

ARMY AND NATIONAL GUARD: CONSCRIPTION AND STATE-BUILDING IN IMPERIAL BRAZIL¹

EXÉRCITO E GUARDA NACIONAL: RECRUTAMENTO MILITAR E A CONSTRUÇÃO DO ESTADO NO BRASIL IMPERIAL

EJÉRCITO Y GUARDIA NACIONAL: RECLUTAMIENTO MILITAR Y LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL ESTADO EN EL BRASIL IMPERIAL

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the relationship between the Army and the National Guard, in what concerns the military recruitment, as well as to the formation of the Brazilian imperial state process. Such motivation is justified by the fact that the study of military institutions is a privileged tool for understanding the National States training process. Following closely on this assumption, we will take as the focus of interest the issue of recruitment and enlistment, two similar terms, but not necessarily equal when it comes to the two corporations. The military recruitment in Imperial Brazil was extremely hated by the male population, especially adult, free and productive age. In general, army recruits were considered socially maladjusted elements whose military service would resemble a moral corrective. Already enlistment to the National Guard had not the same negative connotation as compared to military conscription to the army, given that the legislation of the guard stated that the National Guard should be citizens. For these reasons, the National Guard and the Army were two institutions that operated complement and antagonistically in the state formation process in imperial Brazil in the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Profile. Strategic leadership. Strategic environment.. Process of transformation. Brazilian Army.

RESUMO

O presente artigo pretende discutir as relações entre o Exército e a Guarda Nacional, naquilo que diz respeito ao recrutamento militar, assim como ao processo de formação do Estado imperial brasileiro. Tal motivação justifica-se pelo fato de que o estudo das instituições militares é um instrumento privilegiado para a compreensão do processo de formação dos Estados Nacionais. Seguindo de perto este pressuposto, tomaremos como foco de interesse a questão do recrutamento e do alistamento, dois termos semelhantes, mas não necessariamente iguais quando se trata das duas corporações. O recrutamento militar no Brasil imperial era extremamente odiado pela população masculina, especialmente, a adulta, livre e em idade produtiva. Regra geral, os recrutas do Exército eram considerados elementos socialmente desajustados, cujo serviço militar se assemelharia a um corretivo moral. Já o alistamento para a Guarda Nacional não tinha a mesma conotação negativa em comparação com a conscrição militar para o Exército, haja vista que a legislação da guarda determinava que os guardas nacionais deveriam ser cidadãos. Pelo exposto, a Guarda Nacional e o Exército foram duas instituições que atuaram de forma complementar e antagônica no processo de formação do Estado no Brasil imperial no século XIX.

Palavras-chave: Exército. Guarda Nacional. recrutamento militar. Brasil. Século XIX.

RESUMEN

El presente artículo discute la relación entre el Ejército y la Guardia Nacional, en lo que se refiere al reclutamiento militar, así como al proceso de formación del Estado imperial brasileño. Esta motivación se justifica por el hecho de que el estudio de las instituciones militares es un instrumento privilegiado para la comprensión del proceso de formación de los Estados Nacionales. Siguiendo de cerca este supuesto, tomaremos como centro de interés la cuestión del reclutamiento y del alistamiento, dos términos similares, pero no necesariamente iguales cuando se trata de las dos corporaciones. El reclutamiento militar en Brasil Imperial fue muy odiado por la población masculina, especialmente, la adulta, libre y en edad productiva. En general, los reclutas del ejército eran considerados elementos socialmente inadaptados, cuyo servicio militar se asemejaría a un correctivo moral. Por lo contrario el alistamiento a la Guardia Nacional no tenía la misma connotación negativa en comparación con el reclutamiento en el ejército, dado que la legislación de la guardia determinaba que lo guardas nacionales deberían ser ciudadanos. Por lo expuesto, la Guardia Nacional y el Ejército fueron dos instituciones que actuaban en forma complementaria y antagónica en el proceso de formación del Estado en el Brasil imperial en el siglo XIX.

Palabras clave: Ejército. Guardia Nacional. Reclutamiento militar. Brasil. Siglo XIX.

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About the process of State-building and consolidation in nineteenth century imperial Brazil, Vilma Peres Costa says the study of military institutions is an exceptional field for analyses of this process. After all, as this author says, the development of professional forces evolved side by side with the process of development of modern State Max Weber, in his famous expression, named "monopoly of violence" (COSTA, 1996, p. 27).

