

## ***The Military and the (Colonial) Policing of Mainland Portugal, 1850–1910***

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‘Living among the rank and file while policing the remote countryside, marching with the recruits and making them police popular fairs, religious pilgrimages and election days, was the way my generation learnt the soldier’s psychology’

(Marshall Gomes de Costa, 1930: 34).<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction: The Military and Policing**

Policing the countryside was the main task of the Portuguese army during the second half of the nineteenth century. The military also had a crucial role in the policing of the Portuguese colonies, especially after the occupation campaigns of the 1890s. In order to understand how they approached that task in the colonies, it is essential to have a clear picture of the centrality of the army as police in metropolitan Portugal. This chapter assesses the nature and extent of these policing duties from the 1850s (when the constitutional monarchy became a stable regime) to the 1920s (when the republican reforms changed the picture), underlining the links between the military policing of both European and colonial Portugal. In addition, as both the civilian and the military elite depicted the rural and illiterate populations that they policed as a savage *other*, this chapter also sketches the quasi-colonial appreciation of the metropolitan rural poor that guided the military’s policing

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall Gomes de Costa (1863-1929) was one of the most respected officers of the Portuguese Army. He had a long military career in Africa, took part in colonial administration and commanded the Portuguese Forces in France during the World War I. In 1926 he headed the coup that overthrew the democratic republic, but he soon ceded leadership to General Oscar Carmona.

actions. Michel Foucault's insights on the continuities between colonial and internal governance led to a new approach to the history of policing during the 1980s and Mike Brogden (1987) made the case for the colonial undertones of the British new police in the nineteenth century. This chapter situates Portugal within these debates, also stressing that the military fully belong to the history of policing, both in the colonial and in the metropolitan contexts.

The following pages first propose a comparative assessment of the role of the army in the policing of metropolitan Portugal during the second half of the 19 century. The discussion then moves on to explain the underdevelopment of the Portuguese professional police forces and to assess the workings of the policing arrangements that constitutional governments put in place. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the validity of the idea of internal colonialism to make sense of the policing of the Portuguese countryside. The final section explores the values attached to the experience of policing by the military and the looping circulations between the military policing of colonial and metropolitan Portugal.

### **A Country Without a Gendarmerie**

Historians like to pinpoint novelty, foundation dates and first usages. On the other hand, as the revisionist accounts of the history of technology remark, in order to make sense of what was going on in a particular time and place, we should not focus on innovation, but on technological volume, that is, in 'the sheer amount of technologies in use at a specific time' (Cordeiro 2013:106). This change of emphasis is also an interesting reminder for the history of police and policing. Traditional histories of the Portuguese police were focused on the first modern and professional Portuguese policemen, bringing attention to the foundation dates of the Royal Police Guard (1802), the Municipal Guard (1834) or the Civil Police (1867) (Noronha 1950, Lapa 1953, 1955, Barreto 1979). However, all these dates have a blind spot: while the three cited forces were urban police, nineteenth century

Portugal was a predominantly rural country. Lisbon was a big city by European standards and the policing of the capital was an important issue (Gonçalves 2012), but at the beginning of the twentieth century, three-quarters of the population still lived in villages of less than 2,000 inhabitants. Portugal became an urbanized country much later, specifically in the 1960s (Valério 2001). The same point is valid when applied to the Portuguese African colonies –although not so much to Goa or Macau– where a clear distinction has to be drawn between urban and rural policing, as Gonçalves and Cachado highlight in their contribution to this volume.

To understand how most of the Portuguese land and its people were policed during the nineteenth century, we have to turn to the organisation of policing duties in the countryside. At the same time, if we want to understand transfers and continuities between metropolitan and colonial policing in the Portuguese empire, we may well begin by stressing that policing in metropolitan Portugal was not something that was only performed by salaried state appointed policemen.

The Portuguese military had a central role in policing. This would not come as a surprise, as it is well known that, during the nineteenth century, the army was used for crowd control all over Europe (Johansen 2005). Nonetheless, there was a crucial difference between Portugal and the other colonial powers. Although from the 1830s onwards, liberal Portugal broke with the *Ancien Régime* and followed the well-known Napoleonic blueprint of centralisation, the Portuguese government did not establish its usual policing companion, a national gendarmerie, at that particular time. This left a void in the grid of policing that the army was called to fill.

Gendarmeries were a common feature of most European nineteenth century landscapes. The original French model was first exported during the Napoleonic Wars: Bavaria and Prussia adopted their own forces in 1812, followed in 1814 by the Low

Countries, Piedmont, Tyrol and the Austrian Lombardy. The Spanish Civil Guard, in turn, was created in 1844. After the suppression of the 1848 revolutions, Vienna's government deployed its gendarmerie across the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In addition, in the newly unified Italy of the 1870s, the *Carabinieri*, already in place in Piedmont, became one of the tools for the administrative integration of the country (Emsley 1999).

'Since the deployment of the Civil Guard in Spain', read the Portuguese *Revista Militar* in 1861 'the Army there does not patrol the streets anymore, or police theatres and bullfights' (RM, XIII, 1861: 12). In most of Europe the deployment of constabularies allowed the Army to reduce its policing role to crowd control during big collective threats, such as waves of rioting and large labour strikes (González Calleja 1998, Johansen 2005, Emsley 2005). At first, Portugal seemed to be following the same pattern, but the embryonic gendarmerie that was created in 1838 was disbanded in 1842. The renunciation of professional police for the countryside meant that the military remained a cornerstone of policing during the second half of the nineteenth century. This military pre-eminence endured until the deployment of a true national gendarmerie, the GNR (*Guarda Nacional Republicana* –National Republican Guard) in the aftermath of the 1910 republican revolution (Lloyd-Jones and Palacios Cerezales 2007).

