o Sínodo Diocesano, que o dito senhor celebrou em 12 de junho do ano de 1707*, Brasília, Senado Federal, 2007.

Aware that “knowledge” was an instrument to gain “power,” both the State and the Church shared the urge to keep track of their subjects and parishioners, though each institution had its own motivations. However, we hope that it is clear in our study that these differences do not invalidate the use of the data in the building of guidelines to determine the degree of congruence and reliability of the information gathered in the selected sources.

Sources and methodological procedures

For this study we used population maps and censuses for Rio Grande do Sul, as well as a series of church records: confessional rolls, and baptism and death registers from the parish of *Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre*. This procedure was chosen because the maps presented information about every civil parish of the Rio Grande do Sul territory, enabling us to analyze each one individually. The Madre de Deus registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths are available in a data bank (NACAOB) as a result of ongoing research projects.⁶ So, by analyzing the data from this area, we were able to gauge the congruence between these different types of surveys.

Regarding documentation produced by the colonial administration and requested in letters and royal decrees, the available maps correspond to the years of 1780, 1791, 1798, 1802, 1805, 1807 and 1810,⁷ as well as a census for 1814. For ecclesiastical sources we used a set of twenty-four confessional and communion rolls from the Madre de Deus parish, dating from 1779 to 1814, and stored in the Arquivo Histórico da Cúria Metropolitana de Porto Alegre [AHCMPA].⁸ For the purposes of this paper, we selected the maps and rolls corresponding to the years of 1780, 1798, 1802 and 1805.

⁶ The NACAOB is a tool developed specifically to register parish records (baptism, marriage and death). It allows a semi-automatic reconstruction of the families. For further details about the NACAOB and its potentialities, check Ana Silvia Volpi Scott and Dario Scott, “Uma alternativa metodológica para o cruzamento semiautomático de fontes nominativas: o NACAOB como opção para o caso luso-brasileiro,” in Tarcísio R. Botelho and Marco H. D. van Leeuwen (orgs.), *História social: perspectivas metodológicas*, Belo Horizonte, Veredas & Cenários, 2012, pp. 83–108.

⁷ The authors would like to thank their colleagues Paulo Teodoro Matos (UNL/CHAM) and Tarcísio Rodrigues Botelho (Post-graduation department — History/UFGM) for making available the worksheets containing the population maps used in this paper.

⁸ However, due to the precarious conditions in which this documentation was conserved, six of the maps are unavailable to researchers: 1796; 1806 to 1809 and 1811. Therefore, it wasn’t possible to consult the following surveys: 1779 to 1782; 1790 to 1793; 1797 to 1805; 1814. We were able to access to this documentation through the transcriptions made available by the archivist and historian of the AHCMPA, Vanessa Gomes Campos, and the PPG-History/UFRGS doctorate student Denize Freitas.

In the 1770s the Portuguese government put into practice certain measures to standardize and classify statistics collected throughout the Empire, and which were deployed in Brazil in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

According to an unpublished work by Paulo Matos and Paulo Silveira e Souza, the royal orders of 07/17/1773 and 05/21/1776 were a part of this process of standardization and improvement of the demographic statistics collected in Portuguese America. The royal decree of 1776 reinforced the earlier one, but modified some clauses and “added a regular and systematic character because it compelled overseas officers to issue yearly statistical maps of their administrations.”⁹

Data regarding the number of inhabitants was to be organized according to the following categories: 1) every male child up to 7 years old; 2) every boy between the age of 7 and 15; 3) every man between the age of 15 and 60; 4) every elderly man above 60, with a particular specification for those who were 90 or older; 5) every female child up to the age of 7; 6) every girl between the age of 7 and 14; 7) every woman between the age of 14 and 50;¹⁰ 8) every elderly woman who was 50 or older, with a particular specification for those who were 90 or older; 9) all births occurring in the year of this census; 10) all deaths that took place in the same year.¹¹

These age group categories are proof that the Portuguese authorities were interested in keeping track of their population in a general way, especially of the male residents who were fit for military service and the women who were of childbearing age—information of the utmost importance for the population policies of the Portuguese Crown.¹²

The Church’s network, namely the parish priests throughout the region, was mobilized for the collection of data, along with captains and ordinance officers. This inevitably implied the use of parochial registers and confessional rolls which had considerable limitations due to their very nature. The main concern of the Church and its representatives was not the number of

⁹ Paulo Teodoro de MATOS and Paulo Silveira e SOUSA, “A Estatística da População na América Portuguesa, 1750–1820,” *Memorias. Revista Digital de Historia y Arqueología desde el Caribe*, Año 11, no. 25, Jan.–Apr. 2015, pp. 73–103.

¹⁰ The authors clarify that the decree of 1776 ratified this category to the ages of 14 to 40 years old.

¹¹ The government measures regarding the demographic statistics of their domains took place simultaneously both in Portugal and in Spain, who published a decree with similar purposes in 11/10/1776. P. T. MATOS and P. S. SOUSA, art. cit. The authors state that this aspect was first observed by Dauril ALDEN, “Population of Brazil in the late eighteenth century: a preliminary study,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 43, no. 2 (May, 1963), pp. 177–80.

¹² P. T. MATOS and P. S. SOUSA, art. cit.

children between the age of one and seven.¹³ They were more interested in the number of children who received the sacrament of baptism (increasing the numbers of the Catholic community), and those over seven, as they were then old enough to be included among the ranks of parishioners of confession age.

In a classical article published in the early 1960s, Dauril Alden also analyzed these aspects and pointed to other difficulties faced in the making of population maps, like the fact that the ecclesiastical and administrative jurisdictions didn't always coincide, or people were reluctant to comply with census procedures in the fear that it might lead to conscription or further taxation. Alden suggested that the data provided by the clerics, and the later involvement of a great many people in the making of the maps, contributed to a succession of errors.¹⁴

Portugal's concern with regular and reliable statistical information regarding their domains wasn't restricted to the initiative of the mid-eighteenth century. This remained a priority of the Portuguese government well into the Imperial period in Brazil.

These were the circumstances in which the Royal Charter of 10/21/1797 was issued, and used by D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, Secretary of the Navy and Overseas Territories, to convey royal instructions to the governors of Brazil's captaincies about the surveys to be carried out.¹⁵ The elaboration of these statistics was to be done by people qualified for the task, and eight different kinds of maps were to be sent annually:

First, of all inhabitants of the Captaincy; Second, of the occupations of those same inhabitants; Third, of annual marriages, births and deaths; Fourth, of importations; Fifth, of exportations; Sixth, of the Captaincy's production, consumption and exportation of those same productions; Seventh, of current prices of goods; Eighth, of the number of ships entering and leaving the Captaincy.¹⁶

In the Royal Charter there is reference to models that were to be used for making the maps, and which we weren't able to have access to. The minister directed the governors to seek the assistance of parish priests and magistrates in the elaboration of the first three maps, while the other five

¹³ *Idem, ibidem.*

¹⁴ D. ALDEN, op cit., pp. 177–83.

¹⁵ D. Rodrigo de Sousa COUTINHO, "Carta Régia sobre o trabalho que se deve empreender a respeito da estatística do Brasil, Mafra, 21 de Outubro de 1797," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, Tomo Sexto (1844), pp. 448–52.

¹⁶ *Idem, ibidem*, p. 448.

were to be done by customs officers and merchants from every outpost. In addition, the document required that, after being elaborated with due precision and within the stipulated time, local maps would be the basis for more general maps, all of which were to be sent at the beginning of each year to the Secretary of State.¹⁷

The need for accuracy and regularity in the making and delivery of the maps was reinforced in different parts of the charter, and there were specific instructions for each type of map. Regarding population surveys, it stated:

As for the three maps of marriages, inhabitants residing in each Captaincy, and their occupations, there is nothing else to remember; its clarity and the unwavering rule for its creation in each year make any further recommendation unnecessary other than the need for utmost precision both with the numbers and the groups, and to never alter the method, which is a really easy one since no explanation is needed to fill in the columns that are shown in the models [...]. We again recommend the utmost precision and tidiness.¹⁸

In accordance with the line of thought presented in the text's opening, the excerpt above suggests that the 1797 decree gave continuity to previous attempts to qualify statistical surveys. However, as we will see further on, despite the efforts and insistence of government authorities, the people in charge of making these maps in the captaincies didn't always follow orders very strictly.