Hence, the Army is construed here as "the fundamental tool of the 'monopoly of legitimate violence' that defines the State" (COSTA, 1996, p. 29-30). Notwithstanding, when observing the process of political emancipation of the Portuguese America, the particular historical feature of this process must be underlined. In her classical study about the progress inland of the Portuguese metropolis in Brazil, Maria Odila Leite da Silva Dias calls attention to the actions taken by king John XVI that paved the way for the political independence of Brazil. A conservative independence, at least, for the fact that there were no radical changes to the social structure (survival of large rural properties and slavery) and adoption of the monarchy as the solution to accommodate Portuguese-Brazilian interests. (DIAS, 2009).

In view of the scope defined for this paper, the process of the march inland by the metropolis in Brazil will not be approached. However, its key focus will be directed to an issue critical to our analysis, that is, the specific feature that Brazilian historical emancipation did not include the establishment of a professional army, to act as a national liberation armed force, as it happened in the Spanish America. In other words, Brazilian independence was accomplished with minimum military effort (COSTA, 1996, p. 46).

This is a relevant feature as it contributes to an improved understanding of the reason for the marginal position of the Brazilian army along most part of the nineteenth century. This aspect was strengthened during the regency period (1831-1840), mostly by the aversion and mistrust from the political generation of the Regency towards Portuguese presence among army officers and the social composition of the troops seen as possible sources of disruption of social order. In the first case, for the loyalty of Portuguese officers to former emperor Peter I and in the second for the lack of soldiers' social prestige.

Hence, amidst the turbulent regency period, the solution devised by the regents was to establish a force minimally worthy of trust and above all, capable of keeping the order. This force was the National Guard³.

³ For a time, as remarked by Fernando Uricoechea (1978, p. 136), the National Guard was neglected by historiography, awakening limited interest from history and social scientists. However, in the current stage of historical research in Brazil, fortunately, the National Guard has been the object of master and doctorate theses. For additional details see Pinto (2003), Ribeiro (2005), Nunes (2005), Fertig (2010), Goldoni (2010), Silva (2011), Mügge (2012), Costa (2013) e Saldanha (2013).

The Brazilian National Guard was mostly inspired in the French model, so much so, that the legislation that gave birth to it was quite similar to the French counterpart. Notwithstanding, since it was first established, pursuant to article one of the law enacted on August 18, 1831, the mission of the National Guard was to institutionalize a new legal and administrative order⁴. It was also required to act as a combat force in face of any challenge or movement of opposition to the regency government. Additionally, evidencing the already mentioned mistrust from government authorities towards the army, the Guard was a civil force, and therefore subordinated to the Ministry of Justice, as can be evidenced in the text of article six of the law enacted on August 18th: "The national guards shall be submitted to the authority of the judges of peace, criminal judges, presidents of the provinces and the Minister of Justice"⁵.

Hence, instead of having the Army as a tool to uphold public order, this responsibility was assigned to the National Guard, a civil force formed by soldier-citizens ready to defend their endangered country. The Army was given the responsibility to defend and patrol the borders and the coasts of the Brazilian Empire. About the assignment of roles to the Army and the National Guard, Nelson Werneck Sodré comments that "the first was specifically destined to engage in operations against foreign enemies, with the National Guard was seen as complement or reinforcement; the latter was specifically assigned the responsibility to act against internal enemies, while the Army was seen as complement of reinforcement (SODRÉ, 1979, p. 127).

According to Sodré, the National Guard enjoyed a relevant position with the imperial politicians, ultimately becoming a force serving the elites in the defense interest of their class. To this author, despite the civil militia acting as an auxiliary force of the Army in the defense of borders and coasts, "when it came to internal control the National Guard deserved much trust from the State than the Army" (SODRÉ, 1979, p. 127). This assignment of roles, however, would change at the time of the conflict in the Plata region, whose highlight was the Paraguay War (1864-1870).