### **Policing Alternatives in the Early Years of Liberalism**

Some kind of gendarmerie for Portugal had been projected since the short-lived times of the 1822 constitution. The idea resurfaced after 1834, when absolutism was defeated for good, and liberals had the opportunity to devise a new administrative structure for the country. Liberals divided metropolitan Portugal into 'districts', inspired by the French *departements*, and a government-named 'civil governor' was put at the top of each of them (Silveira 1997, Manique 1989). Then the government created a civil police for Lisbon and Porto, called the Municipal Guard (1834), a citizen's militia called the National Guard

(1835) and, finally, the so-called Public Security Corps (*Corpos de Segurança Pública*), which were small military detachments who served under the supervision of the provincial civil governors and could have become the embryo of a national gendarmerie-type force.

The consolidation of these forces became problematic. The following two decades were full of political turmoil, division among conservative and radical liberals, popular resistance against the new liberal State and renewed civil war (Ferreira 2002, Bonifácio 1992). During those struggles, it became apparent that some of the citizen militias and security corps were just a formalization of the power that local bosses had hoarded during the civil war. Meanwhile, popular resistance hindered the normal workings of justice and taxation.

As open confrontation seemed endemic, pacification grew into a key concern for leading politicians in Lisbon, who sought to gain control of every armed body in the country as well as the general disarmament of the population. In 1838, most of Lisbon's National Guard was disbanded after some bloody clashes with the Army, and the same was done all over the country when guardsmen appeared to act with independence vis-à-vis the wishes of the government. In fact, during the 1840s the citizen militia almost disappeared thanks to governmental abandonment (Pata 2004). In 1842, it was the turn of the provincial Public Security Corps. Some units had sided with the liberal left during political disturbances, while others had mutinied due to the late payment of their salaries. Despite some civil governors' claims that more regular salary payment and some organizational improvements were a better option, the government also disbanded this nascent gendarmerie. Lisbon's and Porto's Municipal guards, in turn, were fully militarized. The militarization had begun as early as 1836, but in 1851 these constabularies were integrated into the army as special units for the garrisoning of the two main cities. Finally, the army also campaigned for the confiscation of those military weapons in the hands of the Portuguese civilian population.

General disarmament and the monopolization of organized armed force by the military allowed the country to enter into a more pacific phase during the 1850s. This came in tandem with political reconciliation within both the civilian elites and the military, which were awarded with a so-called ‘monster promotion’ of all officers, regardless of their past political allegiances. On the other hand, as the National Guard and the Security Corps had been disbanded, in most of the country the army was the only institution left with the potential to mobilise organised coercive force to enforce the law. Pacification came at the price of institutional underdevelopment. Future projects for the creation of provincial police recommended prudence and highlighted how past experiences with militias and security corps ran the risk of them becoming uncontrolled guerrilla bands. (*DCD*, 20 June 1854: 286; *REAP Beja*, 15 September 1859)

### **Self-Policing: The Parish Constables**

Another alternative to the creation of police forces was the mobilization of local communities for self-policing. Different forms of self-policing had existed during the *Ancien Regime* and the National Guard had somehow revived that tradition, but the centralising drive that marked Portuguese liberalism in the 1840s meant that most of the policing duties were entrusted to a top-down hierarchy of delegates under the supervision of the civil governor: an ‘administrator’ in every municipality –usually recruited among the locally rooted gentry; and, one sheriff (*regedor*) under him in every parish. This parish sheriff was to be assisted by a number of parish constables (*cabos de polícia*), one for every eight houses.

Teixeira de Macedo, following the administrative code, calculated that there were 4,000 parish sheriffs and 30,000 constables all over the country (Macedo 1984 [1880]). On paper, the system could appear as a vast and powerful machine of civil governors, administrators, sheriffs and constables running from the heights of the *Ministério do Reino*

(Ministry of the Realm) in Lisbon to the most remote mountain parish (Catroga 2006, Santos 2001). In fact, ‘the rays of central power become weak and colourless as they reach the extremities’, wrote Aveiro’s civil governor in 1858 (*REAP*, Aveiro, 1858). The vast numbers of parish sheriffs and constables were a theoretical proposition that was never achieved in practice. In addition, these men were part-time non-professional police; they were neither trained, nor armed, nor paid, nor uniformed. They were not even integrated into a defined command structure. Constables had no working schedule and were not paid for their services. Instead, they were at the orders of the administrator whenever he needed them, and even then, only for services within the parish where they lived.