The policies that dealt with information and control of the populations in the overseas territories weren't limited to the last decades of the eighteenth century. According to a study carried out by Tarcísio Botelho, Clotilde Paiva and José Castro's, the systematic efforts initiated by the Marquess of Pombal's government were reinforced when the Portuguese court moved to Brazil, and lasted at least until the Regency period. According to these authors, "the arrival of the Portuguese court in Rio de Janeiro helped to bolster the commitment to keeping track of the population of the American colony." There was, therefore, a line of continuity between Portuguese colony and Brazilian empire, since they maintained the same bureaucratic structure and survey categories. On the other hand, it represented a change because it increased the concern with expanding the coverage and frequency of population surveys.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Idem, ibidem*, pp. 448–9.

¹⁸ *Idem, ibidem*, pp. 551–2.

¹⁹ Tarcísio R. BOTELHO, Clotilde Andrade PAIVA and José F. Moraes CASTRO, "Políticas de população no período joanino" in Ana Silvia Volpi Scott and Eliane Cristina Deckmann Fleck, *A Corte no Brasil: população e sociedade no Brasil e em Portugal no início do século XIX*, São Leopoldo, Oikos, 2008, pp. 59–68; the quote can be found at page 62.

It was based on these general reflections that the documental sources were analyzed in this paper.

1. Population maps of the Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy

According to Helen Osório, the population data referring to 1780²⁰ was part of a geographical map of the Captaincy elaborated by Lieutenant Antônio Inácio Rodrigues Córdova.²¹ The map was organized with individual information of the fourteen parishes.²² The total number of inhabitants for each parish was calculated and categorized by gender and legal condition, clearly only discriminating the slaves, and intercalating marital status with descriptive age groups (boys and girls of confession age and the elderly). The chart also presented the sums for each category of inhabitants for all the parishes of Rio Grande de São Pedro.

When analyzing the 1780 maps for different captaincies in Brazil, Dauril Alden noticed that children under seven weren't accounted for in the maps of Rio Grande de São Pedro and Mato Grosso. In Rio de Janeiro, boys under fifteen and girls under fourteen were omitted from surveys. So the author elaborated a methodology that adjusted the population count for Rio

²⁰ BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL, RIO DE JANEIRO [BNRJ], *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134 (“Mapa geográfico do Rio Grande de São Pedro suas freguesias e moradores de ambos os sexos, com declaração das diferentes condições e cidade em que se acham em 7 de outubro de 1780”).

²¹ Helen OSÓRIO, “Expansão territorial e população: a capitania do Rio Grande no primeiro quartel do século XIX” in Ana Silvia Volpi Scott and Eliane Cristina Deckmann Fleck, *A Corte no Brasil: população e sociedade no Brasil e em Portugal no início do século XIX*, São Leopoldo, Oikos, 2008, p. 238. Daniela Fialho adds that the “Planta do Continente do Rio Grande [Arquivo Histórico do Exército] de 1780, gathered by the lieutenant Antônio Inácio Rodrigues Córdova and realized after the First Treaty of San Ildefonso, in which the ‘continent’ appears divided in four provinces (regions): Rio Grande, Viamão, Rio Pardo and Vacaria (or Cima da Serra). In this plant we can find the Porto Alegre Village.” Daniela Marzola FIALHO, “A Porto Alegre de Antônio Eleuthério de Camargo” in *Anais do I Simpósio Brasileiro de Cartografia Histórica — Passado e presente nos velhos mapas: conhecimento e poder*, Parati/RJ, 10 to 13 May 2011. [Accessed on 20/07/2011]. Available at http://www.ufmg.br/rededemuseus/crch/simposio/FIALHO_DANIELA_M.pdf, p. 5. We’d like to register, however, that the referred division by regions is not expressed in the map deposited in the Manuscript Sections of BNRJ. Nevertheless, the proposal for a new administrative division of the captaincy was a recurrent subject, as can be seen throughout this exposition.

²² They are: Nossa Senhora da Madre de Deus de Porto; São Pedro do Rio Grande; Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Estreito; São Luiz de Mostardas; Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Viamão; Santo Antônio da Guarda Velha; Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Arroio; Nossa Senhora dos Anjos; Nossa Senhora de Oliveira da Vacaria; Senhor Bom Jesus do Triunfo; São José de Taquari; Santo Amaro; Nossa Senhora do Rosário do Rio Pardo; São Nicolau da Cachoeira (See the map reproduced in Attachment 1).

Grande de São Pedro by 11.75%, whereby the total sum would be 20,309 inhabitants, and not 17,923 as mentioned in the referred source.²³

The maps of 1798 and 1802 were attached to a letter sent by the governor of Rio Grande de São Pedro, Paulo José da Silva Gama, to the Prince Regent in December 1803.²⁴ In that letter, the governor affirmed that he had received a warning from the Secretary of the Navy and Overseas Territories, D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, with royal orders to send:

the Statistics Table of this Captaincy to the Overseas Council by the end of each year, discriminating circumstantially the State of the Population, the spontaneous productions, and those of industry, as well as all economic and political news that the Council may be lacking.²⁵

However, in spite of repeated instructions by the Portuguese government to maintain the models for data collection, some parts of Paulo José da Silva Gama's letter suggest that he had a different perspective regarding those statistics.²⁶ Apparently, the governor of the Rio Grande captaincy wasn't an exception to the rule. Among the population maps produced in the captaincy of São Paulo between 1798 and 1830, those pertaining to the region of what is currently the state of Paraná and compiled by Iraci del Nero da Costa and Horácio Gutiérrez show that the government's instructions were only partially observed. The categories used to create the map differ from those in Rio Grande de São Pedro's maps, especially with regard to the five year cycle age groups used in the maps compiled by the aforementioned authors.²⁷

²³ D. ALDEN, art. cit., pp. 190–2, 203.

²⁴ ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO ULTRAMARINO [AHU], *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485 (Carta do [governador da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul], Paulo José da Silva Gama, ao príncipe regente [D. João], enviando mapas de população da capitania relativos aos anos de 1798 e 1802 e relação da exportação e importação de 1802, Porto Alegre, 4 de Dezembro de 1803).

²⁵ AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485.

²⁶ For example, the governor justified that the relation between exportation and importation in the year of 1802 wasn't in the form of a map "because it would be necessary to omit some goods, as I judge that this greater perfection is a more accurate display of this Captaincy's commerce." Moreover, he stated that "I cannot send the Statistics Tables right away, because they depend on a great deal of inquiry and work, so I'll send it as soon as possible." AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485.

²⁷ Iraci del Nero da COSTA and Horácio GUTIÉRREZ, *Paraná: mapas de habitantes, 1798–1830*, São Paulo, IPE/USP, 1985.

In the end of his letter, Paulo José da Silva Gama affirmed that he was also sending “the note in which I show the need to create four Villages in this Captaincy; for the good service to His Majesty, and the People, I am also sending on this occasion another copy to the competent Secretary of State.”²⁸ This note was sent separately on the same day to the Prince Regent, along with the “Map of the Parishes that should be annexed to the Four Villages of the Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy.”²⁹ The governor argued that having only one council and one common judge in the captaincy represented a huge setback in the enforcement of the law there. Thus, he proposed the creation of four districts, each with one village and its respective council and judge (the villages of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande, Nossa Senhora do Rosário do Rio Pardo and Santo Antônio da Patrulha). The increasing size of the population, as evidenced in the attached maps (more than five thousand souls between one map and the other) served as the basis to appeal for a better administrative and legal organization in Rio Grande de São Pedro. A solution was needed to address the “continuous

²⁸ AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 487 (Ofício do [governador da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul], Paulo José da Silva Gama, ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], visconde de Anadia, [João Rodrigues de Sá e Melo], sobre a dificuldade de aplicação da justiça em toda a capitania, com uma só câmara e um só juiz ordinário, e propondo a criação de quatro distritos, cada um com uma vila com a sua respectiva câmara e juiz: vila de Porto Alegre, vila do Rio Grande de São Pedro, vila de Nossa Senhora do Rosário do Rio Pardo e vila de Santo Antônio da Patrulha, Porto Alegre, 4 de Dezembro de 1803; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.7, doc. 490 (Ofício do [governador da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul], Paulo José da Silva Gama, ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], visconde de Anadia, [João Rodrigues de Sá e Melo], enviando mapa da população da capitania, Porto Alegre, 4 de Dezembro de 1803).