For now, it should be noted that conscription for both forces was designated by similar terms, that is, recruiting for the Army and enlisting into the National Guard. Although similar, these terms were not necessarily synonymous (CASTRO, 1977, p. 62). After all, military recruiting in imperial Brazil, also known at that time as the "blood tribute", was hated by the male population, especially by free adults who had reached a productive

⁴ "The national guards are created to defend the Constitution, Liberty, Independence and the Integrity of the Empire; to enforce compliance with Laws, to preserve or reestablish public peace; and to assist the Line Army in the defense of national borders and coasts." *Coleção das Leis do Império do Brasil. Law enacted on August 18, 1831 (BRASIL, 1875).*

⁵ *Idem.*

age. This came about because "pay was a mere pittance and barbarous and frequent physical punishment which, to most scholars, explains the generalized attempt to escape conscription and the fact that the army was systematically recruited among the lowest classes of the population" (COSTA, 1996, p. 58). On this subject, in a letter addressed to the Minister of War, Caxias himself stated that the Brazilian Army in the years preceding the Paraguay War "because of a set of deplorable circumstances (...) always had in its ranks a majority of men society had rejected because of their highly objectionable character" (DORATIOTO, 2002, p. 111).

All in all, Army recruits were generally seen as individuals poorly adjusted to society, whose military service was actually be closer to moral punishment (MENDES, 1997, p. 171). On the other hand, in comparison to military conscription for the Army, enlisting into the National Guard was free from this negative undertones. So much so that the legislation providing on the National Guard determined that the members of the national guard had to be citizens, although the services rendered in the guard were burdensome and costly, at least to less the affluent guards, once there was no pay for the services rendered to the corporation (CASTRO, 1977; URICOECHEA, 1978).

In this regard, when analyzing the dynamics of military recruiting at the time of Brazilian empire it can be evidenced that the National Guard took potential Army recruits into its ranks. Somehow, according to Fábio Faria Mendes, "enlistment into the National Guard would mean exemption from recruiting, and therefore, enlisting into the Guard was one of the most frequent evasion strategies employed by those found themselves 'in recruiting circumstances'" (MENDES, 1997, p. 196).

According to this author, "the National Guard actually represented a huge network of institutionalized protection, leading to unavailability of the general population for military service" (MENDES, 1997, p. 196). This a relevant input to our analysis since, as Costa says, the guard itself prevented the Army from effectively holding the legitimate monopoly of violence. (COSTA, 1996, p. 54).

Besides the National Guard, there were other factors that hindered military recruiting at the time of the Brazilian empire, among which were slavery and the complex networks of local privileges and exemptions. About the first issue it is important to underline that "the first and most clear limitations represented by slavery is the shortening of the recruiting base, once by definition, slaves are not fit for recruiting" (COSTA, 1996, p. 58).

As to the second obstacle, it must be acknowledge that in the course of the process of construction of the Brazilian State and the Brazilian nation, in the eighties, there was a marked trade of interests and mutual agreements between the imperial Palace and local aristocracy strata. To settle, negotiate and, agree would be the rule of thumb of "a model of clientelism of relations

between center and periphery overlapping the formal hierarchic networks, supported by a system of swaps that had fidelity, honors and favors as the key "currencies" (MENDES, 1997, p. 150).

Notwithstanding the previous considerations, with respect to military recruiting, conscription of recruits should be based on consultation and based on how much labor the rural land owners needed. Additionally, the military service was an excuse for reckoning and revenge between neighbors, opportunity and means where violence was the prevailing rule in daily relations, where honor was a value of behavior to be followed and respected (DIAS, 1998, p. 70).

Notwithstanding, at the time of the Paraguay War a larger number of recruits was needed to fight in the Plata region and this resulted in increased interference of the imperial government in the authority local magnates exercised to protect their subordinates, considerably changing the power relations in the different localities (IZECKSOHN, 2009, p. 403). Leading, therefore, to changes in the alliances and the political goodwill between the imperial palace and the local notables.

On this subject Peter M. Beattie (2009, p. 73) stresses that:

Intrusion of public authority in private domains was never so diffuse or continuous; it ended up by displacing the balance of power between the realms of home and street. While this exercise of public authority was carried out through the traditional channels of patronage, mobilization for war eroded the ability of many patrons to protect themselves and their clients from state power.

In fact, the scale of mobilization for the war against the Republic of Paraguay "led the authorities to breach the rules previously applicable only to "the unprotected"(BEATTIE, 2009, p. 73). An example of the resistance to "intromission of public authority in private affairs" can be inferred from the report from the presidency of the province of Minas Gerais, where the provincial authority listed the hindrances faced for military recruiting for the war in the Plata region. To the higher authority of that province the obstacles to military service are mostly due to the existing "party spirit":

Increasingly unfair designations and dictated by party spirit are taking place. (...) I am not ready to see ignorance or lack of patriotism as the cause of the aversion to fulfillment the sacred duty of patriotism, but rather to the abuses of the designations, to local rivalries and poorly understood perspectives (RELATÓRIO DO PRESIDENTE DA PROVÍNCIA, 1865).