The collection of the civil governors yearly reports about the administrative improvements of their districts offers a useful bottom-up evaluation of the rural police (*REAP*, 1856–62). The spirit of the law supposed that these were voluntary offices to be held by the socially prominent, but the gentry very often refused to collaborate. As there were not many volunteers, the administrator could force any citizen to serve as parish constable for a year. Occasionally, ‘appointing someone constable meant making a new political foe’ (*REAP*, Portalegre, 1865: 5). Nomination for policing service was a kind of punishment, and during election time the political opponents’ supporters could be appointed constables ‘and receive the order to guard their own houses in order to prevent them from campaigning’. In the 1880 election, ‘in Vila Nova de Gaia 580 parish constables were named; in Vila do Conde, 605; in Sintra, 638, and most of them because they were against the government’ (*DCD*, 16 January 1880: 461). Due to the refusal to serve by the socially prominent, added to the coercive nature of the nomination and the elasticity of the constable’s obligations, the administrators used their power to nominate constables in order to reinforce their own patronage networks (Macedo 1984, *Um liberal* 1858). As a result, the parish constables were conscripted among the less powerful, usually workingmen who lost

their subsistence wages every time they made a policing service. The quality and reliability of this police were low. As a former civil governor said ‘sometimes the constables accomplish a valuable policing service [...] if they are not knifing someone in a tavern’ (*DCP*, 2 July 1878: 35). The civil governors yearly reports repeat the same idea: the system was ‘a simulacrum of police’ (*REAP, Leiria*, 1858: 12); the constables had neither social authority nor motivation and were not reliable enough to grant them arms permits (Bulhões 1867, Mendonça 1866). The fiscal authorities also complained that, during open conflicts, sheriffs and constables were prone to side with the people they belonged to (Roma 1857; AMR–ANTT, L 38 n° 904, 23 July 1888).

### **The Army as Police**

The parish constables’ shortcomings as police meant that civil governors and municipal administrators requested military support whenever they needed to capture a criminal, police a rural fair or a seasonal market, maintain order during court hearings, or control civil unrest. Harvest policing, riot suppression, customs enforcement, tax collection, criminal detention, elections, prison guarding, and even collecting tolls in roads and bridges were duties the Portuguese army performed during the nineteenth century.

The 1842 decree that dissolved the regional Public Security Corps outlined how the Army's policing role would function:

‘The Army’s duty, during peacetime, is to maintain the State’s internal security and to enforce the Law, supplying all the support that the due magistrates may ask for. [...] The policing service will be performed by the regular army regiments. The civil governors have to accord the service with the commander of each regional military division, who should give orders to provide the necessary force for the said service, following the guidelines agreed by both authorities.’ (*Diário do Governo* n° 239, 10 October 1842)



This arrangement stayed in full force for more than sixty years, and only began to lose its validity in the 1910s, when the GNR was deployed. That said, it is important to notice that the army did not perform policing duties as an inborn mission. Despite some projects favouring such development, it did not become a *de facto* gendarmerie. Its policing role, albeit constant, was that of a military aid to the civil power – in short, a muscle provided to unarmed civil authorities.

The contrast between the Portuguese and the Spanish case also is worth stressing, as the army's policing role did not lead to a militarisation of the administration similar to that of the neighbouring country. Spain, in addition to deploying the Civil Guard since the late 1840s, widely used the army to quell civil disorder. In contrast to Portugal, however, the Spanish army did not agree to act as an aid to the civil power and, in order to intervene, stepped into the civilian prerogative, imposed martial law, and acting as a military government (Ballbé 1984, Risques I Corbella 1995, González Calleja 1998). The Spanish army did not wait for the government or parliament to decree martial law. The regional army commander (*Capitan General*) would make a consultation with the local civil governor and would then take the decision himself. Rioters or strikers detained by the army in Spain were court-martialled; in Portugal, the army delivered them to the civil justice.

This greater respect for civilian power in Portugal was a legacy from William Carr Beresford's reconstruction of the Portuguese Army, which he had headed from 1809 to 1820, when he was ousted by a revolution. His 1816 army regulations departed from the previously practiced extension of military jurisdiction over rioters.<sup>2</sup> Beresford's role as Lord Protector in Portugal during the 1810s, while the Portuguese Royal family resided in Brazil, in tandem with the prominence of British officers within the Portuguese Army, were often depicted as a kind of British colonialism (Carvalho, 1830: 212). In this vein, this civilian

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<sup>2</sup> *Regulamento para a organização do exército em Portugal*. Lisboa, Imprensa Régia. Esp. Art XXX n 2 and art. XXXII n 7. These army regulations overwrote the *alvarás* of 20 December 1784 and 10 August 1790, which had subjected rioters to military authority.

legacy may also be understood as a kind of colonial transfer of policing practices that lasted until the further militarisation of public order during the 1910–1926 republic.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, neither the military nor the civil governors liked the army to be used as police. The army only policed at the request of the civil authorities, but the latter complained that, once the military received their orders, they didn't have any say on how policing operations were to be conducted. For the civil governors, the military as policemen were insufficiently flexible and, as their network of barracks was not designed for policing purposes, they often arrived too late. For the army, as will later be discussed, the scattering of the regiments on small police detachments meant that they could not focus on their main purpose: preparation for war.

The Portuguese army has not retained any institutional memory of this policing role. Even the recent publications, such as the *New Military History of Portugal* (Barata 2003), do not address policing in the volume dealing with the nineteenth century. In addition, the Portuguese Army's archives are organised in such a way that scholars can only do research into military campaigns, or on some major mobilisations for crowd control. All the paperwork on everyday policing activities such as the maps of the territorial distribution and the movement of military patrols, that regional military headquarters had to produce on a monthly basis, have hitherto escaped from historians. Only one such map, published in *Revista Militar* in 1849 (vol. I, 1849: 21–22), makes a first approach to the volume of the Army's policing activity possible. In that year, 60 infantry detachments ranging in size from 3 to 295 men slept all over the country, away from their regimental barracks, on a daily basis, guarding posts and dealing with policing activities. These numbers did not comprise the cavalry squadrons that usually patrolled highways, nor the short-term detachments that the civil authorities asked for when they needed to perform special tax collection operations, capture criminals, organise quarantine lines, enforce the monopolistic cultivation of the

tobacco plant or police seasonal courts and fairs.