²⁹ In the referred map, the governor related the parishes that comprised each of the villages or districts and the (total) number of souls in each one of them, along with the sum of the districts. AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 484.

disruption” caused by a structure that was inadequate for the size of the captaincy and its growing population.³⁰

Further on we will show that in the interval between the population surveys of 1798 and 1802 a yearly growth rate of 3.9% was registered for the total number of inhabitants (Table 4), the highest in the entire period under analysis in this article. This suggests that the governor’s reasoning was well founded.

The information about the population in the 1798 map was registered separately for the fourteen parishes distributed in three major geographical and administrative units: Capital of the Porto Alegre Village³¹(Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre, Nossa Senhora Conceição de Viamão, Nossa Senhora dos Anjos, Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Arroio, Santo Antônio da Patrulha, Nossa Senhora Oliveira de Cima da Serra [Vacaria]); Frontier of Rio Pardo (Nossa Senhora Rosário de Rio Pardo, Nossa

³⁰ The subject was once again debated in a letter sent to D. João in 08/25/1804. In response to the request for enlightenment regarding the absence of judges in the captaincy’s villages and districts, the governor reiterated that there was only one village and affirmed to have sent the population and commerce maps “to His Majesty Royal presence, through the competent Secretary of State, and through the Overseas Council,” in a letter sent on 12/04/1803. Thus he reaffirmed the need of judges for the four villages that should be created, as he had proposed. He defended the idea that the villages of Porto Alegre and Rio Grande should get lettered judges due to the complexity of the required disputes, since they had a large population and a great flow of commerce. According to him, the size of the population and number of existing disputes would be enough for the subsistence of “that Minister.” Check: AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 8, doc. 526 (Carta do [governador da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul], Paulo José da Silva Gama, ao príncipe regente [D. João] sobre a necessidade de criação de vilas e da conveniência de um juiz letrado para as vilas de Porto Alegre e na de São Pedro do Rio Grande, em razão da grande população e do comércio na referida Capitania, Porto Alegre, 25 de Agosto de 1804). In later reproductions, the “Mapa das Freguesias que se devem anexar às quatro Vilas da Capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro” was mistakenly attributed to 1803, because of the date of the first mailing of this map to the Portuguese rulers (04/12/1803). Check: Antônio Eleutério de CAMARGO, *Quadro estatístico e geográfico da Província São Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul*, Porto Alegre, Tipografia do Jornal do Comercio, 1868, pp. 72–4 e anexos; Fundação de Economia e Estatística (RS), *De Província de São Pedro a Estado do Rio Grande do Sul — Censos do RS: 1803–1950 (1981)*, Porto Alegre, FEE, 1981, pp. 49, 51.

³¹ The capital and Council of Rio Grande de São Pedro were transferred first to Campos de Viamão in 1763 and later to the newly created village of Porto Alegre (1772), by order of the governor José Marcelinho de Figueiredo (1773) in response to the Spanish occupation of the Rio Grande village (1763–1776). Guilhermino CESAR, *História do Rio Grande do Sul. Período Colonial*, Porto Alegre, Editora Globo, 1970, pp. 168–85. These contingencies, among other factors, generated a *sui generis* situation. Even though the condition of village was essential to house a Chamber, Porto Alegre was only effectively elevated to that statute in 1810 (08/29/1808 Charter, confirmed by the 10/07/1809 Provision), although it was already acknowledged as such by administrative practice. Adriano COMISSOLI, *Os “homens bons” e a Câmara Municipal de Porto alegre (1677–1808)*, Porto Alegre, 2008, pp. 42–7; Amyr Borges FORTES and João Baptista Santiago WAGNER, *História Administrativa judiciária e eclesiástica do Rio Grande do Sul*, Porto Alegre, [s.n.], 1963. pp. 326–7.

Senhora da Conceição de Cachoeira, Senhor Bom Jesus do Triunfo, Santo Amaro, São José de Taquari); Frontier of Rio Grande (São Pedro do Rio Grande, Nossa Senhora da Conceição do Estreito, São Luiz de Mostardas).

The demographical data was organized according to the population's "conditions," "states" and "gender." We counted men and women from all conditions, states and ages separately: white (implying free), Indian, freed mulattoes/mestizos, freed blacks, enslaved mulattoes/ mestizos, and enslaved blacks. All the people in the categories were divided into married and single. We added two more fields with the partial sum of each parish's inhabitants, as well as the number of newborns and deceased. The map ended with general figures for each category and the total sum of Rio Grande de São Pedro's inhabitants.

Despite having been sent in the aforementioned letter to the Prince Regent, and having a short interval between one and the other, the 1802 map showed differences when compared to the map of 1798: the fourteen parishes were no longer grouped into geographical and administrative units; the total number of inhabitants was registered according to their legal status (white, Indian, freed, slave). The white population was subdivided into sex and age groups—1 to 7; 7 to 15, 15 to 60, and over 60 (for men); 1 to 7, 7 to 14, 14 to 40 and over 40 (for women). Indians were categorized only according to gender; the freed and the enslaved were divided into mulattos/mestizos and blacks. Finally, one column showed the total population of each parish and of the captaincy; another one showed those who were married, subdivided into whites, Indians, mulattos/mestizos, enslaved mulattos/mestizos, freed blacks and enslaved blacks.

The "Map of the entire population living in the captaincy of Rio Grande de São Pedro in the year of 1805"³² provided the statistics required by the Crown, but also supported the demand by Rio Grande's governor for a new administrative division of the captaincy, as initially proposed in 1803. By sending maps of the infantry troops, of the militia's cavalry companies, and of the population, Paulo José da Silva Gama ensured that the increase in

³² AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 11, doc. 669 (Carta do [governador da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul], Paulo José da Silva Gama, ao príncipe regente [D. João], enviando mapas da tropa de linha, das companhias de cavalaria milicianas e da população da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul, Porto Alegre, 30 de Setembro de 1806).

the number of inhabitants was associated with the population shift from the “Northern Captaincies” to Rio Grande de São Pedro.³³

The 1805 map was once again sent to the viscount of Anadia in a letter dated 11 October 1807, around the time that the new governor, D. Diogo de Souza, was requesting the creation of a new Justice Council in Rio Grande’s captaincy. The number of inhabitants was once again presented as a justification for this request. In a dispatch dated 26 October 1807, the viscount of Anadia informed that the Prince Regent had decided to send the plea to the Overseas Council for consultation, and the decision would then be sent back together with the documents from Rio Grande’s governor, “up to Royal Presence of the Prince Regent.”³⁴

This map repeated some of the patterns of categorization used previously. Figures for each of the parishes were recorded and organized into three larger administrative and geographical units, just like in the 1798 map. Demographic data was listed according to “condition, state, gender” and age groups. The inhabitants were divided into whites, Indians, freed men and slaves, repeating the pattern adopted in the 1802 map. The first group was classified by gender and age: from 1 to 7, 7 to 15, 15 to 60, and 60 and over, both for men and women, unlike the rest of the population. Indians were divided only by gender (men and women). The categories “mulatto/mestizo” and “black” were repeated for freed men and slaves. One column indicated the total population by parish and the sum of the entire captaincy.

One can perceive that the maps gradually began to show a regular pattern. However, the population surveys under analysis show that the governors and their subordinates added, or omitted, information about the territory and its population as they found convenient, even if that implied not carrying out the Crown’s instructions.

³³ In the same occasion, another office with similar content was sent to the viscount of Anadia, dealing with the same need of forming three regiments. AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 11, doc. 670 (Ofício do [governador da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul], Paulo José da Silva Gama, ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], visconde de Anadia, [João Rodrigues de Sá e Melo], enviando mapas da tropa de linha, das companhias de cavalaria miliciana e da população da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul, Porto Alegre, 30 de Setembro de 1806).