According to the above mentioned report, the obstacles to which military service was subject in the Minas Gerais province actually did not derive from "ignorance or lack of patriotism", but especially, from the "abuse of designations, local rivalries and poorly understood

perspectives". About this particular aspect, the "poorly understood perspectives" left margin to several strategies aimed at escaping military recruitment. Such stratagems went from last minute marriages, armed resistance supported by friends and family, escape to woods close by and even self-mutilation in more desperate cases (MENDES, 1997, p. 179).

Obviously, as evidenced in another report submitted by the president of the province of Minas Gerais, the authorities were paying attention to the ruses people resorted to evade military service:

The generally irregular qualifications, (...) were tainted to the point of preventing clear action by the government. (...). Those who qualified, for example, by being single in the previous year, produced evidence of having been married with children for many years; (...) (RELATÓRIO DO PRESIDENTE DA PROVÍNCIA, 1867).

As to the National Guard, as already mentioned, this institution was primarily responsible for driving recruits away from the Army⁶. With due consideration to the changes the corporation was subject to, most importantly, after the 1850⁷ reform, above all, for officers, being a guard meant status, and one of the ways of avoiding the feared and hated military conscription. Moreover, the prestige of many commanders of the National Guard was rooted on the ability to offer protection to his subordinates, especially protection from recruiting agents.

On this subject Aline Cordeiro Goldoni argues that the rank of officer of the civil corporation and, especially the rank of high commander:

[...] worked as an important tool for the exercise of local power, once the immense majority of municipal voters were under his command. Hence, the prestige of a commander was directly related to the degree of protection he would be able to afford his subordinates (GOLDONI, 2010, p. 105).

It was precisely the "degree of protection" that the higher commander could offer his subordinates that was the area of conflict between his authority and the need for recruits the central government required during the War against Paraguay. Evidently, the tacit agreements and alliances between local leaders and the imperial authorities were seriously shaken and, it can also be said, led to conflicts of interest in face of the war efforts of the Brazilian Empire. Somehow, among other skills, a higher commander was expected "to be sufficiently able to grant dispensations, arrange promotions, authorize exemption from active service and, most of all, to keep his "protégés"

⁶ However, the militia was not the only institution drawing potential recruits away from first line troops. There was also the Permanent Police Corps and the Police Guard that equally enlisted individuals to the detriment of army contingents (CASTRO, 1977, p. 79).

⁷ About the reform of the National Guard in 1850, see Saldanha, (2013).

save from recruiting for the Army, (...)" (GOLDONI, 2010, p. 105).

Evidence of the considerations above can be inferred from the words of the president of the province of Minas Gerais. To the leader of the provincial executive power, shortage of national guards did not result from a lack of "eligible personnel", but rather from an alleged "indolence of its commanders":

I am pained to tell you that to this date it has been impossible to send the full contingents required for this service, because under several allegations, with or without plausible reasons, the respective commanders excuse themselves, (...). Many efforts were made by my predecessor to obtain the contingents that have been requested, however, rebelling against any of such efforts, the National Guard has been shying away from fulfillment of its duty, and there is no question that this has been happening not for lack of eligible personnel, but due to the indolence of its commanders (RELATÓRIO DO PRESIDENTE DA PROVÍNCIA, 1869).

On this issue, as evidence of the conflict of interest, as well as of the capacity National Guard officer had to protect their subordinates from military service for the Paraguay War, we will analyze an extraordinary session of the Municipal Council of Uberaba where one of the councilmen submitted charges of irregular behavior by the higher commander of that town in the enlistment into the militia.

Before anything else, however, some considerations are needed about the city of Uberaba and its vicinities, that is, the region named Sertão da Farinha Podre.

The former Sertão da Farinha Podre⁸, currently Triângulo Mineiro (the Minas Triangle region) and part of the High Parnaíba river region, encompasses the westernmost region of the State of Minas Gerais. The area is delimited by river Grande, on the South, separating Minas Gerais from São Paulo. On the North, river Paranaíba marks the region of the border with Goiás. To the West, the confluence of rivers Grande and Paranaíba constitutes the border with Mato Grosso do Sul. Last, to the East, the region is delimited by the mountain ranges of Serra da Mata da Cordao and Canasta.