Policing was such a central activity for the army that, in 1850, when the government tried to cut the military budget, it asked the provincial civil governors if the number of soldiers could be reduced 'without making public service suffer.'<sup>3</sup> Contrary to the desired response, they answered that they needed more troops on an everyday basis, and that they also feared renewed waves of food and tax rioting such as that of 1846 (AHM, 3<sup>a</sup> Div, Secç. 50 Cx. 6 Doc. 3). Their worries were not groundless, and major waves of rural rioting took place again in 1861–62, 1867–70, 1882, 1888 and 1893–94.

Despite the 'aid to the civil power' role that was assumed by the army, its network of barracks was not designed for policing the countryside, nor was it designed for defence against Spain. The border fortresses were almost abandoned, while the barracks were distributed following a non-systematic pattern derived from the contingencies of the civil war contingencies and the availability of suitable buildings such as confiscated monasteries (Maya 1887, Oliveira 1993). The lack of a planned deployment meant that policing services sometimes necessitated that the troops march for three or four days in order to get to the designated place. Coastal naval transport was often used for the deployment of troops during periods of major unrest and from the 1860s onwards, the telegraph and the first railroads improved the logistics of the army in fulfilling its internal mission. Nevertheless, the infrastructural capabilities of the Portuguese State remained low. In 1893, when riots were expected in Fafe due to rising grain prices, an infantry detachment was sent from Viana do Castelo. It took four days marching for them to cover the 85 km (Castro 1947).

Many of the reformers who dreamed of a proficient and war-ready army saw the policing service as the main obstacle to the army improving its military performance. For the military, acting as 'vile policemen' was not their true mission (Salgado 1862). They

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<sup>3</sup> Circular do Ministerio da Guerra para os governadores civis, 26 February 1849 AHM, 3<sup>a</sup> Divisão, Secção 50 (Diversos) Cx. 6 Doc. nº 3

resented the regiments being subdivided into policing detachments, which meant that they could hardly be trained for external and colonial war: 'the *esprit-de-corps* vanished' and 'discipline suffered' (Pimentel, 1868: 6). According to Fontes Pereira de Melo, the most prominent Portuguese statesman of the second half of the nineteenth century, the arrangement meant that Portugal had 'neither a true police nor a true army' (Coelho 1877: 238). In addition, the strategic defence of the realm against Spain was in hands of the British alliance, which hurt the patriotic pride of some officers. The status quo satisfied nobody, but as the Minister of War declared in the 1860s, 'as no war is probable for the next 30 years and the treasury is paying for an army, it is reasonable to make something useful of it as police' (Sá da Bandeira: *DCD* n° 92, 14 June 1862: 1644).

In fact, the half a dozen aborted projects for the deployment of a new national gendarmerie discussed in Parliament between 1850 and 1910 always stressed that both the army and the civil policing service would benefit from it. Nevertheless, the political power of the big landowners was strong enough to abort the gendarmerie projects. Big property was neither pressed by criminality nor by social struggle, so landowners did not want to pay for a gendarmerie. At the same time, they dodged taxation thanks to the State's low infrastructural power. In fact, big landowners were the main beneficiaries of the anti-tax riots of the 1860s and 1880s, which succeeded in maintaining rural wealth outside the State's fiscal knowledge (Palacios Cerezales 2013).

In 1888, the Ministry of War was in the hands of Vizconde de S. Januário, a general seasoned in colonial government. He was determined to improve the army's training for war, so he wanted to force parliament to approve the creation of a national gendarmerie. That year had been riotous during winter and spring, but he established higher requirements for the civil authorities to obtain military aid (*DCD*, 14 June 1888, p. 1976). Then, in August, he announced that during September and October the Army would perform large

military exercises, and would not, therefore, be available for policing duties. He subsequently ordered every military detachment to join its original regiment: sentries disappeared from public vaults, judicial buildings and prisons, while cavalry squadrons ceased to patrol the major highways. In order to fill the gaps, civil governors overloaded their small civil police forces and ordered the unpaid parish constables to abandon their private occupations in favour of public service, resulting in an explosion of complaints. Civil governors were alarmed, especially when their requests for military aid for major fairs and markets were declined. The *Ministério do Reino* [Ministry of the Realm – in charge of home affairs] was flooded with letters: the menace of riots was widespread and civil authorities feared that the ‘bad tempered’ rural populations would take advantage of the lack of armed support to renew the customary attacks on tax and recruitment offices. They also feared robberies by wandering gypsies and all kinds of moral and social disorder caused by railway construction workers. Appealing to the military's self-interest, the civil authorities underlined that, without armed support, the recruitment of new conscripts had to be halted.<sup>4</sup>

The general clamour increased tension between the *Ministério do Reino* and the *Ministério da Guerra* (‘Ministry of War’). Finally, short-term security concerns prevailed, and the Ministry of War had to concede. By the middle of September the army was again policing fairs and festivals; sentries returned and, once again, the desired gendarmerie was postponed. The Army’s challenge had failed.