³⁴ AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 12, doc. 747 (Ofício do [governador e capitão-general da capitania do Rio Grande de São Pedro], D. Diogo de Sousa, ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], visconde de Anadia, [João Rodrigues de Sá e Melo], sobre a necessidade de criação, na capitania de São Pedro, de uma junta de justiça onde se julguem breve e sumariamente os crimes de todas as classes, Lisboa, 11 de Outubro de 1807).

2. Confessional and communion rolls from the parish of Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus in Porto Alegre

As stated above, confessional rolls were lists of all the people in the parishes who confessed and took communion during the preparations for Easter, as required by the Church in order to keep a tighter control over parishioners' fulfillment of their Christian duties. The First Constitutions of the Archbishopric of Bahia, which governed religious life in the colony, outlined the instructions for these lists:

To certify that worshippers partake in the sacraments of Confession and Communion during Lent, we require all parish priests of the Archbishopric, and no other person, to make records throughout the streets, houses and farms of parishioners, in each year between Septuagesima Sunday and Quinquagesima Sunday (the Sunday before Ash Wednesday), (except for those that are more than six leagues away, in which case the list may be done by someone else), and they will write the names and surnames and places of residence of all their parishioners.³⁵

The First Constitutions called for this census to be carried out by all parish priests once a year within the specified period of time. Apart from observing the deadline, they were also required to "include the name, surname and places and streets" of their parishioners. The clerics were to try and cover as much area as possible within their parishes, and take particular care to include "Rivers, Farms, and their names", separating each one by a line "between houses, and recording each one."³⁶ The confessional rolls of the *Madre de Deus of Porto Alegre* parish show that parish priests were careful to observe the rules in a systematic and comprehensive way at the end of the eighteenth century. However, in the lists produced during the first decades of the nineteenth century, certain deviations can be seen: the names of places were no longer recorded as precisely (streets, public places, lanes and farms), and the information that was registered was much briefer. However, names and surnames, and information regarding separate households continued to be carefully registered.

For this study we selected confessional rolls from the same years as the population maps: 1780, 1798, 1802 and 1805. There is some discrepancy in their content, for example, in the census for 1780 the parish priest divided each household into well-defined sections with detailed information about the heads of family, their profession and quality, age, descendants,

³⁵ S. M. VIDE, op. cit., Livro Primeiro, Título XXXVII, p. 61.

³⁶ *Idem, ibidem*, Livro Primeiro, Título XXXVII, pp. 61–2.

and marital status. Slaves, their family members, and ages were mentioned separately.

We would like to highlight the importance of the 1780 roll, because the entire parish population was listed in it, as well as their ages, including those who weren't old enough to confess (under seven years old), and can thus be considered a complete survey of the parish's inhabitants.³⁷

The age of parishioners was not reported for the other years, 1798, 1802 and 1805, nor did children under confession age figure in those lists. On the other hand, these maps included categories such as "sea men" and "wanderers," indicative of the population dynamics characteristic of ports like Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre at the turn of the nineteenth century. In those years we see an intense circulation of ships, especially in 1805, (thirty in 1798, twenty two in 1802 and forty seven in 1805).³⁸

It is clear from these population maps that the agents in charge of carrying out the confessional rolls could manipulate and change the contents, in spite of the "First Constitutions" instructions. For example, the parish priest listed all his parishioners in the 1780 roll (like in those of 1779, 1781 and 1782), with their respective ages, including even those members who weren't old enough to confess or take communion.³⁹ What would have motivated such an attitude? Did it indicate greater zeal in producing more accurate information and knowledge about the population under their care? Could it be the result of trying to comply with the government's orders calling for greater precision and regularity in the production of statistics? After all, it's important not to forget that under the system of royal patronage, priests were employees of the Portuguese state.

Evidence found in other sources points to the sense of commitment of some of the clerics that worked in Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre, as illustrated in the 1803 diocesan visitations to Rio Grande de São Pedro. The opening paragraphs of the book state: "First, I cannot keep silent the

³⁷ The references regarding ages also appear in other rolls from the same location. Ana Scott elaborated age pyramids of Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre's population using the confessional rolls from the years 1779 and 1782. Check: Ana Silvia Volpi SCOTT, "Sobre os espaços de sociabilidades a partir do cruzamento nominativo de fontes eclesiásticas" in Andréa Doré and Antônio Cesar de Almeida Santos (org.), *Temas Setecentistas. Governos e Populações no Império Português*, Curitiba, UFPR-SCHLA/Fundação Araucária, 2009, pp. 413–27.

³⁸ That parish's port played a fundamental role as a trading post for commerce of the captaincy's interior and the village of Rio Grande, where the only sea port of Rio Grande de São Pedro was located. See the attached map. Check: Gabriel Santos BERUTE, *Atividades mercantis do Rio Grande de São Pedro: negócios, mercadorias e agentes mercantis (1808–1850)*, PhD dissertation in History, Porto Alegre, PPG-História/UFRGS, 2011, *passim*.

³⁹ The 1779 roll was elaborated by the Priest José Gomes de Faria. The others by the Vicar Luiz de Medeiros Correia.

deserved praise to the Re[verend] Vicar of this Mother church for his diligence and readiness in providing spiritual pasture to his flock.”⁴⁰

The Vicar General during this period was the Reverend Inácio dos Santos Pereira, who signed most of the confessional rolls from Porto Alegre’s Mother church,⁴¹ and not only did he receive praise from the Church, but also from the governor of the Captaincy:

The governor Veiga Cabral says “great capacity and zeal in the service of God and of His Majesty shine in the persona of Father José Inácio.” He affirms that as chaplain he celebrated daily, preached the mass, and administered the Sacraments to Portuguese and Spaniards alike.⁴²

In spite of the richness and potentiality of this source for studying populations and families in the past, we must reinforce that the precarious state of the documentation presented some limitations. In part of the material both the upper and lower margins are blemished, making them impossible to read. Consequently, the procedure adopted was to estimate the under-registration of the population surveyed based on the pattern used by the parish priest in the censuses for each household, thus serving as a standard for the figures analyzed herein.⁴³

Table 1 was based on this procedure. It indicated the size of the population effectively counted in the sources, which, added to the estimated population, provided the total number of inhabitants used to compare with the

Roll's year	Effective populations		Estimated population		Total
	#	%	#	%	
1780	1,209	91.7	109	8.3	1,318
1798	2,347	90.5	245	9.5	2,592
1802	2,715	82.8	565	17.2	3,280
1805	2,351	72.8	878	27.2	3,229

1 Effective population and estimated population in the confessional rolls of the Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre parish (1780–1805)

Source: ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO DA CÚRIA METROPOLITANA DE PORTO ALEGRE [AHCMPA], *Conjuntos dos Livros de registros do Rol de Confessados de 1780–1805*. Set of books registering confessional rolls from 1780 to 1805.

⁴⁰ ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO DA CÚRIA METROPOLITANA DE PORTO ALEGRE [AHCMPA], *Livros de Capítulos de Visita Pastoral*, fl. 14v.

⁴¹ Vicar of the Madre de Deus mother church from 1785, he was appointed Vicar General by Queen D. Maria I in 1794, remaining in that position until 1814.

⁴² Arlindo RUBERT, *História da Igreja no Rio Grande do Sul*, Vol. I (“Época colonial, 1626–1822”), Porto Alegre, EDIPUCRS, 1994, p. 95.

⁴³ The authors are aware of the fragility of the procedure adopted here, but this is a way to make the use of this important documental *corpus* feasible.

population maps. We can deduce that in 1780 and 1798 this estimate was of less than 10%, but in the following years the rate was higher due to the precarious condition of the lists from the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Counting colonial populations and comparing sources

In the previous sections we introduced our references and the procedures used to analyze them. From here on, we will analyze some statistical parameters to measure the degree of congruence and convergence in the sources used.

Among the various possibilities to study and compare available sources we focused our methodological exercise on evaluating the general data presented in the maps and confessional rolls. We also compared the baptism and death records (NACAOB) with three of the four maps analyzed, where the number of births and deaths was registered.

The first analyses refer to the total population of the captaincy, as shown in Table 2. For the year of 1780, we used the total of inhabitants in the captaincy according to the aforementioned procedure proposed by Dauril Alden (section 2.1.) to correct the absence of children under seven years of age in that map.⁴⁴ We used this procedure because the methodological exercise developed here presented similar results to those of that author and thus allowed us to work with figures closer to those of the real population of the captaincy.