In political and administrative terms, between 1720 and 1748, the region of the so called Sertão da Farinha Podre belonged to the captaincy of de São Paulo. The region, however, was added to the captaincy of Goiás when it was created in 1748. In 1816 the region was again detached and added to the territory of the province of Minas Gerais (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 66).

⁸ The origin of the term "Sertão da Farinha Podre" (Backwoods of Rotten Flour) comes from the fact that the first explorers to reach the region, coming from Desemboque, marked the way by hanging bags full of flour on tree branches. On their way back, after long months, the flour was literally rotten and, therefore, unsuitable for consumption. Another version says the term came from a region in Portugal whose lands were reasonably similar to it. (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 51).

In the nineteenth century, especially, when the decade that started in 1830 was coming to an end, the region of Sertão da Farinha Podre became an importance center of agricultural-cattle breeding settlement. (LOURENÇO, 2005, p. 337). The agricultural-cattle breeding activity played a significant role in region economic development and in settlement centered, most of all, on salt trade and cattle breeding.

With respect to salt trade, the region of Uberaba outpaced the other regions, mostly due to the opening of roads for salt carrying. On this specific aspect “Uberaba became the leading center of salt distribution to an immense extensive cattle breeding area, which included Triângulo Mineiro, Goiás and Mato Grosso” (LOURENÇO, 2005, p. 329).

Salt trade led to the settlement of traders in Uberaba. From 1840 to 1850, Uberaba experienced a gradual population growth that resulted in the birth of a class of medium and large traders. All this led Uberaba to achieve a sound position “as the gate to the hinterlands, with very special characteristics: it was located between two leading cities - Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo –, and three regions – Triângulo [Mineiro], Goiás and Mato Grosso” (LOURENÇO, 2005, p. 339-40).

It is interesting to note that Uberaba was raised to the status of village by provincial law nr. 28, on February 22, 1836. Notwithstanding, the city council was only inaugurated on January 7, 1837 (PONTES, 1978, p. 84). About the legislatures of the Uberaba city council, it is interesting to note that as of the sixth legislature (1857-1861) the number of councilmen was increased from six to nine because the village had been granted the status of town in May of 1856. However, the analysis of the minutes of the inaugurations indicates that the number of councilmen ranged from nine to fifteen in each legislature (CORASPE; COUTINHO, 2012, p. 69).

With these brief considerations about the region we will now analyze the above mentioned session⁹.

The relevant session was held on February 25, 1867. It started with a speech by councilman Antônio Borges Sampaio about rallying national guards from Uberaba and Prata for the Paraguay War¹⁰:

Councilman [Antônio Borges] Sampaio [said] some nominees were in the barracks; fourteen came for enlistment, four of which had gone to fourth class, others were submitted to health inspection and also others had presented replacements and, in reality, despite the efforts of the Police Chief, and of all other persons in charge of assembling the contingent,

⁹ By the way, in view of the limitations of this paper we do not intend to describe the details of the historical origins of Uberaba and its surrounding region. At this point, we will follow closely the considerations presented by Marc Bloch and will not direct our focus to the origins. See (BLOCH, 2001).

¹⁰ The references to this session were researched in the Book of Minutes of the Sessions of the Uberaba City Council kept on the records of the Public Archives of Uberaba. Book 01, pages 254 to 262.

had faced significant problems, mostly due to the aversion of our people for the army career and to the size of the geographic region of Uberaba and Prata, that allowed the nominees to hide in the woods where they cannot be found, and where they can find abundant means of subsistence, the said Police Chief having evidenced that not a small number of deserters and nominees were in the woods of Rio Grande, in an island where, using rafts, they were able to communicate with the municipalities of Franca and Araxá, he proceeded to order search for them and their capture to no avail. (UBERABA, 1867)

The statement above evidences two parameters that have already been mentioned in this paper, namely, “aversion of our people to the military career” and the “size of the geographic territory of Uberaba and Prata”. As already said, the blood tribute was fiercely hated by the population and one of the ways of evading military service was to run away to the woods close by, or as transcribed above, to the “woods of Rio Grande”. This ruse gave rise to a proverb that became popular in the period: “God is great but the woods are even greater!” (TAUNAY, apud COSTA, 1996, p. 234). On this issue, it is interesting to observe that in 1867 a cartoon in the newspaper O Cabrião, in the province of São Paulo, depicted a “city full of wild animals that had replaced the men who were hiding in the woods to escape recruiting” (BEATTIE, 2009, p. 83).