The centralization of the Army's policing operations payments in the *Ministério do Reino* offers the opportunity to obtain some systematic information about the Army's involvement in policing during the 1880s. Over 60% of the policing services for pilgrimages and fairs were provided during the summer when most of these gatherings took place. Archival sources also confirm something already pointed out in several military

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Copiador de correspondencia expedida, AMR-ANTT L 38 nº , 209, 239, 864, 1091, 1103, 1051, 1156, September-October 1888.

memoirs: there was no policing specialization among the different regiments and only the aristocratic units around the Royal Palace in Lisbon were free from policing duties (Costa 1930b). Each season, it was the factors of recruitment and training that determined which units would be more involved in policing. During summer, one third of the regiments were scattered into policing detachments, while the rest only performed a couple of policing missions and concentrated on drilling and manoeuvres.

### **Internal Colonialism.**

The image of the domestic missionary Robert Storch applied to the English policeman in ‘a battle with local custom and popular culture’ cannot be directly projected on to the policing service of the Portuguese military (Storch 1976: 481). Their more restricted role as an aid to the civil power limited their interaction with the civil population. On the other hand, numerous military reformers proposed the army itself as a school for the nation. A true national army would make all classes of society serve in equal terms, and teach the illiterate rank and file how to read and write, uprooting superstition and favouring patriotism. In fact, conscription was far from universal, and it was suffered only by the powerless. In addition, regimental schools hardly functioned, so the army seldom played this educational and nationalizing role.

In connection with the civilizing role towards the whole population, numerous military writers affirmed that the Army, by deterrence, guaranteed that Portuguese society did not disintegrate into chaos. However, they agreed that a true civilising result could only be achieved if a gendarmerie was deployed (Breyner 1862, Maya 1887). To exemplify the civilizing role of a gendarmerie, they usually made comparisons with Spain. According to them, in Portugal, twenty soldiers were needed to patrol a fair and prevent brawls, while in the other side of the border, despite the hypothetical hot blood of the Spaniards, a couple of Civil Guards were usually enough (Machado 1888)

Not being a civilizing force, the Army was nonetheless an active part of the apparatus to impose national law over local custom and popular resistance. The military officers belonged to the social and political elite and shared the same distant view of the ordinary people – ‘*o povo*’. By ‘*povo*’ they meant the illiterate peasants they had to deal with during seasonal fairs and food and tax riots, the masses that, at the same time, were the pool of recruitment for their rank and file. As Rui Ramos (2004) has argued, the liberal elite recognized themselves as those who had recently risen above the general mass of the people and the only ones to have a vested interest in the independence of the nation. They assumed that the populace were indifferent to their patriotic and progressive sentiment. Persistently high illiteracy levels came to illustrate the reluctance or incapacity of the rural masses –that is, most of the Portuguese– to join the liberal community. Thus they saw the state as an instrument through which to create a community of civic-minded individuals out of a hostile mass of superstitious and unpatriotic peasants. In general, liberals treated the *povo* as children under tutelage. This was the same as they treated indigenous peoples in the colonies; and a suspicion of the masses led liberals, who did not share the traditional reverence for religious traditions, to use the Catholic clergy as an instrument of popular control (Neto 1998). When in 1911 the Republican government divided the inhabitants of the colonies into *citizens* and *natives*: ‘those born of native parents and who by education and habits were not distinct from the common of their race’ (Silva 2010: 53), the Portuguese authorities were resorting to a distinction between nationality and citizenship that had been commonplace since the 1830s to deal with the rural poor. The natives were nationals, and had rights guaranteed by the Portuguese state. But they were not citizens. Thus, the ‘colonial utilization of the citizen/national dichotomy reveals the relation between the enlightened urban elite and the illiterate rural masses in Portugal itself as a case of internal colonialism [...] As in Africa, the citizens awarded themselves the right to rule and direct

their backward compatriots in the name of a natural superiority' (Ramos 2004: 102).

The political elite saw popular protest as a kind of natural phenomenon. The passivity of the *povo* or their mobilisation in the face of any public policy, such as taxation, was something that defined the field of possibilities in the political system, but the political elites never thought of the lower classes as potential allies. They were just *povo*, not citizens, not identifiable groups with partial interests that could be incorporated into the political game. The category of '*povo*' worked as a tag of exclusion; it was the name for all the social groups excluded from political decision-making (Valente 1981).

The military elite often depicted the rural and illiterate populations that they policed as a savage *other* who, like the soldiers, only understood force (Mendonça 1866, Gonçalves 1921). 'Iroquois' (a derogatory comparison alluding to Native American tribes), 'imbecile' and 'savage' could easily combine in a paragraph about Portuguese rural rioters (Guimaraes 1863)

In the absence of day-to-day policing, and not believing that 'in the actual state of civilisation' the rural populations could voluntarily comply with the law, the military devised a routine of intervention in rural disturbances based on what they called 'the re-establishment of the authority principle' (Palacios Cerezales, 2007). This meant that any punctual victory of the rioters over the authorities had to be erased from the public imagination by an energetic display of force, and by making the rebel communities pay, often through the billeting of troops. In 1862 and 1868, when tax riots became widespread, the military established special 'flying police columns' (*colunas volantes de policia*). Located in key communications points, these mobile units were always ready to be dispatched wherever necessary. Mike Brogden, dealing with the British case, identified task forces for outside excursions as a mode of intervention at odds with consent-based policing that linked colonial and metropolitan practices in Britain (Brogden, 1987). In Portugal, this



mode of deployment of military force was to be replicated in the African colonies after the 1901 military reorganisation (Castro, 1907).