The calculation of the population's growth rate presented in the maps is of 2.9% a year for a period of twenty-five years, between 1780 and 1805.

Period	Year interval	Population map		Annual rate (%)
		I.P	F.P	
1780-1798	18	20,309*	31,545	2.5
1798-1802	4	31,545	36,721	3.9
1802-1805	3	36,721	41,009	3.8
1780-1805	25	20,309*	41,009	2.9

2 Population Growth for the Captaincy of Rio Grande de São Pedro (1780-1805)

I.P: Initial population; F.P: Final population.

* The total amount was adjusted according to the methodology proposed by D. ALDEN, "Population of Brazil," cit., pp. 190-2, 203.

Source: 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.11, doc. 669.

⁴⁴ D. ALDEN, art. cit., pp. 190-2, 203. The same adjustment was adopted to analyze the total number of inhabitants in the parish of Madre de Deus (see Table 3)

The smallest growth rate (2.5%) was registered at the time of the final annexation of Rio Grande de São Pedro to the Portuguese territories in America in the last decades of the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ The figures for the Rio Grande captaincy are similar to those of other regions that had been occupied earlier, like São Paulo, Bahia, Pernambuco and Alagoas. Despite the turmoil caused by the consolidation of Portuguese occupation, it showed certain dynamism when compared to regions that had been occupied in the early days of colonization, and which registered a maximum annual growth rate of 2.3% below that seen in this southernmost region of Portuguese America.⁴⁶ From 1798 onwards, there was a significant growth spurt of close to 4% a year, which lasted until the middle of the first decade of the nineteenth century. One explanation for this rise may be the increased presence of slaves in Rio Grande São Pedro. Helen Osório observed that between 1780 and 1807 in most parishes the amount of slaves was never lower than 28%, and in 1798 it oscillated between 30% and 36%.⁴⁷ The increase in the slave population is another indicator of the economic dynamism of the region.

When examining the specific case of the parish of *Nossa Senhora da Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* (Table 3), we can verify that there are recurring differences between the total figures in the confessional rolls and those in the population maps.

As stated previously, only the white population was classified according to age and sex in the maps of 1802 and 1805, a fact that allowed us to delimit the white inhabitants of that parish belonging to the age group of one to seven. In other rolls, the only survey that identified that part of the population was the one of 1780. The total amount of the parish's inhabitants of that year was also adjusted according to the rate proposed by Dauril Alden (11,75%).⁴⁸ For comparative purposes, studies were made both with and without the presence of the population under seven years of age.

⁴⁵ Helen OSÓRIO, *O império português no sul da América: estancieiros, lavradores e comerciantes*, Porto Alegre, UFRGS, 2007, pp. 183–91.

⁴⁶ This aspect was pointed out by Helen Osório when she evaluated the same population maps. The author identified a growth of 3.2% a year between 1780 and 1798, because she took into consideration the total population indicated in the 1780 map, which underestimates the number of inhabitants because it doesn't include those younger than seven years old. H. OSÓRIO, op. cit., 2008, p. 237.

⁴⁷ *Idem, ibidem*, pp. 238–47. Regarding the circumstances of the slave trade and the intensification of importation of captive workers in Rio Grande de São Pedro in the first decades of the nineteenth century, check: Gabriel Santos BERUTE, *Dos escravos que partem para os Portos do Sul: características do tráfico negreiro do Rio Grande de São Pedro do Sul, c. 1790–c. 1825*, MA dissertation in History, Porto Alegre, PPG-História/UFRGS, 2006, pp. 34–87.

⁴⁸ D. ALDEN, art. cit., pp. 190–2, 203.

Year	Total population found in the Population Map	Total population found in the Confessional Role	Difference	Difference (%)
1780	1,512	1,075	437	28.9
1780 (with 1–7 yrs old)	1,713*	1,318	395	23.1
1798	3,258	2,592	666	20.4
1802	3,927	3,280	647	16.5
1802 (without 1–7 yrs old)	3,504	3,280	224	6.4
1805	4,087	3,229	858	21.0
1805 (without 1–7 yrs old)	3,597	3,229	368	10.2

3 Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre Parish population (1780–1805)

*The total amount was adjusted according to the methodology proposed by D. ALDEN, “Population of Brazil,” cit., pp. 190–2, 203.
Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.11, doc. 669; Confessional rolls — AHCMPA, *Rol de Confessados*, 1780–1805.

The biggest difference was found for 1780 (28.9%), when we compared only the number of inhabitants who were old enough to confess in both sources. After adding the children under confession age to the total population, we saw the difference reduced between the two lists (23.1%). It is interesting that this percentage is quite close to the difference registered between the roll and the map of 1798 (around 20%), in which there was no information about the population under seven years old.

There are also important differences between the total figures in the maps and in the confessional rolls for the years 1802 and 1805 (although slightly lower for 1802), 16.5% and 21% respectively. When the children under the age of confession were removed from the lists the difference was much smaller: 6.4% and 10.2%. It’s important to remember that only the white population was divided into age groups, so we can assume that the higher numbers in the maps were partly due to the presence of Indian, slave, and freed children between the ages of one and seven.

Table 4 shows the growth rates for the population of the parish of *Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* recorded in the maps and confessional rolls. The maps show an average annual growth of 3.5% for the period under analysis, differing slightly from the 3.6% registered in the rolls. Despite the differences, the information in this table is coherent: between 1780 and 1798 the rates were almost the same (with a difference of 0.2% per year); there was a significant increase in the following period (1798 to 1802), with both sources showing a noticeable reduction in growth percentages. In other words, both the maps and the rolls showed the same general trend, as can be seen in Attachment 3, revealing a definite converging of the results, independently of the source used.

Period	Interval (years)	Population maps			Confessional rolls		
		I.P	F.P	Annual rate (%)	I.P	F.P	Annual rate (%)
1780–1798	18	1,713	3,258	3.6	1,318	2,592	3.8
1798–1802	4	3,258	3,927	4.8	2,592	3,280	6.1
1802–1805	3	3,927	4,087	1.3	3,280	3,229	-0.5
1780–1805	25	1,713	4,087	3.5	1,318	3,229	3.6

4 Annual population growth rate in the parish of Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre (1780–1805)

* The total amount was adjusted according to the methodology proposed by D. ALDEN, “Population of Brazil,” cit., pp. 190–2, 203.

I.P: Initial population; F.P: Final population.

Sources: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.11, doc. 669; Confessional rolls — AHCMFA, *Rol de Confessados*, 1780–1805.

The comparison of these results with the entire captaincy’s annual growth rate (Table 2) indicates that between 1802 and 1805 the parish registered a slower growth rate. It is possible that this particular trend was associated to epidemics, judging from the death records of Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre. By applying the methodology proposed by Jacques Dupâquier to burial records we identified a sequence of minor or medium mortality crises between the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century,⁴⁹ due to outbreaks of measles and smallpox. Documentation from the town council confirmed the occurrence of these epidemics in the *Termos de Vereança*:

In this act of the council a letter was written to the Rev[erend] Vicar of this parish in order to prevent the church from burying the bodies inside the mother church during a period of six months due to epidemic that has been going on, by request of the head surgeon to this Council.⁵⁰

However, this sequence of deaths of small or average intensity was not the only reason for the change in growth rate. This parish was characterized by the great mobility of its population (entering and leaving), due to the fact that it was a port town that linked the interior of the territory to the coast. Therefore, a more careful look should be taken of the data and our analyses,

⁴⁹ Jacques DUPÂQUIER, “L’analyse statistique des crises de mortalité” in Hubert Charbonneau and André LaRose (eds.), *The great mortalities: methodological studies of demographic crises in the past*, Liège, Ordina Éditions, 1979, pp. 83–112. Utilizamos também a metodologia proposta por Lorenzo DEL PANTA and Massimo LIVI BACCI, “Chronologie, intensité et diffusion des crises de mortalité en Italie: 1600–1850” in *Population*, 32e année, numéro spécial (Sept. 1977), pp. 401–43.

⁵⁰ ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO DE PORTO ALEGRE MOYSES VELLINHO [AHPAMV], *Termos de vereança* (20 de Janeiro de 1801).

bearing in mind the context of the populations living in the parish of Rio Grande de São Pedro and Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre.

