

# Progress versus decadence. In the pursuit of a demystification of the black legend of the Portuguese Empire

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## Abstract

Developing controversies from the historical past of Portugal supposedly divided into cycles of progress and decadence, historians, scholars, politicians and economists from 19th century Portugal resorted to testimonies of previous centuries to prove their theses. The testimonies selected from the 16th and 17th centuries helped them consolidate a black legend of the Portuguese Empire, mostly because of the fragmentation and lack of contextualization to which such discourses were subject.

There must be a revision of contemporary concepts and interpretation that requires a close rereading and objective analysis of the discourse of 16th century authors, their complete works, deepening their philosophy of History and the factors that they valued in their time as conditions of progress and decadence, comparing them with each other and with other different testimonies.

**Keywords:** Philosophy of History, Progress, Empire, Laws, Faith, Public good