All the same, while minor technological and logistical advantages over the native chiefdoms, such as patrolling gunboats, made it possible for small Portugal to acquire and control big chunks of Africa (Telo 1994), the military saw their cohesion, communications and superior weaponry as the basis of their ultimate success during the campaigns against rural rioting in metropolitan Portugal. As one military commander explained during the 1862 riots, the long range of the new Enfield rifle made it possible for 40 soldiers to stop a crowd of ‘four or five thousand peasants.’ (AMR–ANTT, *Mç.* 3004, L 13 Oficio 1092, 5th of May 1862 Telgr. n° 2)

Rural policing would only be revamped after the 1910 republican revolution, but the new policing trends, amidst anxieties with the new workers militancy and fear of counter–revolutionary revolts, would also have a quasi–colonial flavour. Republicans were an urban minority that, considering the backwardness of the *povo*, feared that ‘only the reactionary priests and landowners who dominated the rural masses would benefit from universal suffrage and the devolution of power to the provinces’ (Ramos 2004: 101). They had a democratic program, but ‘democracy’ for them was a future stage in the development of the country, something that could only come about once they had eradicated illiteracy and superstition. Therefore, they stripped 375.000 illiterate heads of household of the voting rights they previously had enjoyed (Almeida 2006).

The military were also employed to conquer the hearts and minds of the rural populations. During 1911 and 1912 the republican military embarked on a series of propaganda missions in the rural north ‘to publicize the benign accomplishments of the provisional government’ (AHM, I Div, sec. 34 cx. 6 doc. 14). This was a kind of propaganda action that the military would again do in Africa in the 1960s, trying to

undermine the appeal of the independence movements (Cann, 1997). Then, the deployment of the new national gendarmerie, the GNR, was not conceived just as a provision of policing, but also as the arrival of the republic to the countryside. With the GNR, the Portuguese government, the new national colours and the Republic itself were made present in every small village at least once a week. The guards had to collaborate with local authorities, but they only obeyed their own chain of command; they belonged to a centralised national organisation that represented the Republic and, as dutiful bearers of the Republican promise of national resurgence, they didn't easily compromise with local power equilibria (Lloyd-Jones and Palacios Cerezales 2007).

### **Learning to Police**

Despite its everyday involvement as an aid to the civil power, the army did not develop a training program for policing duties. In fact, as we have seen, military writers usually despised policing operations and blamed the continual scattering of the regiments for their poor level of battle readiness. On the other hand, a few officers welcomed the policing operations as an opportunity to see some real action. In addition, policing services were paid by the *Ministério do Reino*, and the extra money that younger officers and NCOs received from civil authorities was an interesting reward. 'I have never been so rich', remembered Gomes da Costa, 'as a lieutenant in 1885, when I was paid for 15 months of duty in a sanitary cordon in the Spanish frontier. I had saved 20,000 reis; I was a prince!' (Costa 1930: 39)

Army officers learned how to deal with policing duties by on-the-job training. After the 1842 general instructions for the military to aid the civil power cited above, several army general orders (*ordens de serviço*) tried to clarify how different policing missions had to be performed. Since the 1870s, compilations of orders were regularly reprinted in policing handbooks for army officers (Silva 1876, Costa 1889, Vidigal 1905). These

unofficial manuals also gave advice based on 'experience and common sense', because a lot of services 'were not clearly fixed by law and only experience and practice may teach the better methods' (Silva 1876: 66).

In 1889 a new army code thoughtfully explained the principles of military aid to the civil authorities. First, in every barracks a picket should always be ready to answer the call of duty. When a detachment was mobilized to help the civil power, its mission had to be clearly stated and the civil authorities could not employ the men for any other purpose without previous authorisation from the provincial military government. Only in cases of urgent need could the civil authorities ask the commanding officer to perform a different policing duty, but even then the request had to be made in writing or in the presence of some witnesses. This was crucial to maintain the functional distinction between the military and civilian authorities. The former should not invade the civilians' jurisdiction, while the latter should not resign their responsibility. The commanding officer or NCO had sole responsibility for the operational performance of the mission and a soldier, not even rank and file, should never take direct orders from a civilian, regardless of their administrative status (Secr. de Estado dos Negócios da Guerra 1889).

How did the army perform the more common policing operations? The most reprinted handbook recommended that for the policing of a rural market, a fair or any other collective gathering, the military force had to be stationed in a cleared position 200 metres apart from the gathering. The commanding officer had to resist any demand from the civil authorities to scatter the force in patrols or sentries and had to maintain it ready for collective intervention. Diverse evidence shows that sometimes administrators and excise collectors managed to get personal escorts from the Army during periods of riots but, since the 1880s, civil policemen detached from the provincial capitals began to perform those roles, the Army acting only as a reserve force (Palacios Cerezales 2008).

During policing services, it was usual for the Army officers to train their men to swing the rifle as a blunt weapon, contrary to service orders, because the bayonet was potentially lethal. In the 1890s the more common non-lethal usages of military weaponry, such as hitting with the stock of the rifle, firing blank ammo, or firing overhead during crowd control operations were forbidden by army regulations, but infantry officers widely used them during policing operations ‘in order to avoid injuries’ (Castro 1947: 10). In practice, the military aimed at a proportionate usage of force, but they did not want to be constrained to it by law (Palacios Cerezales 2011). During the parliamentary discussions that followed some fatal casualties in crowd control operations, some important differences between the ethos of a police force and that of the military surfaced. As one parliamentarian with a military background explained: the army sometimes had to kill in order to ‘maintain its dignity’ in the face of the crowd, while the police did not (Dantas Baracho, *DGP*, 23 April 1900: 10).