So, it is possible to affirm, with all due caution, that the population maps analyzed in this case provide reliable statistical information that is quite useful for studying the population and society of Rio Grande de São Pedro at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century.

Continuing the comparison and evaluation of the convergence of data selected for this study, the population maps allow for an assessment based on the number of baptisms and deaths recorded in each of Rio Grande de São Pedro's parishes.

In Table 5 the data from the Madre de Deus parish records of baptisms and deaths are compared with the figures in the population maps for 1798, 1802 and 1805. In general, there appears to be some discrepancy in the number of births and the number of deaths of the two sources. The smallest variation was found in the baptism and death records for 1802, whereby the data in that year's population map was between 1% and 2% higher than that registered in the parish books. The population map for 1798 showed the lowest figures when compared to the parish records (15% less baptisms and 50% less deaths), while for 1805 there appeared to be 7% fewer baptisms and 52% more deaths in the map than in the parish records. These results indicate, therefore, that death records were the harder to calculate, a fact that is reflected by the incongruence between the sources.

This set of elements gives us an idea of the gross birth and mortality rates for the Rio Grande de São Pedro captaincy, and provides a context in which to study the specific case of Madre de Deus (as shown in Tables 6 and 7). Although these gross rates admittedly are somewhat rough, they do have a large enough scale to be very useful for our analysis.

Year	Population map		Parish records			
	Number of births in each parish	Number of deaths in each parish	Births PR in NACAOB	Deaths PR in NACAOB	% Errors of PM with PR for births	% Errors of PM with PR for deaths
1780	I/U	I/U	91	65	-	-
1798	225	80	264	160	-15	-50
1802	256	178	254	175	1	2
1805	270	311	289	204	-7	52

5 Baptisms and deaths of the Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre parish (1780–1805)

PM: Population map; PR: Parochial records; I/U: Information unavailable.

Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, Seção de Manuscritos, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, Conselho Ultramarino, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.11, doc. 669; Parochial records — NACAOB, Banco de dados da Freguesia Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus, extração de 02/02/2015.

Year	Total population	Births	Deaths	GBR	GRM
1780	1,713*	91	65	53.8	38.5
1798	3,258	264	160	81.0	49.1
1802	3,927	254	175	64.7	44.6
1805	4,087	289	204	70.7	49.9

6 Gross rates of births and deaths in Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre parish (1780–1805)

GBR: Gross Birth-rate; GRD: Gross Rate of Mortality; PM: Population map; CR: Confessional Rolls.

* Total amount adjusted according to the rate proposed by D. ALDEN, "Population of Brazil," cit., pp. 190–2, 203.

Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.11, doc. 669; Confessional Rolls — AHCMPA, *Rol de Confessados*, 1780–1805.

The first finding was an increase in rates throughout this period, a reflection of the aforementioned population growth. There was greater irregularity in the gross birth-rates. The results found by Luiza Marcílio for the town of Ubatuba in the captaincy of São Paulo between 1798 and 1818 are far more modest than the figures found in Madre de Deus. For Ubatuba, Marcílio found rates that fluctuated between 38.9 and 45.6 per thousand in the thirty year period analyzed, much lower than the numbers for the Rio Grande de São Pedro's parish, which were 53.8 per thousand for 1780, and 81.0 per thousand for 1798 (Table 6). For this last year (1798) Ubatuba's rate was only 28.9 per thousand (for the population as a whole, in both cases). However, the contexts of both places should also be taken into consideration: while Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre was a port town, Ubatuba was an area inhabited mostly by *caiçaras* (mestizos) and had a rustic economy characterized by small subsistence farms (established in clearings in the woods) that produced the essential goods for family consumption, with any surplus being sold in the local market.⁵¹

The gross birth-rates seen in the Rio Grande de São Pedro captaincy (Table 7) also appeared to be higher than the rates found by Marcílio, but well below those found in the *Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* parish.

⁵¹ Maria Luiza MARCÍLIO, *Caiçara: terra e população: estudo de demografia histórica e da história social de Ubatuba*, São Paulo, Paulinas/CEDHAL, 1986, pp. 29, 156–7.

Year	Total population	Births	Deaths	GBR	GRM
1780	20,309	I/U	I/U	-	-
1798	31,545	1714	699	55.2	22.2
1802	36,721	1697	843	46.2	23.0
1805	41,009	1999	1,263	48.7	30.8

Table 7 Gross Rates of Birth and Death in Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy (1780–1805)

* Total amount adjusted according to the rate proposed by D. ALDEN, “Population of Brazil,” cit., pp. 190–2, 203.

GBR: Gross Birth-rates; GRM: Gross Rate of Mortality; PM: Population map; CR: Confessional Rolls; I/U: information unavailable.

Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx.11, doc. 669.

Regarding the gross rates of mortality, a comparison with Maria Luiza Marcílio’s results is also pertinent, although they refer to the late 1820s. In 1828 Ubatuba presented a death rate of 33.4 per thousand, for the population as a whole,⁵² while *Madre de Deus* didn’t register rates lower than 38.5 per thousand in the period under study (1780). In the remaining years of this time span, the rates were slightly under 50 per thousand. It is fitting to remember that for Louis Henry, “the primitive regime of gross mortality rates situates the average between 30 to 40 deaths for every thousand inhabitants, in normal years.”⁵³ Although results for the *Madre de Deus* parish were above these parameters, it is important to note that this author used European societies as a reference, where slavery was not a factor. Maybe the specific nature of Portuguese America can explain those higher rates.⁵⁴

It is interesting that the numbers regarding the gross rate of mortality for the entire captaincy of Rio Grande de São Pedro are significantly lower compared to those of the *Madre de Deus* parish, varying between 22.2 and 30.8 per thousand. What could be the reason for such discrepancy? Could the higher mortality rate be attributed to poor or unhealthy living conditions in Porto Alegre? Apparently not. Even though it was a port town, where

⁵² M. L. MARCÍLIO, op. cit., pp. 175–6. For England, Alfred Perrenoud found a rate of 27.8 for the period between 1775–1799 and of 25.3 for the period of 1800 to 1824. Alfred PERRENOUD, “The attenuation of mortality crises and the decline of mortality” in Roger Schofield, David Reher and Alain Bideau (eds.), *The decline of mortality in Europe*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 25.

⁵³ Louis HENRY, *Démographie: analyses et modèles*, Paris, Larousse, 1972, pp. 58–9 *apud* Maria Luiza MARCÍLIO, *Crescimento demográfico e evolução agrária paulista: 1700–1836*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp, 2000, p. 90, note 16. On chapter 3 (specially, pp. 84–95) of that same book, the author performs a deep reflection on the methodological procedures and on the adoption of analysis models to correct the incomplete and defective survey data. In the aforementioned chapter, Marcílio even used the São Paulo captaincy population maps.

⁵⁴ In the case of the crude death rates for the captaincy of Rio Grande de São Pedro, the results were below the standards pointed out by Louis Henry. The most plausible hypothesis is that the death records of the other parishes may have had a significant sub-registration.

the high level of human circulation facilitated the spread of epidemics and mortality crises (as was recorded periodically), one cannot ignore the possibility of the under-registration of deaths. This problem was not only exacerbated among the slave population, as Maria Luiza Marcílio points out,⁵⁵ but there were also recurring gaps in the death records of children under seven years of age.

Final considerations

The goal of this paper was to develop a methodological exercise that would allow us to examine the potentialities, and identify the limitations of the different statistical sources available for studying the population of Rio Grande de São Pedro at the turn of the eighteenth century. Methodologically, the quality and reliability of the population maps were assessed by comparing them with the confessional rolls and the baptism and death records of the *Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* parish.

The comparison between the general data and that related to the parish indicated the convergence of the information of this documental *corpus*, especially regarding the greater lines and trends. We demonstrated the advantages of comparing information from other sources and using them as standards to assess and control the data. If used carefully, the sources provide important information for studying not only the population of Rio Grande de São Pedro, but also of other regions of the Portuguese Empire.