Continuing with our considerations the speech delivered by Antônio Sampaio was challenged by councilman Wenceslau Pereira de Oliveira, who:

(...) reported that he was not questioning that the size of the territory provided designated guards means to hide themselves, but he saw other reasons why the designated National Guards refused to serve, not just now, but also at the time of the designation in December of 1866, and in 1865, because at the time of the first designation, out of the 132 National Guards called to serve in the municipalities of Uberaba and Prata, just 40 were found in the barracks, and after the designation in December, just one or two appeared for service, while 80 individuals had been designated, and in the current designation, encompassing both single and married men, to this very day, as we can see, the result is deplorable and mostly results from the unfair practices enforced for the nomination and the patronage granted to some guards, many of which were fit for War service and domiciled in this town. (UBERABA, 1867)

Councilmen Oliveira thought that the key obstacle faced when the time came to recruit national guards was not the “size of the territory” but that actually there were “other reasons that drove the National Guards to draw away from service”. To Oliveira the “unfair practices enforced for nomination and the patronage granted to some guards, many of which were fit for National Guard service and even have their domicile in this town”.

Challenged by Wenceslau Oliveira, Borges Sampaio claimed the accusation was groundless.

Wenceslau Oliveira, responded by saying that his claims were true and argued:

(...) that this was a public and generally accepted fact and that it was not all, as everybody knew that a relative of the High Commander had been designated to serve, and when the list of nominations was delivered to the Chief of Police for him to seize the guards, this authority ordered sentinels to be posted to capture that guard, but the High Commander went in and came out of his home and told the Police Chief that the guard they were looking for was not home, and later on, the said guard was spotted coming out of that home helped by a National Guard Officer who was also a relative of the High Commander. (UBERABA, 1867)

In face of the accusations brought forth by Oliveira claiming that this was a "public and generally accepted fact" and that as everybody knew "a relative of the High Commander had been nominated" and was "assisted by a National Guard Officer, Antônio Borges retorted:

(...), I must also say that appointed as I have been to the office of Overseer, an office that makes me proud, I warrant to this Assembly that no frauds are perpetrated at the High Command and the qualification books are never tampered with. The High Commander was accused of failing to nominate guards fit for War service, these guards were stationed at the barracks, some had gone to Ouro Preto accompanying prisoners and those who remained at the barracks were equally carrying out missions, withstanding rain, hard labor and days and nights of strenuous work and, additionally, if prevented from joining the contingent, they were and continue to be ready to be nominated and march, if necessary. (UBERABA, 1867)

In face of the altercation and mutual accusations exchanged by Sampaio and Oliveira, another councilman joined the discussion. This councilman was José Teixeira Alves de Oliveira, who stated before his fellow councilmen:

(...) that nominations were manifestly unfair, made at will and in the Conservative Party, and among Liberal Party followers, a grandson of Lieutenant Felisberto was the only liberal to be nominated. (...) [there is] another well known fact that in the last nomination single men were not called in and that some of them were protected by councilman Sampaio, and also that, on the day of the nomination, they were stationed at the barracks in this town under influence of said councilman. (...) everybody knows that, also a single man, (...), who had been nominated was exempted from service for being married, (...).(UBERABA, 1867)

The facts referred to above require some considerations. Who were councilmen Wenceslau

Pereira de Oliveira, Antônio Borges Sampaio and José Teixeira Alves de Oliveira? Unfortunately, about the first and the third ones there is not much information available. However, we have more accurate information about Antônio Sampaio. He was once a correspondent of the Brazilian Historical and Geographic Institute (IHGB) and equally of the Minas Gerais Public Archives (APM). According to the obituary published in the IHGB journal, Sampaio was a "diligent collector of interesting manuscripts and active recorder of current facts" (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 34).