Policing elections was another important task for the military. Sometimes electoral competition made strong networks of patronage clash and the army was needed in order to maintain the peace. During the 1878 national elections 4,258 soldiers were mobilised, which meant that in some districts 80% of available soldiers were on electoral duty (*DCD*, 16 February 1880: 478–479). At times the presence of troops on election day was seen as government interference against the opposition. Even so, troops could only approach the ballot box in situations where the civil authority asked them to come ‘to prevent brawls and aggressions’, and from then on the ballot was suspended until peace was re-established and the troops departed (*Ordem do Exército* n° 48 1870).

To capture a criminal, a civil magistrate had to organize the operation. One manual recommended the military to surround the habitation of the criminal at night and to wait until dawn in order to break the door, as the constitution forbade the officials from entering

a citizen's home at night (Silva 1876: 64).

The creation and growth of the civil police in the provincial capitals since the late 1860s (Gonçalves 2012), the deployment of a new and militarized customs guard (the *Guarda Fiscal*) in the 1880s and the modernisation of the civil police in the 1890s diminished some of the army's policing duties. Nevertheless, as late as 1903 the civil governor of Porto –a district with a high density of police, comprising the Municipal Guard, the Civil Police and the Custom's Guard– asked the army for 65 ordinary policing services: 31 for rural fairs; 7 for low level public order threats; 5 for court or prison guarding; 2 for tax collection enforcement; and, one for escorting a magistrate during criminal investigations (*Arquivo do Governo Civil do Porto* L 737). All of these services were performed in the rural municipalities near Porto. Furthermore, that same year there was a major strike in Porto and the city's police was reinforced with several cavalry squadrons for almost two months.

Additionally, the military did not only perform policing duties in the Army. The Municipal Guards of Lisbon and Porto had been militarized in the 1850s, and the customs guard was also a military body. Moreover, in the rest of the country municipal administrators were sometimes recruited among reserve officers, who also looked for retired NCOs to serve as parish sheriffs.

### **Africanism and Militarism**

At the end of the century, some colonial military successes and the new European-wide militaristic ethos allowed for the enhancement of the status of the military within the Portuguese elite. During the 1860s and 1870s, the project of a civilian police had been advanced as the most in tune with the liberal ethos of constitutional Portugal. The heavy militarisation of the Municipal Guards had not been presented as an intrinsic virtue, but as a transitory necessity derived from the *povo's* low level of civilisation. As the Minister of the

Realm, Rodrigo da Fonseca, explained in 1855 'here [in Portugal] only a fully armed soldier is able to command respect from the masses' (*DCD*, 22 May 1855: 239). In contrast, after the 1890 British *ultimatum*, that thwarted the Portuguese great colonial plans and humiliated its governing elite, the new generation of bold politicians that took the reins of government presented the military as a source of patriotic renewal (Cabral 1989, Sardica, 2001, Cabral 1993). They promised 'new life' for a system that, according to Oliveira Martins, Eça de Queiros and other leading intellectuals of the time, had become exhausted by partisan, clientelistic and corrupt politicking (Ramos 1998).

In the wake of the *ultimatum*, nationalist and republican mobilization in the streets of the main Portuguese cities foreshadowed a revolution, making the Constitutional Monarchy seek a stronger defence. First, military men with colonial experience were put in charge of Lisbon's and Porto's civil government, such as the Visconde de Paço d'Arcos, who served in Lisbon after having been governor of India and Moçambique. Then, the Municipal Guard was reinforced and the urban 'civil' police underwent a process of militarisation. The 28 August 1893 decree reorganised the patrolling section of the civil police as a 'special body organized, instructed and disciplined under the direction of army officers, far from any suspected influence of favouritism'. Militarism was on the rise and the government thought that army officers were the only individuals capable of 'directing, educating, disciplining and commanding groups of men armed by the state'. Finally, the new legislation imposed that all the new recruits for the police had to be discharged soldiers (*Decree of 28 August 1893*).

Despite its influence on government and public opinion, the militaristic ethos did not become hegemonic (Sardica 2001). In fact, it was not able reach the goal of creating a gendarmerie that would permit the army to concentrate upon military training and readiness for war. In fact, the military reform of 1900 aimed at a cost-free improvement of the

military aid to the civil power. Eight regiments of four squadrons were each transformed into 10 regiments of three squadrons each, aiming at favouring two additional towns with a full regiment (Ramos 1998).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, policing was still the main occupation of the Metropolitan army (Sousa 1938). 'For the military in the provinces', as one army officer recalled, 'service meant commanding policing forces during fairs, pilgrimages and election days' (Castro 1947: 7). In 1907, a young officer with militaristic projects offered an acid view:

'service is mounting guard, escorting a religious procession, going to those villages where there is disorder, or where the local politicians ask for some troops for the adornment of the place; service is being on parade, exposed to the curiosity and the gossiping of the public, writing down *corpus delicto*, selling some stuff in public auction, [...] in such a way that some get the idea that the army's purpose is to perform policing activities and that it has nothing to do with war.' (Esteves, 1907: 8).