At this moment, we are now able to have an indicative of the potentiality of examining the data available in the population maps and the analysis of the results. In this sense it's important to take a brief look at the evolution of the growth rate in the parishes of the Rio Grande de São Pedro captaincy. Besides Porto Alegre, and the captaincy itself, which were the focus of this paper, six other areas showed the same trend between 1780 and 1805, that is, a continuous growth between the end of the eighteenth century and the first few years of nineteenth century, followed by a reduction in that pace until 1805.⁵⁶ On the other hand, this pattern wasn't necessarily repeated in other parishes of the captaincy (see Appendix 2).

⁵⁵ Maria Luiza MARCÍLIO, *A cidade de São Paulo: povoamento e população, 1750–1850*, São Paulo, EDUSP, 1974, p. 173.

⁵⁶ Some comparative essays were written about the growth rate of the *Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* parish and the Rio Grande de São Pedro captaincy, using maps that allowed us to move beyond the time frame studied in this paper. What was most noteworthy was that, despite the great oscillation, both areas had an almost identical linear growth between 1780 and 1810, as seen in Attachment 5.

We would like to point out the relative stability of Viamão's population in the first two periods—maybe resulting from the transference of the Council to Porto Alegre—and the strong growth between 1802 and 1805. As for Rio Grande, the towns of Porto Alegre and Rio Grande de São Pedro grew more rapidly. The increase of both coastal and maritime trade through its port⁵⁷ possibly played an influential role in the dynamics of this population (see Attachment 2).

Considering that in the population maps of 1798 and 1805 the parishes were combined into three large regions (Village of Porto Alegre,⁵⁸ Frontier of Rio Pardo and Frontier of Rio Grande), some considerations should be made. There were clearly different development rates for the populations in each of these regions. The Village of Porto Alegre showed a strong increase in growth between 1780–98 (1.1%) and 1798–1802 (4.0%), which was followed by a slight drop in the next period (1802–1805): 3.2% per year. The Frontier of Rio Grande maintained the highest rates and showed the same trend registered in both the Village of Porto Alegre and the actual captaincy. Meanwhile, there was a reversal in the Frontier of Rio Pardo when the rate decreased in 1798–1802 from 3.1% to 2.8%, but went back up between 1802 and 1805 (3.4%) (see Appendix 4).

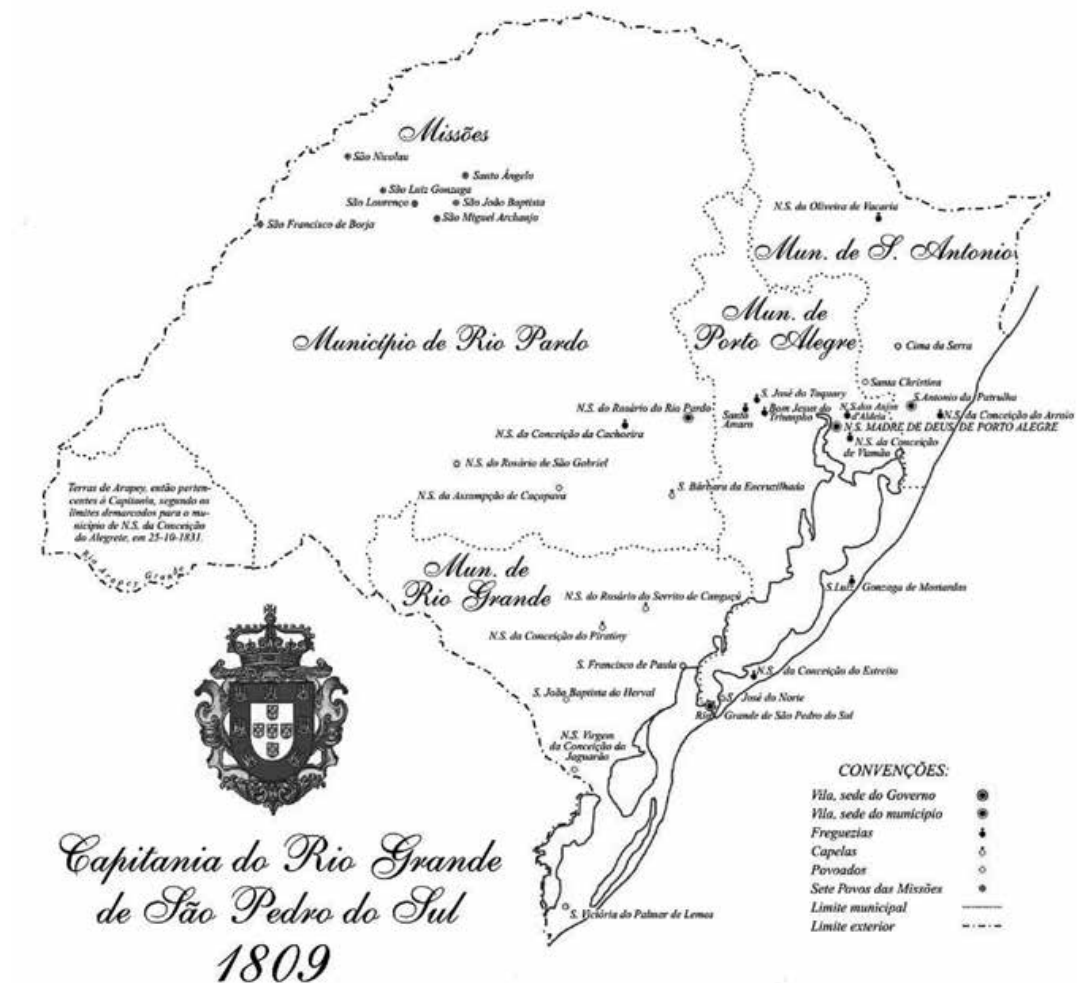
However, a closer look at the internal behavior of the regions under study shows us that the parishes in each of those regions could present different behaviors, as we can see in Attachment 2. These differences may be explained by the specific nature of each location, as well as possible imprecisions in the population maps. In this sense, implementing the methodological exercise applied to the parish of *Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* would allow a more accurate analysis of the information for the other parishes of Rio Grande de São Pedro.

Finally, it is important to note that the reflections presented herein have focused on more general aspects of the captaincy's population. Analyzing other variables would enable us to assess the population's behavior according to the different groups it was made up of. In this case, we'd like to highlight categories such as legal status, gender, age group, color and ethnic group. One aspect that remains to be examined in the case of *Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre* is the low numbers for individuals identified as *pardos* (mulattoes/mestizos) and Indians in the confessional rolls as compared to the population maps. But this and other questions will have to wait for future studies.

⁵⁷ Ver G. S. BERUTE, op. cit., *passim*.

⁵⁸ In the map shown in Attachment 1 this region corresponds to the municipalities of Porto Alegre and Santo Antônio da Patrulha.

Appendix 1 Map of Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy (1809)



Source: Mapa baseado na reconstrução histórico-cartográfica, executada no Departamento Estadual de Estatística do Rio Grande do Sul, por João C. Campomar Junior, desenhista-cartógrafo, em julho de 1942, Reeditado digitalmente por Sérgio Buratto em junho/2002. [Accessed on 19/11/2013]. Available in <http://genealogias.org>.