Borges Sampaio was born in Portugal and came to Uberaba in 1847 to join the above mentioned salt trade in that city. When he first arrived to town he became a close friend of Antônio Elói Cassimiro de Araújo, the baron of Ponte Alta, a leading liberal party politician. As a result of this friendship, in 1849 Sampaio married His friend's sister Maria Cassimira de Araújo Sampaio. Besides his status as brother in law of the baron of Ponte Alta, Borges Sampaio's father in law was another important political leader in Uberaba and vicinities, namely canon Hermógenes Cassimiro de Araújo Brunswik, who is said to have founded the city of Sacramento in the province of Minas Gerais (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 37). This was an important local leader of the conservative party in the region of Sertão da Farinha Podre. He was a wealthy farmer, with considerable religious and political influence, and despite being a priest he had a numerous family and held civil and religious offices (DOMINGOS, 2007).

In Uberaba, Sampaio engaged in several activities¹¹ and was appointed to several offices. He was police chief, public prosecutor, pharmacist, councilman and officer of the National Guard. In the civil militia he served as a lieutenant-surgeon, and his post was raised to the rank of lieutenant colonel of the joint staff of the high command of Uberaba and Prata when the Paraguay War started. Because of the war Antônio Borges was in charge of organizing the military forces in Uberaba that would be marching towards Mato Grosso, from where the Paraguayan forces had invaded the Brazilian territory (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 39). Just for information purposes, with respect to the Paraguay War, Uberaba was the site of the stopover of a column sent to drive away the Paraguayan troops stationed in the region of Laguna. This column was rendered immortal by a famous book by the viscount of Taunay, *A Retirada da Laguna*¹².

About Sampaio's political career, some inferences can be made based on the writings of

¹¹ One of the actions implemented by Sampaio, was the urban census at the then Vila de Santo Antônio de Uberaba. This census enabled the Legislative Assembly in Minas Gerais to raise Uberaba to the category of city, in 1856. As a result Antônio Sampaio was seen in Uberaba as an honorable benefactor (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 39-40).

¹² See Taunay, (1997).

memorialist Hildebrando Pontes¹³. According to Pontes, Antônio Borges was a member of the liberal party. Mostly from 1861 onwards, his actions as a party member in Uberaba made him the target of criticism and anger from his conservative adversaries. They nicknamed him the “*jaguaririca* (ocelot) – that inflicts injury with its claws without showing them” (RISCHITELI, 2005, p. 40).

Based on the considerations above, we can infer the reasons that led councilmen Wenceslau Pereira de Oliveira and José Teixeira Alves de Oliveira to bring forward their accusations at the extraordinary meeting of the Uberaba City Council. Based on the information provided by Hildebrando Pontes, both were members of the conservative party and accused Sampaio of offering political patronage and protection to members of his party against recruiting for the Paraguay War¹⁴. On this subject we have a crystal clear example of how the pressure of the war effort on the Brazilian Empire kept in check the ability of National Guard commanders and other personalities enjoying social prestige and local political capital to protect their subordinates from the blood tribute.

But, and the City council session? In face of the charges brought forth, city council chairman Henrique Raimundo Des Genettes took the floor and said:

(...), unfortunate and painful is the position of a High Commander in current circumstances, faced with the harsh need to fulfill his duty in complying with the stands taken by his Country, his actions are always misinterpreted, it would be much better if all worked hand in hand to have the contingent marching out and exercise more caution with respect to the accusations (UBERABA, 1867)

Besides calling on support to bring together the group of national guards and asking for “more caution with respect to the accusations” by the end of the session chairman Des Genettes again took the floor and declared that the moment required:

¹³ Hildebrando de Araújo Pontes was born in 1879, in Jubá, district of Conquista in the region of Triângulo Mineiro. In the forties he published the book “*História de Uberaba e a civilização do Brasil central*”, where he depicts region customs, geographic aspects and the occupation of the territory of the Triângulo Mineiro. Pontes, however, is not a historian. His literary production about Uberaba and the region is classified as memorialist essays.

¹⁴ It is appropriate to ask, besides the political party membership, which were the reasons for the enmity between the above mentioned councilmen. Additionally, we could ask if they managed to establish relations at the court and in the city of Rio de Janeiro, considering the geographic, political and economic importance Uberaba enjoyed in that period. These and other questions are the object of analysis and research in the project named “*No sertão se constrói a Nação: elites regionais e a formação do Estado imperial no Sertão da Farinha Podre*” now being developed at the department of History at Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro as a project of scientific initiation funded by FAPEMIG between August, 2012 and July, 2013 and August, 2014 and July, 2015.