For the most dynamic among the military, policing mainland Portugal was not a fulfilling experience. As Marshall Gomes da Costa recalled years later. '[By means of policing duties] we officers learnt how to command, and we naturally acquired our military spirit, the science of making men obey and our authority and prestige [...] [yet], in order to become true soldiers, we had to ask for a commission in Africa' (Costa, 1930: 34). His contemporary Gonalo Pimenta de Castro agreed: 'my dream would come true in Africa; I would become a true soldier, not just a policeman for fairs, pilgrimages and elections' (Castro 1947: 14). In the Portuguese African territories, both the Army and the Navy were involved in authentic military operations aimed at asserting sovereignty, especially from 1895 to the end of the Great War. The colonies thus held the promise of real military action, even if most of the time the use of troops for preventive policing was the rule, not combat

against insurgents. That last possibility, nonetheless, was often also portrayed as an imperial policing endeavour, reflecting the blurred line between the military and the police so common in colonial contexts (see Reis in this collection). Finally, the colonial successes of the military served to enhance their status, also favouring, as we already mentioned, the militarisation of the metropolitan police.

In 1891, the Portuguese military comprised around 17,000 men in metropolitan Portugal, including the navy, the Municipal Guard and the Customs Guard. The three African possessions, in turn, were supposed to have 8,000 soldiers, of which only one battalion of 374 were Europeans, most of them serving in Africa due to disciplinary reasons. The colonial army was not an integral part of the Portuguese army, but a series of scattered forces under the supervision of the colonial governors. The officers were Europeans, while most of the troops were recruited among the colonised. The colonial troops were chiefly used for policing duties, not for combat. As the officers did not trust their loyalty, when strong action was needed they would rely on the extraordinary, and expensive, deployment of metropolitan forces in Africa (Carrilho 1985).

In 1901 a new reorganisation of the colonial forces sought to further integrate the metropolitan and the colonial armies. At the same time, for the purpose of occupying and ‘pacifying’ the large African territories under the nominal Portuguese sovereignty, the state began to deploy the so-called ‘mobile police columns’. Those were military detachments that, albeit in a temporary basis, brought the State to regions where the European administrative state seldom arrived (Castro, 1908). These mobile forces re-enacted the ‘flying columns’ that the metropolitan army had used during waves of rioting up until the improvement of railway communications in the 1870s.

The proclamation of the republic in 1910 and the foundation of the GNR in 1911 did not mean an abrupt disconnection of the army from policing duties. On the contrary, the



republic strengthened and multiplied the links between the military policing of the metropolis and that of the colonies. The GNR itself was a fully militarised institution. The guards were soldiers and the officers fully belonged to the army. Despite some specialisation in rural patrol, most of the GNR's policing practices were a development of the traditional military involvement in policing operations. The last edition of the traditional policing handbooks for military officers was published in 1937, this time aptly addressed to 'officers of the army, GNR, customs guard and police' (Delgado and Oliveira 1937: I). Finally, the exacerbation of social and political conflict during the republic –aggravated between 1916 and 1918 by the state of war– led to a further militarisation of public order policing. The temporal suspension of constitutional guarantees, very sparsely used during the second half of the nineteenth century, became a common feature from the January 1912 general strike onwards. The state of siege, massive deportations and military courts were used to subdue monarchist unrest, strikes and bread riots, multiplying the involvement of the military in policing (Palacios Cerezales, 2011). The suspensions of guarantees undermined the civil rights protection in the metropolis, creating a *de facto* juridical situation close to that of the colonies.

## **Conclusion**

In bringing this chapter to a close, it is important to highlight some important connections with other works included in this collection. As Bruno Cardoso Reis underlines, military operations in Africa would be understood as imperial policing, rather than colonial war, well into the twentieth century. The long involvement of the military in metropolitan policing, addressed in this chapter, may explain his comparative finding of a more blurred line between the police and the military in the Portuguese colonies. In addition, as the chapter by Gonçalves and Cachado describes, during the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, new police forces were put on foot for the

capital of each colony: Praia, Sao Tomé, Luanda, Lourenço Marques, Nova Goa and Macau. These were a new kind of colonial police, but circumscribed to urban spaces and hardly reaching the vast countryside, which was largely left to the army to patrol. At the same time, these forces were strongly militarised and commanded by European officers.

The threads that linked the military to colonial policing were inextricable. When metropolitan officers first disembarked in Africa, heading for a policing post, they came from an organisation that was already accustomed to a vast array of policing duties. During their career they could have served as police in the regular army, but also in the civil police and in the two specialised paramilitary constabularies: the Municipal Guards of Lisbon and Porto and the Customs Guard. Unfortunately, we do not have numbers to assess the proportion of colonial officers that had previously served in either of the metropolitan police forces, but a survey of the published memoirs shows that temporary commissions with the police forces were quite common. At the same time, the colonial attitude in Africa shared important elements with the internal colonialism elements of the military policing of the metropolitan countryside. Both trends were reinforced after 1911 with the establishment of the National Republican Guard, as serving for some years in its ranks became common for an army officer's career. When the colonial army was used as police and when military officers were put in charge of the colonial police forces, they already knew the business.

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*REAP: Relatórios sobre o Estado da Administração Pública*, Imprensa Nacional, 1856–1866.

*AHM: Arquivo Histórico Militar*

*AMR–ANTT: Arquivo do Ministério do Reino–Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon.*

*DCD: Diário da Câmara dos Deputados 1834–1910)*

*DCP: Diário da Câmara dos Pares do Reino 1834–1910)*

*RM: Revista Militar, 1849–1910*

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