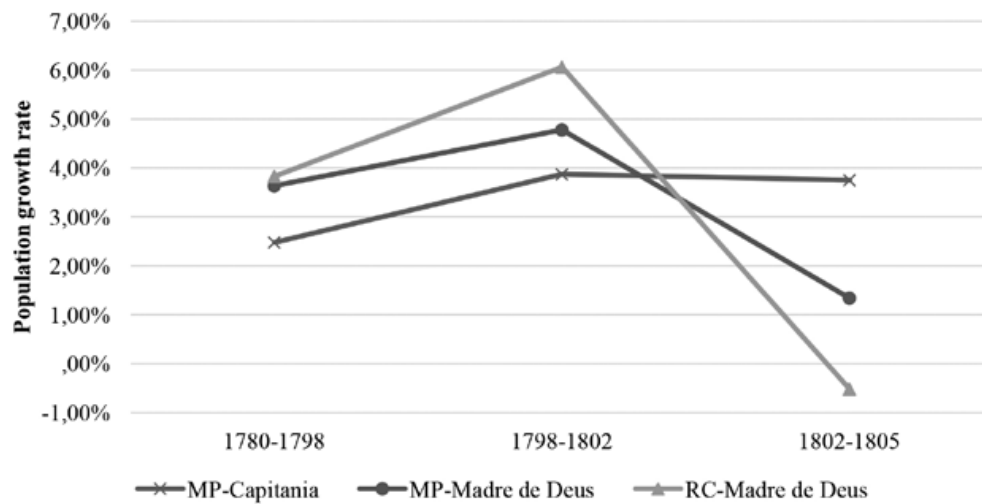
Appendix 2 Population growth by parishes and regions of Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy (1780–1805)

Regions	Parishes	Annual growth rate (by Region)	Population				Annual growth rate			
			1780*	1798	1802	1805	1780-1798	1798-1802	1802-1805	1780-1805
Village of Porto Alegre	N. Sr. ^a Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre		1,713	3,258	3,927	4,087	3.6 %	4.8 %	1.3 %	3.5 %
	N. Sr. ^a da Conceição de Viamão		2,143	2,124	2,065	2,798	0.0 %	-0.7 %	10.7 %	1.1 %
	N. Sr. ^a dos Anjos		2,669	1,996	2,718	2,722	-1.6 %	8.7 %	0.0 %	0.1 %
	N. Sr. ^a da Conceição do Arroio	1.8 %	473	1,063	1,041	1,196	4.6 %	-0.5 %	4.7 %	3.8 %
	Santo António da Patrulha		1,347	1,752	2,199	2,368	1.5 %	5.8 %	2.5 %	2.3 %
	N. Sr. ^a de Oliveira da Vacaria		647	746	845	892	0.8 %	3.2 %	1.8 %	1.3 %
	Total population and region's rate		8,992	10,939	12,795	14,063	1.1 %	4.0 %	3.2 %	1.8 %
Frontier of Rio Pardo	N. Sr. ^a do Rosário do Rio Pardo		2,690	3,914	3,739	5,197	2.1 %	-1.1 %	11.6 %	2.7 %
	N. Sr. ^a da Conceição da Cachoeira		750	2,633	3,284	3,111	7.2 %	5.7 %	-1.8 %	5.9 %
	Sr. Bom Jesus do Triunfo	3.1 %	1,447	2,860	3,036	3,151	3.9 %	1.5 %	1.2 %	3.2 %
	Santo Amaro		816	950	1,661	1,356	0.8 %	15.0 %	-6.5 %	2.1 %
	São José de Taquari		781	962	916	1,171	1.2 %	-1.2 %	8.5 %	1.6 %
	Total population and region's rate		6,484	11,319	12,636	13,986	3.1 %	2.8 %	3.4 %	3.1 %
Frontie of Rio Grande	São Pedro do Rio Grande		2,742	6,500	8,390	10,168	4.9 %	6.6 %	6.6 %	5.4 %
	N. Sr. ^a da Conceição do Estreito	4.0 %	1,421	1,727	1,713	1,813	1.1 %	-0.2 %	1.9 %	1.0 %
	São Luiz de Mostardas		670	1,060	1,187	979	2.6 %	2.9 %	-6.2 %	1.5 %
	Total population and region's rate		4,833	9,287	11,290	12,960	3.7 %	5.0 %	4.7 %	4.0 %
Total population and annual growth rate of the Captaincy			20,309	31,545	36,721	41,009	2.5 %	3.9 %	3.8 %	2.9 %

* Total amount adjusted according to the rate proposed by D. ALDEN, "Population of Brazil," art. cit., pp. 190–2, 203.

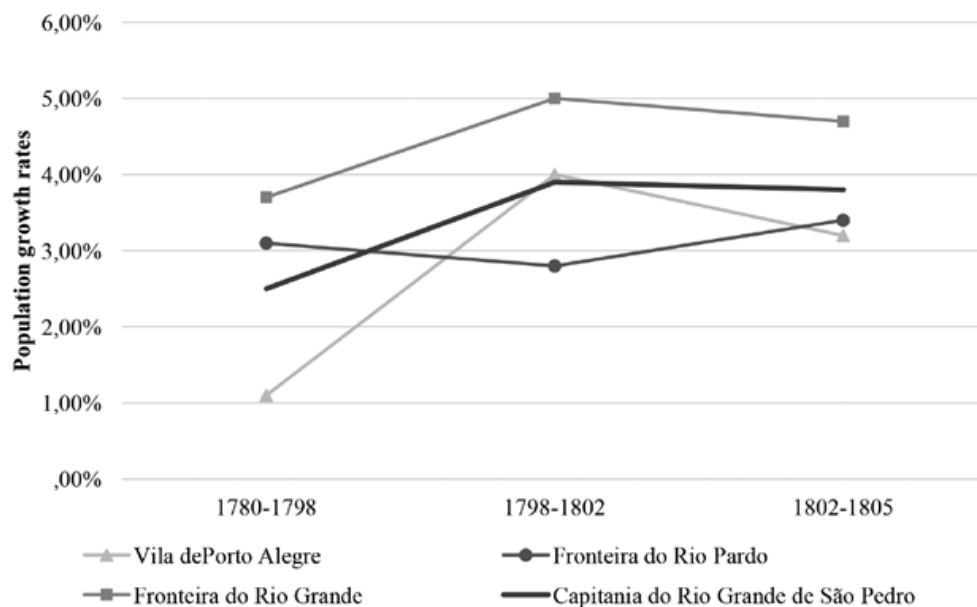
Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 11, doc. 669.

Appendix 3 Growth rates of the Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy and of Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre Parish (1780–1805)



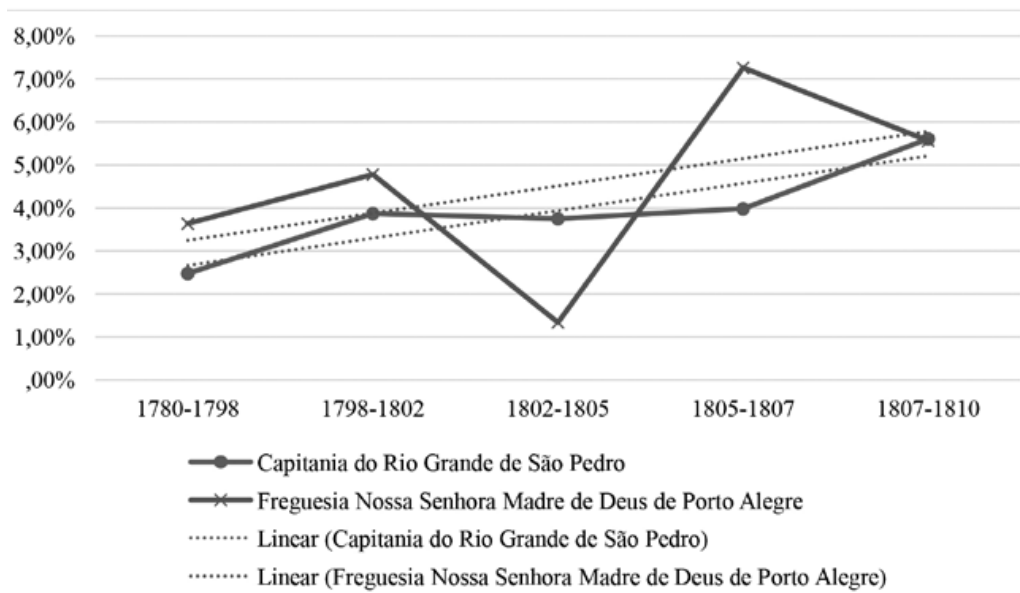
Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 11, doc. 669; Confessional Rolls — AHCMPA, *Rol de Confessados*, 1780–1805.

Appendix 4 Growth rates by regions of the Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy (1780–1805)



Source: Maps — (1780) BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 11, doc. 669.

Appendix 5 Growth rates of the Rio Grande de São Pedro Captaincy and of the Nossa Senhora Madre de Deus de Porto Alegre Parish (1780–1810)



Source: Maps — 1780: BNRJ, *Seção de Manuscritos*, 9, 4, 9 no. 134; 1798 and 1802: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 7, doc. 485; 1805: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Rio Grande do Sul, AHU_ACL_CU_019, Cx. 11, doc. 669; 1807 and 1810: ARQUIVO NACIONAL, RIO DE JANEIRO [ANRJ], Cód. 808, volume 03.

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