(...) enmity to be set aside [and] a circular letter to be sent to all authorities, all influential citizens, all parents and relatives of the nominees, to persuade them to convince their relatives [and] their children, or any people they might influence (UBERABA, 1867).

This was not just a random appeal for mutual animosity to be set aside. After all, this was the year 1867 and the war against the Republic of Paraguay was far from to the end. Somehow, it was necessary at least to set aside the political rivalries and concentrate efforts on rounding up troops and sending them to the theater of war. Something, we deem hard to be achieved in view of the local protection and privilege networks that this paper intended to illustrate by describing the session of the City Council of Uberaba.

For now, considering the scope of this paper, based on the considerations of Jeanne Berrance de Castro (1977, p. 81) we can conclude that :

The qualification-recruiting problem was associated to political injustices. The qualification of national guards carried out at the small nuclei of curates and parishes frequently bowed to local political party interests, their voter status was recognized. While often freeing them from recruitments, on the other hand qualification subjected them to the rule of the local political party.

It can be inferred then that recruiting required negotiating and agreements to meet the “political demands” and e “local political party interests”. In this scenario, the National Guard represented an institutionalized network whereby to escape conscription for military service, once “individuals of a certain social standing” were accepted in the Guard, while the Army recruited “all negative elements of the population” that is, unproductive individuals, who had practically no chance of enlisting in the National Guard” (CASTRO, 1977, p. 82).

Nonetheless, it should be taken into account that the civilian militiamen, although exempted from military service, were subject to the ascendancy of the local party¹⁵, with duties and obligations to be complied with inside the patronage networks. Additionally, as already mentioned, the outbreak of the war against the republic of Paraguay tested the ability to protect the members of the militia who were caught up in the local protection networks.

Last, we would like to conclude this paper by revisiting an item that has already been approached, namely: the transformation of the roles assigned to the National Guard and the Army along the Brazilian State-building process in the imperial period. During, and most of all, as of the end of the conflict with Paraguay, the roles of the National Guard and the Army were subject to significant changes. The civilian militia was the target of a reform on September of 1873, which, if not actually abolished, removed all of its military obligations assigning it a purely political role¹⁵.

¹⁵ Just for information purposes, the National Guard was extinguished in May of 1918. For further details see Faria (1977).

As to the Army, as years went by after the Paraguay War, it ceased to be "a penal destination and a police force", which formerly had been the "most consistent of its roles" (BEATTIE, 2009, p. 29). Clear evidence of this change is provided by the debate around the military draws. The theme of the debates was changing the Army into an institution to prevent social reform. This time, "instead of policing family honor, coercing the refractory individuals, conscription was aimed at winning over the hearts, minds, the bodies and even the genes of the poor honorable men to a nationalist and eugenic cause" (BEATTIE, 2009, p. 39).

On this issue, we are faced with a nationalist design project, which according to Beattie, universal male conscription would enable Brazilians from all social classes to feel part of an homogenous citizenship¹⁶. According to this author, "as illusory as they may seem, these concepts enabled nationalism to become increasingly ingrained in the population. They also weakened the traditional ideals of racial, social and gender hierarchies, but without becoming weaker" (BEATTIE, 2009, p. 39).

Despite all these issues, military service conscription remained in the popular minds as a synonym of punishment, deprivation and restriction of the mobility enjoyed by the majority of free and poor men in the Brazilian Empire. "On the horizons of invisibility of the population"¹⁷, the adult, male population old enough to become productive, became, so to speak, invisible, either in the local clientelism protection networks, or at the remotest and deserted corners of the Brazilian Empire, escaping to the woods nearby, despite the development of State that was slowly taking shape.

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¹⁶ About the homogenous and universal citizenship, the members of the republican movement in Brazil, supported the thesis that the Republic would bring about actual access to this citizenship. Some even argued that the military would become the interpreters and the tool needed to achieve this goal. It is necessary, however to stress that the proclamation of the republic did not result solely from the action of the military. In the military category, especially the low ranking officers and cadets of the Military School were directly involved in the events of November 15. Hence ensigns, generals and most of the higher ranking officers were excluded. See Castro (1995).

¹⁷ Expression borrowed from Antônio Manoel Hespanha, apud (MENDES, 1997, p. 159).

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